

College of Arts/ Sociology Department

Lecturer of Social problems- First semester -2023-2024

What is a social problem?

- A social problem is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed. This definition has both an *objective* component and a *subjective* component.
- **Social problems have two components**
 1. An objective component.
 2. A subjective component.

Personal vs. Social problems

- Personal problem as one whose causes and solutions lie within the individual and the individual's immediate environment.
- Social problem is one whose causes and solutions lie outside the individual and the immediate environment.

C.Wright Mills (1959:8-9):

Calling personal problems, the “personal troubles of milieu” and social problems the “public issues of social structure”.

- Social issues: Social issues are political debates involving moral judgments about how people should live.
- Social movement: Social movements are an organized effort to encourage or discourage some dimension of social change.
- Social policy: Social policy is a formal strategy to shape some aspect of social life.

➤ Characteristics of social problems

We can identify the following characteristics of social problems:

1. All social problems are situations which have injurious consequences for society.
2. All social problems are *deviations* from the “ideal” situation.
3. All social problems have some *common basis* of origin.
4. All social problems are *social and political in origin*.
5. All social problems are caused by pathological social conditions.
6. All social problems are *interconnected*.
7. All social problems are social in their results –they affect all sections of society.
8. The *responsibility* of social problems is *social* –they require a collective approach for their solution.
9. Social problems occur in all societies.

Main and Sub- Factors of Social Problems

➤ Main factors of social problems

1. Factors of physical environment:
2. Individual factors
3. External social problems.
4. Factors of social mobility and transformation conflict.

➤ Sub- Factors of social problems

1. Multiplication of interest and social function.
2. The analytical knowledge.
3. Civilization.
4. Industrialization.

Theoretical Approaches on Social Problems

- A theoretical perspective provides some fundamental assumptions about the nature and operation of society.
 - Macrosociological perspectives focus on large groups, social institutions and society as a whole.
 - Microsociological perspectives focus on the intimate level of everyday interactions between people.

Theory:

- Explains how two or more concepts (or facts) are related, such as age and suicide.
- **Sociological Theory:** Provides a framework for thinking about a social issue from a perspective that we might otherwise neglect.

Sociological perspective

- **Functionalism:** Functionalism is a theoretical framework that defines society as a system of interrelated parts. Because functionalism focuses on the entire social system and not just the individual, it is considered a macro approach to sociological study.
- Functionalists believe that the best way to understand society as a whole is to understand how social institutions (such as family, education, and the economy) are interrelated. Each institution has an impact, no matter how small it may seem; because everything is connected, a butterfly effect occurs.
- Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) Social integration and social control hold society together. People view themselves as unified wholes, which helps them stay within the boundaries of their social structure's rules and laws.

Conflict theory

- Conflict theory is a theoretical framework that views society as being in a constant struggle over a limited amount of resources.
- Marxist theories: social problems result from class inequality in a capitalistic system.
- Non-Marxist theories: conflicts arise when groups have opposing values.
- Karl Marks (1818-1883) Capitalism breeds conflict between the rich and the poor. The pursuit of wealth corrupts society and will ultimately destroy it. Economic power should not lie in the hands of the elite few, but in the hands of all people.

Symbolic interactionism

- Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that focuses on how individual interactions between people influence their behavior and how these interactions can impact society. Unlike functionalism and conflict theory, this paradigm is a micro approach because it deals with individuals, not groups or institutions.
- George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) society is made up of symbols that teach us to understand the world. We use these symbols to develop a sense of self, or identity. We then take this identity into the world to interact with other identities to create society.

Lewis Coser (1913-2003)

- Defined conflict as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals”.
- Conflict is part of relationships and is not necessarily a sign of instability
- Conflict serves several functions:
 - Leads to social change
 - Can stimulate innovation
 - During times of war threat, can increase central power.

Managing cases: Process of case work

Case manager’s emotional preparation

What do you fear from?

What kind of reaction might embarrass you?

Are you clear about your role in the assessment?

Do you think you should be a listener or a talker?

What is your belief about children lie?

What will you do if the case reminds you with your own childhood or experience?

And

Remember do not be overoptimistic as your prediction might not be correct, if so, you might risk your relationship & credibility.

Be prepared for different scenarios (What IF questions)

- ▶ What if there is nothing to be concerned about?

- ▶ What if this is a false report?
- ▶ What if as a consequence of the assessment, the child needs to be removed from his/her family?
- ▶ What if the person has a concern and he/she is worried about what will happen?
- ▶ What if the person is hostile or won't join in?
- ▶ What if I am out of my depth or don't know enough or don't get something right?

I. Intake (First Interview) Rapport Building (mutual understanding)

- ▶ Consent Should be signed
- ▶ When people reach out to you for professional help.
- ▶ Relationship between two persons of unequal positions and power will be developed.
- ▶ Accept people as a person in a stressful situation
- ▶ Respect the case's personality and help him/her decide and resolve.
- ▶ Never treat cases (Children) as a child!

Gathering information

- ▶ Many sources to provide information (parents, relatives, friends teachers....)
- ▶ Gathering information and measuring it against clients of the same age.
- ▶ Careful thinking while asking or answering a client.
- ▶ Well explanation for the purpose of the assessment to the client
- ▶ Never answer with misinformation or a lie to a client.

What should we do and avoid in case management process?

<u>Behavior to avoid!</u>	<u>Things to DO</u>
Advice giving	Introduce your role & duty
Lecturing	Invite the client to sit down and
Excessive questioning	Ensure he/she is comfortable
Storytelling	Address the case by name
Asking why?	Use social conversation to reduce anxiety
Asking how did that make you feel?	Watch the non-verbal behavior of the client as a sign of emotional state

Blaming/ accusing	Invite them to describe the reason for coming to talk
-	Allow sufficient time to the client to talk
-	Show your interest in serving him/her.

2. Exploration, investigation, Psycho-Social Study

1. History of the problem.
2. Personal history.
3. family history.
4. Problematic areas.
5. Treatment Plan

Psycho – Social study is the initial assessment of clients current, relevant past and possible future modes of adaptation to stressful situations and normal living situations.

3- Diagnoses, Assessment

- 1) **Dynamic diagnosis:** understanding of the current problem and the forces currently operating within the client and social environment. The nature of such diagnosis is changeable because it is the beginning phase of the social case work practice.
- 2) **Clinical diagnosis** is an attempt to classify the client by the nature of his/her sickness / problem. It identifies the client's personality maladaptation & malfunctioning. It is useful only when it becomes apparent that a disorder of personality accompanies the social disorder, creating & complicating it.
- 3) **Etiological Diagnosis:** This diagnosis is concerned with the explanation of the life history of the client's problem. The past history and its appraisal help to understand the rigid reactions of the client and make appropriate treatment plan.

4. Treatment, intervention, Problem Solving

1. Administration of concrete and practical services.

2. Indirect treatment (modification of environment, both physical and social). E.g. group activities, training programs, library, etc.

3. Direct treatment:

- A. Counselling (advice and support) Clarification.
- B. Interpretation and Insight
- C. Psychological support.

D. Resource utilization

E. Environment modification.

Providing information

Central to problem solving & decision making

- ▶ So we need to be accurate as you are providing new meaning & understanding
- ▶ Priorities important sentences and do not keep the important information for the last session of your talk.

Giving advice

- ▶ Identifying the problem clearly
- ▶ Identifying possible solutions
- ▶ Offering help with a great care: teaching, training, providing info.etc
- ▶ **Remember we might be wrong in the offer or in what we advice !**

6. M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation), *Follow up & Termination:*

M&E is the process of attaching a value to the social work practice. It is the method of knowing what the outcomes are. It is a continuous process.

- ▶ M&E strengthen the relationship between the caseworker and child and motivate the client to work towards his/her goal.
- ▶ Casework practices need to be evaluated from time to time.
- ▶ Casework practice should be subjected to critical review.
- ▶ Workers need to win approval for their programs.

Follow up is an action that serves to increase the effectiveness of an act that has been taken previously. Follow up in case work means monitoring the progress of the provided services.

How to do case Termination?

- ▶ It is not wise or recommended to be rush in termination.
- ▶ It is best to discuss termination several times before the final interview.
- ▶ It is better to inform the client with the termination time explaining the entire process.
- ▶ The frequency and amount of contacts should be gradually decreased.

- ▶ Termination of the helping process brings up in both the case worker and client(s) many feelings – both positive and negative – which must be verbalized and discussed.

Reporting cases

Keep your objectivity.

- ▶ Seek for parental consent.
- ▶ Have all required & supportive documents.
- ▶ Have client's file history coded.
- ▶ Keep your case & report confidential (but your line manager).