In Class Skills

Mallory Dudley

Western Washington University

HSP 345 Case Management and Interventions

 Case managing in this class was a high learning curve of skills needed for this practice. Throughout each visit with my client, I was constantly learning new approaches of how to react or find appropriate things to say to my client. It was difficult because I did not know how my client was going to react. I had to get a feel for their mood and willingness to be there to find a way to make them feel comfortable and reassured.

My client was a woman suffering from depression that made a suicide attempt and is now in a wheel chair. Of course, as a student who was role playing my client was very easy to work with given her situation. In real life, it would be difficult to know exactly what to say or do with any person, given the diverse range of needs and assessments. I was constantly worried of how my actions or words could affect my client negatively. With her in such a vulnerable state, I realized how much power I had through my words. Sometimes she would agree to what I would say and that would make me question if I was doing enough for her. I tried my best to focus on the positives and find things that made my client happy. Her main goal was to find wheelchair accessible housing. That is easier said than done, however given this scenario that is a fairly manageable resource to find. I thought that once we found housing, then we could find transportation so she could visit her mom, or find a public poetry writing class for her to attend. Real life scenarios however might not be as flexible and open to my ideas, personality, or approach. This assignment has only given me a glimpse of what it will really be like working with clients.

 As a client, I found my situation to be contradictory because I was making it up as we went along. I noticed that this made it difficult for my case manager, yet she was flexible and caught on quickly that I was inconsistent. Although my story was not completely clear, she was very open and understanding as a case manager. I tried my best to play the role and step into the shoes of my client, but I feel like I was very willing to cooperate and do my work. When being in the real life situation it would not have been that easy. My character was an eighteen-year-old Hispanic male who was getting involved in drug and gang activity and was trying to graduate high school. By the end of our meetings I made it sound like I did all of the work very easily such as finding a tutor, looking into options for college, and also cut down on drugs and drinking with my friends. Realistically, it would be a lot more difficult to change that person’s lifestyle in just a few weeks so that they are focusing on school, especially with all the other stressors in their life.

 I learned a lot by being an observer. Fortunately for me I got to observe each of my peers before it was my turn to be the case manager. That way, I picked up some useful ideas from their situations and used them in my scenario. The role of the observer is just as important in role-playing because you can not only learn but also give feedback and give an unbiased, third party perspective. You might catch things that they otherwise would not have noticed given they have a lot to think about all at once. I noticed consistency with the client and Case Manager with how they interacted. The case manager was very comforting and reassuring with everything the client said. She did not interrupt but waited until a good time to tell her client that what he was going through was difficult and that she was there to help. Her questions were asked in a productive way that showed she was getting to know her client but also tried to think of ways to find services that could maybe help him.

 It is important to be very thorough with case files. You do not want to be missing anything, especially if you are referring them to another service. The client most likely has a lot to deal with and does not want to have to tell their story over and over again. By reviewing goals and objectives, you are clarifying with your client that it is time to take the next step. As a case manager who reads the case files, they get to know very personal information but at the same time cannot understand much about their client without getting to know them. However, the case files are what gets passed on to other services when referring to another case manager or needed agency. It is incredibly important that these case files are not missing crucial information for the client. If an agency is going to be truly client centered, they would do all they could do help their client. With that, they would try to get to know their client’s needs and do their best to get their needs met.

 This experience has been very helpful to know the basics of case managing of the structure, the paperwork, and important models to follow for certain situations. I am interested to see how one would use the medical model or educational model in real life. As beginners who are still experimenting with the field and discovering new, appropriate ways to handle situations, that there is a lot of knowledge out there that we still do not have. That might just come with life experience but I am curious to see examples of how case managers do their work and perform interventions based off these models.