

Professional in Environment: Mission Statement/Macro Reflection

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Growing up, I would always tell people that I wanted a career helping others and to make a positive difference in people's lives. I came into college undecided, when searching for what I wanted as my career it became apparent to me that social work is the path I wanted to take. Being in the social work program it has broadened my perspectives and has provided me knowledge. I have been able to repair a relationship with my dad. I never fully understood mental health disorders like bipolar when I was growing up, until I got into social work. I was finally able to understand that my dad's bipolar is barrier for him and that it has created many challenges for him in life. Additionally, I learned that my dad is not his disorder. For which he needs people to be a support system and to not cut him off like I did for years in high school.

My dad is a big reason for my 'why' in going into the social work field. As well as other life experiences that have shaped me into who I am today. Therefore, personally, and professionally, as social worker it is my mission to help underserved populations, who need assistance and support. My main passion going into this field is serving people experiencing homelessness. Many individuals experiencing homelessness slip through the cracks of mental health and never get the support nor not being able to receive proper treatment. It is my mission to create change and to empower those experiencing homelessness, to be another ally in the fight to end homelessness.

My mission statement reflects my personal and professional values because I value that everyone should be treated equally. Which, those experiencing homelessness are not treated as equals, they are disrespected and treated unfairly. It is saddening that our country has so many resources, yet there are still so many people unsheltered or cannot afford housing. I value that everyone should have that right to get all their basic needs met. We should all have equal rights

to water, food, clothes, and shelter. As homelessness continues to be a growing problem in the United States it is apparent that our society needs to create change by advocating for the homeless and to start creating solutions to end homelessness. I will use my mission statement to help guide me as a professional social worker by holding onto my values and practicing them. My mission statement will be the guideline for me to follow in the social work field to serve those experiencing homelessness. As well as creating an equal society for everyone is the main goal. What have you learned about evaluating agencies and the communities they are in?

Macro Reflection

I have learned about the importance of interagency collaboration and how working together is one of the best ways to solve community issues. In social work we don't want to reinvent the wheel nor work in silos. It is important to work together to create solutions to help our client's and the community. Through evaluating different types of agencies, I have learned that some agencies are more formal and informal than others. The formal agencies tend to do more case management and have a lot of documentation. Whereas the informal agencies are easier to access for clients in some cases.

I have engaged in advocacy by writing letters to legislators on the local, state, and federal level in support of bills and for not supporting bills. Main things that I advocate for are affordable housing, mental health treatment, and abortion rights. As well as many other things I have learned that sending letters to your legislators is hugely important in order to have your voice heard and to start making changes. I have also engaged in advocacy by creating an informational business guide on strategies to address homelessness for business owners in downtown Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The guide is to inform business owners on people experiencing homelessness and what they can do to help. The guide also serves as a resource

guide. I provided multiple different resource sheets that can be used to give information on services that are provided in Eau Claire for those experiencing homelessness. When moving into my career I will continue to implement advocacy in my daily life. I will try to implement a committee similar to the Gap's committee at my internship site. This committee addresses the gaps within our community and multiple agencies get together to brainstorm solutions and close the gaps. I will use this example of this committee to bring along with me when I enter into the work force. I have seen others advocate by working together within different agencies, sending letters, protest, speaking at public hearings, etc. There are so many ways others advocate for change and create change through advocacy.

Overall, it is important to know your mission and to remind yourself of your mission when you are feeling burnt out. This will help to avoid burnout remembering my 'why' I do this work. To help others and make our society better in all realms of things.