DIRECT SOCIAL WORK WILLIAM PRACTICE

THEORY AND SKILLS
FIFTH EDITION

DEAN H. HEPWORTH RONALD H. ROONEY JO ANN LARSEN

Direct Social Work Practice

Theory and Skills
Fifth Edition





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Preface

As this fifth edition is being published, we social workers and our constituencies face pressing challenges. To face those challenges, we draw on a *cherished tradition* of commitment to social justice, maximum feasible self-determination, and the affirmation that all people are worthy of dignity and respect and are entitled to resources. This cherished tradition is now evolving into a vision of a *desired future* that includes expanded commitment to the enhancement of client strengths and empowerment. Empowerment as a goal builds on our commitment to self-determination by helping our clients realize self-defined goals through the acquisition of skills and resources (Hartman, 1993).

In between this cherished tradition and this vision of a desired future is a *troubled present* that is often antithetical to both. Specifically, our troubled present often includes an emphasis on cost containment and the "management" of care in which practice decisions are no longer the exclusive domain of client and practitioner. This managed care environment resurrects the medical model (Strom, 1992) at the very time we have incorporated strengths and empowerment into our vision.

Also, we can no longer assume that the majority of those who come into contact with a social worker are applying voluntarily for a service. In fact, the majority of our potential clients are referred by others or are under legal pressure to seek contact. Such potential clients do not ask "Who am I? Where am I going? Why am I here?" as does the applicant. Involuntary clients more frequently ask "Who are you? Why are you here? When will you leave?" (Rooney, 1992).

Finally, a change in the national political envi-

ronment has meant that efforts to balance the budget entail major hardships to many of social work's traditional constituencies. Too often political leaders use terms such as *empowerment* to mean reducing dependency on welfare without assuring adequate supports for child care, job training, and placement (Simon, 1994). We find that social work's commitment to social justice and distribution of resources clashes directly with efforts to cut welfare and roll back affirmative action. In the ambivalence toward lower socioeconomic groups in our society, we find that our traditional clienteles are often perceived as a drain on scarce national resources rather than as a source of underdeveloped, untapped resources.

We could deal with the challenges of the troubled present in many different ways—for example, by choosing to ignore them. Too often we social work faculty and textbook writers choose to preach to students "This is what you should do, if only supervisors in the misguided, short-sighted practice settings would allow you." We could also ignore the present by relying too much on our trusty counseling skills in dealing with dislocation of power and resources. It is insufficient to focus on client feelings about loss of resources—"How do you feel about having your welfare benefits ended?"—without in fact acting to assist clients in the recovery of resources. Or we could cling to our cherished tradition and our vision of a desired future alone—a decision that would hardly solve the problems we are dealing with.

In our book, we choose to meet these challenges by encouraging students, practitioners and instructors to rely on our tradition and vision, supported by practical guidelines drawn from research and practice wisdom. We ask ourselves how we can act

with clients and consumers to facilitate empowerment, to gain resources for clients, and to mobilize strengths in a manner that is true to both our heritage and our future. We have tried to achieve a balance between social work theory and the practice skills that translate theory into action. Our original motivation to write a textbook was to respond to students' persistent pleas for learning experiences that would help them cope with the concrete challenges encountered in direct work with various clients. In addition to presenting theory, then, we have continued to delineate many basic skills essential to effective practice and have included relevant skill development exercises and modeled responses, many adapted from actual practice situations we have encountered during our combined 80 years of direct social work practice.

We are joined in this edition by Ron Rooney, a professor at the University of Minnesota with extensive experience in public and private direct practice settings and expertise in work with involuntary clients. Before undertaking the revision of the book, we received many suggestions from reviewers of the previous edition. We incorporated many of their suggestions and express our gratitude to them for their thoughtful recommendations.

Structural Changes

We have eliminated what was Chapter 12 in the fourth edition on work with involuntary clients and infused content from that chapter throughout the book. Consequently, Chapter 13 in the previous edition becomes Chapter 12 in this fifth edition, and so on. Content on role socialization has been moved from Chapter 12 to Chapter 5 to provide a context for the discussion on the use of communication skills. The chapters on work with families and groups (Chapters 11 and 17) have been expanded to include task groups and involuntary groups, and examples in Chapters 10 and 16 now draw on work with families in settings such as health care and work with the elderly.

Changes in Content

Rather than assume that the majority of potential clients are applicants for service, this edition integrates throughout the topic of legally mandated and referred clients with materials about voluntary clients. In Chapter 4, barriers to client acceptance are examined anew from normalizing perspectives drawn from strategic self-presentation theory and

reactance theory, which are helpful in reframing

manipulation, helplessness, and noncompliance. In

addition, Chapter 5 now sets the stage for explor-

ing communications skills by discussing role social-

ization, including an example of how to introduce

contact with a legally mandated client. Chapter 7

now includes examples of problem identification

with applicants, referrals, and legally mandated

clients. In Chapter 12, the topic of contracting has

been expanded to include both voluntary and

involuntary clients. In addition, content on con-

frontation now includes a broader continuum of

interventions and is adapted to involuntary cir-

cumstances in Chapter 18. Resistance is reframed

as opposition to change in Chapter 19, with useful

perspectives from reactance theory. Finally, Chap-

ter 20 now includes adaptations of the termination

process to involuntary clients.

Work with Referred and Legally Mandated Clients

Varied Case Examples and Settings Social work students and practitioners operate in a variety of settings that include those for which providing therapy is the primary function. Reflecting managed care realities, a case study in Chapter 2 and an ethical dilemma vignette in Chapter 4 now illustrate the involvement of third parties in decisions such as payment for inpatient hospitalizations. The communications skills described in Chapters 5 and 6 are also useful in settings such as work with the elderly, discharge planning, hospital social work, and chemical dependency situations, among others. To reflect applications to these settings, Chapter 5 now includes an elderly-client example and a domestic-violence example; Chapter 6 includes

elderly-client examples, health-care examples, and a teenaged-mother and child welfare example. A major case study from a health-care setting is now used to describe the utility of family assessment methods in Chapter 10. Similarly, Chapter 11 broadens the scope from therapeutic groups to other social work groups including involuntary and task groups. Chapter 17 also includes expanded content on work with task groups.

Greater Focus on Client Strengths and Empowerment To reflect our greater emphasis on a strengths perspective, Chapter 1 begins with a case study that introduces a dual focus on problems or concerns and on strengths and resources. Chapters 1 and 4 include new material from the Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Guidelines and from the proposed revision of the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics, Social work students have sometimes had difficulties in focusing their assessments and integrating a strengths-oriented assessment process. To help them, Chapter 8 now introduces assessment in an agency context and presents priorities in assessment. Also, the chapter places greater emphasis on identifying strengths in assessments and includes an example emphasizing strengths.

Theoretical Orientation

In this text, we address human problems from an ecological systems framework. Thus, a major feature of the book is the inclusion of material germane to various systems and subsystems typically implicated in problems encountered by social workers. They include individuals, couples, families, groups, and various environmental systems.

To equip students with a broad range of skills, we present a systematic-eclective (pluralistic) perspective of practice. Both demanding and rigorous, this perspective enables practitioners to choose from various theories, practice models, and interventions those that best match the unique

needs of each client. To the extent possible, we have included models, interventions, and techniques that are empirically grounded. Moreover, we have included interventions and techniques applicable to modifying environments, improving interpersonal relationships, and enhancing individuals' biophysical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning. The text thus has a truly multidimensional approach to both assessment and interventions.

Organization of the Book

This edition of the book retains its basic structure, consisting of four parts. The first part introduces the reader to the profession and to direct practice and provides an overview of the helping process. Part 1 concludes with Chapter 4, which is concerned with the cardinal values of social work and how they are operationalized in practice.

Part 2, which is devoted to the beginning phase of the helping process, opens with a chapter that focuses on relationship-building skills in the context of socialization to roles. Chapter 6 shifts the focus to theory and skills entailed in eliciting vital information from clients, exploring problems in depth and providing direction, focus, and continuity to sessions. Chapter 7 deals with barriers to communication, and Chapters 8–12 are concerned with assessing problems and strengths of individuals, families, and groups; forming groups; enhancing motivation; and formulating goals and negotiating contracts.

Part 3 is devoted to the middle phase (goal attainment) of the helping process. It begins with Chapter 13, which is concerned with planning and implementing change-oriented strategies, including the task-centered approach, crisis intervention, and cognitive restructuring. Chapter 14 delineates numerous interventions and skills, including teaching independent problem-solving skills, social skills, assertiveness, and stress management. In Chapter 15, the focus shifts to modifying envi-

ronments, developing resources, empowering clients, serving as case managers, employing advocacy, and engaging in social planning. Chapter 16 deals at length with methods of enhancing family relationships. The focus of Chapter 17 is on theory and skills entailed in work with social work groups. Chapter 18 is concerned with the implementation of additive empathy, interpretation, confrontation, and related interventions. Part 3 concludes with Chapter 19, which discusses manifestations and methods of dealing with relational reactions and other obstacles to change, methods of coping with opposition to change, and strategies for dealing with them in the context of individuals, families, and organizations.

Part 4 consists of Chapter 20, which deals with the terminal phase of the helping process. This chapter covers five different types of termination, as well as the valuation of the outcomes, the consolidation and maintenance of gains, and the prevention of relapse.

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Finally, this edition could not have been developed without the support, challenge, and inspiration provided by Glenda Dewberry Rooney of Augsburg College and by Glenda and Ron's son, Chris.

Dean H. Hepworth Ronald H. Rooney Jo Ann Larsen

A postscript to Dean and Jo Ann:

Many thanks for the opportunity to join your team and continue the cherished tradition of this book toward our desired future through our troubled present.

R.H.R.

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