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Social Assistance in Poland

I Warm-up questions. Talk in pairs.

1. What do you think is the correct number of charities and non-profit organizations in Poland?
Is it about: 500, over 9000, over 15, 000 NGO?
2. What do you think is the correct number of social workers in Poland?
Is it about 10, 000, 710, 000, or 1 million people?
3. Have ever met a social worker? Do you know somebody who did?

II What are the synonyms to the words:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. purpose | a) find the difference between |
| 2. assistance | b) important, significant, vital, essential |
| 3. due to | c) because of, thanks to, owing to |
| 4. distinguish | d) aim, goal, target |
| 5. crucial | e) help |
| 6. task | f) homework, assignment |

III Match the words with their Polish translations.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. overcome | a) środki ostrożności |
| 2. among others | b) poczucie własnej wartości |
| 3. precautions | c) udogodnienia, obiekty |
| 4. social exclusion | d) ocenić, oszacować |
| 5. self-esteem | e) przewycięzać |
| 6. assess | f) nieprzystosowanie społeczne |
| 7. school counsellor | g) między innymi |
| 8. social welfare/welfare care | h) opieka społeczna |
| 9. facilities | i) pedagog szkolny |
| 10. social maladjustment | j) wykluczenie społeczne |

IV Read the questions and while reading, underline relevant answers in the text.

1. According to M. Porowski's definition, how does he describe the role and purpose of social services in aiding individuals and social groups? What key elements does his definition encompass?
2. What are institutionalized and non-institutionalized social services?
3. How do social workers engage in communication with other professionals and institutions regarding their clients?
4. Is it: **True or False**: Clients often display passivity in seeking solutions, preferring to wait for the social worker's initiative. This lack of self-reflection, opinion formation, and responsibility is due to their expectations of the system providing ready solutions.
5. What is the main goal of the "Schematom STOP" (STOP Stereotypes) pilot project mentioned in the text, and who is it for?

V Read the text and answer questions. Try to paraphrase the sentences from the text.

Multi-professional Support of Families Through Cooperation of a Non-Governmental Organisation with the Public Sector: Advantages and Risks by Izabela Krasiejko, Lidia Zeller

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present principles and forms of multi-professional family support in a local community, along with its advantages and potential threats. Also described are examples of projects executed by the non-governmental organization *Stowarzyszenie na rzecz pomocy dziecku i rodzinie DLA RODZINY in Częstochowa* [Association for the Child and Family Support FOR FAMILY in Częstochowa] in cooperation with the public sector.

Key words: social service, multi-professional social work, social welfare centre

(...) Social services provide assistance for families struggling with difficulties they are unable to overcome by themselves. To properly understand what social services are, it is helpful to consider the word “service”. When we talk about service, we think about performing duties supporting the set of rules adopted by the society. The word “service” for a long time has been, and still is used in the context of (among others) the military, police forces, fire department, or religious ministrations.

(...) In the context of socio-pedagogical work with families, especially when bureaucratic institutions such as individual branches of social services are involved, additional precautions need to be taken to ensure the proper character of the assistance provided.

(...) For the purpose of this article we use the definition created by M. Porowski (1999: 270), who describes social service as “a network of officially or functionally interconnected institutions, non-governmental organisations, informal task groups, or individuals who, due to professional duty, voluntary work (...) and to the extent of their competence and under supervision of law or their conscience only, work with the purpose of aiding individuals and social groups in regaining their self-esteem, avoiding the effects of helplessness, or regaining the capability to function in society through properly selected efforts to support, relieve, protect, rehabilitate and correct, and creating macro-structural and environmental conditions required for achieving these goals”.(...)

Two types of services can be distinguished: institution-alised services, which include the governmental system of social care, charities, foundations, or aid groups; and non-institutionalised services, which include: help from relatives, neighbours, or informal aid groups (Smykowska 2007: 25–26).

Multi-professional social work targeted at a certain category of clients (e.g. a family) is based on the cooperation of professionals from different fields, which allows a better chance of achieving common goals, including both goals pursued by the family in question and those required by institutions (e.g. the court of law). This is achieved through joint arrangements and the division of work between the family members and representatives of various aid groups during scheduled meetings. The purpose of these meetings, which include professionals from different fields, is to exchange information, assess the situation, create a work plan, analyse the problem, implement the plan, and evaluate the results. C. Robertis (1998: 238–241) describes four forms of the cooperation of social workers: communication, coordination, teamwork, and consultation.

Social workers communicate (through mail, telephone, or during face-to-face meetings) to exchange information about their clients, and learn about the steps taken by other institutions.

The purpose of coordination is to develop an accurate analysis of the situation, perform an operational assessment, and create a plan of action during a meeting with the family members and a group of professionals. While working with families who struggle with multiple issues, it is often necessary to employ professionals from different fields, e.g. a social worker, family assistant, health visitor, court-appointed caseworker, school counsellor, or psychologist. (...)

Family members have an opportunity to express their own assessment of their situation, as well as create their own solutions, evaluate the suggestions of other social servants, express their willingness and readiness, and describe possibilities of taking advantage of institutional resources offered to them by social workers (Mróz, Krasiejko 2011: 63–80).

Teamwork is the next method mentioned by C. Robertis (1998: 239–240). In opposition to coordination meetings, which are held when needed, teamwork is based on regular meetings involving a group of professionals working in the area (district, municipality, or city). (...)

The last method, consultation, requires asking for the opinion of an expert in a given field – a social worker with greater professional experience or an expert in a field unknown to a social worker, e.g. a lawyer or psychiatrist.

One of the most crucial ones is that all of those participating in the system, all its elements and subjects, share a clear vision of their joint activity and understand the benefits and the need for conducting cross-sectoral cooperation.

Speaking about the activation and integration of social institutions in an environment of family life in the context of multi-professional support, we can enumerate those institutions which are currently able to participate in joint activities through the work of competent and committed professionals. These are:

- 1) social welfare institutions diagnosing and supporting the family environment of families affected by unemployment, poverty, disability, single parenthood, alcoholism, violence, and other dysfunctions;
- 2) care and education institutions, especially daycare facilities organising compensatory, therapeutic, and recreational activities affected by, or in danger of being affected by, social exclusion;
- 3) schools;
- 4) family courts and juvenile courts which intervene into the family environment via court-appointed caseworkers;
- 5) non-governmental organisations specialising in family welfare and organising assistance for children with special needs;
- 6) clinics offering psychological and pedagogical help (as well as other specialist clinics for children, teenagers, and parents) able to properly diagnose children/students displaying intellectual giftedness, developmental deficits, or social maladjustment;
- 7) local authorities and governmental bodies creating specific policies (including the sphere of education) and are able to financially and organisationally support institutional initiatives, and monitor specific projects in the given environment (Jarosz 2008);
- 8) police, churches, and other institutions undertaking preventive, pedagogical, and educational projects;
- 9) mass media, which is able to undertake informational and educational activities or promote other institutions and help them raise health and education awareness (Kantowicz 2010: 146-148);
- 10) healthcare facilities, clinics, and specialist clinics. Advantages and risks of multi-professional actions targeted at families.

Most of the tasks that social workers engage in to assist the client are based around three points: diagnosis, solution, motivation (usually externally) of the client to implement the solution proposed by the professionals based on their expertise.

Cooperation requires time, patience, and understanding. (...) The clients themselves are often not particularly interested in seeking solutions on their own, and instead wait for the social worker's initiative – a situation especially common while creating contracts. Clients are passive, because their opinion is seldom asked for. They are not accustomed to self-reflection, to forming their own opinions, searching for solutions, or taking responsibility for their actions. They clearly have expectations of the system – “You want to help me, give me a solution”.

A valuable methodological proposal is the solution-centred approach, where we start by analysing the client's strong points and those moments in their lives when they did not struggle with the problem or managed to resolve it by themselves. The family is invited to a meeting along with a multi-professional team and together they try to come up with a way to overcome the difficult situation. While working, it is important to take clients' goals into account, to ask them what they want and need, how they imagine their future life, to compare their current situation with their expectations, to inform how we, as social workers, can help them to achieve what they want for themselves, for their children, and for their whole family.

(...)

Examples of multi-professional tasks completed by The Association for the Child and Family Help "FOR FAMILY" (...) Since 1 July 2013, as a part of open tender, Child and Family Support Association "FOR FAMILY" has been executing the project "Częstochowskie Centrum Wsparcia Rodziny". The Association employs family assistants, foster care coordinators, social workers, a school counsellor, and a psychologist. The association's beneficiaries are families struggling with a variety of problems that could result in the removal of children from their parents' care. The families are offered the help of a family assistant and other professionals employed by the association. (...)

An example of a multi-professional family support programme offered by the non- governmental organisation and the public sector is the implementation of the "Schematom STOP" (STOP Stereotypes) pilot project. The main objective of the project is to create a coordinated system of institutional cooperation with families who are at risk of social exclusion due to unemployment, who remain in permanent generational unemployment, or who lack the possibilities of becoming independent from social benefits. (...)

In conclusion, it is difficult for a single social service to resolve the difficulties of families struggling with multiple issues. The cooperation of a team of specialists in various fields has a greater chance of success. It should be kept in mind that the problem of being helpless is also the problem of not being listened to – it is a problem of people whose needs, wishes, and opinions are not taken seriously.

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VI Speaking. Follow up questions. Group work.

1. What are the key elements of scientific texts?
2. What is their structure What should they contain?
3. What language should be used in such texts?
4. How are other authors quoted in such texts?

VII Speaking. In a **short presentation** (1-2 minutes) say what the text was about and what you have found interesting about it or what you learnt from it.



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