

Vignette

*WHY DID YOU CHOOSE  
TO BECOME A SOCIAL  
WORKER (VOL. 1)*

ABSTRACT: Beginning students describe what attracted them to the field of social work.

Discussion topics

Preconceived notions/generalizations about older people

Students in the film say "They (older people) are so thankful...they want to give you so much..."I'm comfortable with older people because I lived with my grandparents"

To what degree do you think these statements are predictive of your encounters with older adults?

What if your older adult clients are not giving or thankful? How will this affect your practice and feelings about your work?

Circulate the Palmore (1980) attitude test on the stereotypes of old age.

Bridging the age gap

How can you draw on your own experiences to relate to older people's experiences? One student suggests that he uses his own experiences of loss to understand his clients. What other ways do you see obstacles or bridges to connect to older people?

Vignette

*HOME VISITING AND  
BOUNDARY CONFUSION  
(VOL. 2)*

ABSTRACT: Leora is doing a home visit in a supportive housing setting for seniors. This is her second visit with Mrs. K. Mrs. K treats the student like a friend and asks personal questions about her weight and living situation. Leora does not know how to set limits or if she should. Her supervisor has defined her task as gradually forming a relationship with Mrs. K and over time assess what mental health issues she may be experiencing and want help with from the intern.

Discussion topics

Defining professional roles and boundaries in the home setting.

How should a worker handles offers of food and drink?

What does it mean to the client to be a "good hostess" in this session?

What are the pros and cons of hugging a client?

Self-disclosure

If asked, should you disclose your height, weight, where you live?  
What is your purpose with a client and how will self disclosure advance or hinder your purpose in each interaction?  
How will you feel if you choose to disclose personal information? How will you feel if you choose not to?

Techniques of engagement

The home environment offers unique opportunities to learn about a client. Leora uses looking at the clients' photos. What other opportunities are there?

Reaching for lifelong themes in a client's story

How do you listen for client's interests, strengths, health changes?

Leave taking

Do you have a fixed length of time for a home interview?  
If the time is not fixed, how do you determine when it is time to go?  
How do you break away?

Vignette

STUDENTS CONFUSION:  
ASSESSMENT,  
CONTRACTING AND  
GOALS? Vol. 1.

ABSTRACT: A focus group of social work interns discuss their confusion when working with clients who do not voluntarily seek help. Students are in settings such as nursing homes, child welfare, senior centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Centers.

Discussion topics

Contracting

If the client did not initiate the request for services, how do you form a contract?  
How might the client view you if they themselves did not make the request?  
What does the client know about social workers and therefore what might (s)he expect/fear/hope from you?

Prying, invasion of space, purpose of contact

Why might your agency expect you to look into the client's food cabinets? How is this related to the worker's overall purpose?  
How might you explain your questions and investigations to a client?

Handling taboo subjects

What seems wrong or scary about asking clients about living wills or emergency responses systems?

What are the students' own feelings about addressing issues related to mortality and clients' physical vulnerabilities?

What do students expect clients will feel if these topics are addressed?

Providing  
preventive/supportive  
services to older adults

“Work with older adults is not about making things better, but about staving off decline” states a student in the film.

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Are your classroom readings and lectures addressing the value and skills of doing supportive social work?

Vignette

CASE MANAGEMENT:  
HELPING OLDER  
ADULTS ACCEPT  
SERVICES (VOL. 2)

Abstract: Leora, the student intern highlighted in this episode, has spent six months helping Mr. R accept his need for having assistance with cooking and cleaning. The video follows the work did Leora did with the client before and after a home health aide is brought into his apartment. Mr. R, while legally blind and uses a wheel chair, had been resistant to getting help because he saw it as giving up his independence.

Discussion  
topics

Client resistance to  
accepting services

The first client shown in the film, reports that she does not want to have help with her shopping once a week, rather than once every other week. She says she “needs time for her own life”. What might she mean?

Why do you think Mr. R resistant was resistant to having a home health attendant?

And now why does it want her to come even more hours?

Supporting self-  
determination

Can a worker support self-determination and also help a client to accept services that they initially oppose?

There are times when a social worker must bring in services against the client's wishes, such as Adult Protective Services (APS) mentioned in the film. What feelings might you have if you had to "force" this service on a client whose son was putting her in danger? What feelings might you have if you did not insist on mandating this service?

Worker skills in helping  
someone to transition into  
receiving services.

What are the skills necessary by the worker to gradually help someone to consider getting additional help?

What role does the social worker have once a home health attendant is already in place?

How do you explain the client's shift from not wanting any help to requesting full time help?

Entitlements and services

How do you learn what services your clients are eligible for?

How do you maintain an up-to-date list of available agencies that provide needed services for your clients

Vignette

*SUPPORTING FAMILY  
CAREGIVERS (Vol. 2)*

Abstract: Stacey, a beginning intern, meets with Mrs. E, an 80 year old woman whose sister is rapidly losing her memory and other cognitive faculties. Stacey does an assessment with Mrs. E and learns that she wants to keep her sister living at home, but wants a home health attendant. Stacey also does psycho-education with Mrs. E about the strains of being a caregiver and suggests that she may benefit from joining a support group herself.

Discussion  
Topics

Supporting self-  
determination

The intern struggles with providing service information about referrals without taking away the client's right and need to do her own research and make her own decisions. How do students allow clients to remain engaged in making decisions and finding resources? Why is this important?

The intern does not explore the pros and cons of nursing home placement with the client. While this may look like she is blending with the client's wishes, without exploration of choosing or not choosing nursing home care what might be lost?

How to learn about  
eligibility for benefits

The intern provides inaccurate information to the client when she informs her that Medicare will provide the reimbursement for the home health aide. How harmful is this incorrect information? How do you educate yourself about eligibility criteria for services?

Caregiver burnout

What are effective ways of helping and supporting caregivers?

Vignette	<u><i>OUTREACH TO THE VERY OLD (Vol. 2)</i></u>	Abstract: Hilary has been doing home visits with Mrs. C. who is 96 years old for several months. There is a lively connection between Mrs. C and the student. The client clearly enjoys the student's visits.
Discussion Topics	Working with very old clients.  Self-disclosure.  Termination  Home visiting	What are students' preconceptions of working with very old clients?  Mrs. C asks the student questions about herself. She wants to know what she has been doing. She is interested in what she will be doing in next year's placement. Is it appropriate for the student to answer these questions? What are the reasons to recommend self disclosure in this setting? What are the limits?  How does a worker prepare a client for termination at the end of the semester? What feelings might the worker and the client each have about ending this relationship?  What is the difference between being a friendly visitor and a professional social worker?
Vignette	<u><i>CONFRONTING AGEISM: USING SUPERVISION (Vol. 2).</i></u>	Abstract: Anicka does a home visit with an 89 year old woman, who is an artist. In supervision later that day, her supervisor examines how the student's stereotypes about older people continue to limit her interviewing style.
Discussion topics	Engaging older clients.  Assessing older clients  Using process recordings.	What assumptions do students make about older people that may limit their inquiry about their current life, including hobbies (music) and romantic interests etc. How do older clients currently find meaning and pleasure in their daily lives?  Do you focus on what the client was like in their youth or what they are like now? What are the advantages of inquiring about an older client' current interests? When you work with younger people do you hesitate to ask about their current interests?

Discussion on the value of process recordings for learning.

Vignette

*RUNNING A SUPPORT  
GROUP*

Abstract: Stacey has been running a support group for older adults in a community center for several months. She sets up for the group by providing tea and cookies and runs the group by starting with a “check in” and then finds a common theme for the day’s discussion. Afterwards, she reflects on what she has learned by doing this group.

Discussion  
Topics

Doing outreach to start a  
group

Stacey did initial outreach to potential members by personally contacting them at the Center and then phoning them. Do you think it was worth her while to put in this extra time to do this outreach? What are other ways to plan for a new group?

Group interaction patters

How would you assess the member-to-leader interactions? How would you assess the member-to-member interactions?

Providing food for a group

What are the positives of offering food and drink in a support group?  
The leader keeps bringing the tea, even though she notes that hardly anyone ever drinks it. What are your thoughts about her choosing to keep this as part of the group?

Choosing a theme for a  
group discussion

Stacey shifted the member check in to a group discussion, focusing in on one member’s concerns about her recent doctor’s visit. Do you think this was an effective intervention? What role did Stacey have to maintain to keep this discussion on target about Mrs. R’s problem? What did other group members receive from this discussion?

Vignette

*USING SUPERVISION TO  
LEARN ABOUT  
YOURSELF (Vol. 1)*

Abstract: Anicka, a young African-American intern, goes over a process recording in which she describes her anger at being mistreated by people in the hospital setting: a guard and a client’s aide. The supervisor is white. There is a climate of

trust and respect between them that allows for them to discuss issues related to the student's anger and racial identity.

Discussion  
Topics

Cross cultural/racial  
supervision.

Supervision as a tool of  
self-awareness.

Working with other health  
professionals.

How can students create a climate with their supervisors in which they can discuss issues related to discrimination, and other feelings related to feeling disrespected by clients and other health professionals?

How can students use supervision to discuss their own personal issues that may interfere with their professional work, such as controlling anger.

When working with older adults, social workers must interact with medical doctors, nurses, nurses' aides etc. What skills are necessary to negotiate these various relationships? How are social workers viewed by interdisciplinary health professionals?

Vignette

STUDENTS GROWTH  
OVER TIME (Vol. 2)

Abstract: Students reflect on what they have learned after the first year of graduate school. The students are seen one year later at graduation, in their caps and gowns.

Discussion  
Topics

Termination of students'  
academic year

Learning skills about  
engagement

Learning about oneself

Valuing a profession where  
you feel you make a  
difference in peoples' lives.

What do students see they have learned in the field and in their classes?  
What have students learned from their older clients?

Leora reports how she has learned to "listen".

Anicka reports that she has learned so much about herself.