

Professionalism Paper

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Professionalism is usually described as some with skills and knowledge of a certain field. Being a professional takes a lot of time and learning. I know that once I graduate with my degree that many people would consider me to be a professional but in my opinion it take a lot more then just learning in a classroom or even in select internships to completely become a human services professional. I personally believe that there is amount of wisdom that can only be gained through personal experiences.

“Clinical education does not end with a diploma; it is a lifelong learning process. It is your professional obligation to continue your education” (Murphy, 2008, pg. 398). Throughout my life helping others has been a passion. It was something inherent that I have always felt. My mom likes to tell the story of my first day of kindergarten, where I took off from her to care of a friend that was very sad about having to leave her mother. I took her hand, said I’ll take care of you and off we went together. “For most of us, it is a combination of factors that led (or pushed) us to a life devoted to service” (Kottler, 2000, pg. 13). In all the human service classes I have taken, a large underlying theme is the idea of stepping outside of one’s self to understand and empathize with others. I think what drives me most to enter this field is my family. I grew up with divorced parents, half sisters and lots of family drama. But the one thing that I really noticed in my family was how no matter what: we were family. My mom and dad could be in a huge battle but would still come sit across the table from each other every Wednesday to eat lunch with me. I now work at a daycare and some of the children I see don’t go home to the best

atmosphere but for the few hours a day that I am with them I try to show them what unconditional love it like. It is thanks to my family that I can step outside of my daily life to be completely devoted to what they need.

Stepping outside of one's self is a large part of what a human service worker needs to do. Being accepting without external judgment is also a must. "Clinicians must be able to appreciate and affirm clients as people without necessarily condoning specific behaviors that might be harmful to themselves or to others" (Murphy, 2008, pg. 120). A large part of the learning I have done so far has been to let go of my usual judgments and stereotypes. I have had to do a lot of digging within myself and understanding why I think the way I do. In gaining this knowledge I can better accept those who walk through the door.

Self-care is something that I have had to also learn. After a year of working in a day care it can take a lot out of a person. Coming each day fresh and ready to undo all that was done just the night before is hard. My first six months was really hard. I took everything that happened during my day home. It felt like I never really got a break from all the drama. It took me awhile to understand that I couldn't take that home with me. I had to leave the bad stuff at work. "You can treat your helping work reverently, honor your clients and still retain the ability to laugh at the absurdities of what transpires" (Kottler, 2000, pg 112). I had to learn that I could only remember all the funny things the kids had done and not all the bad. I would go home to my friends and tell them a few funny things that the kids would do. It helped me focus on the positives of my job and to not worry. "We need to be good to ourselves and to take time and space for ourselves without feeling selfish and guilty or that we are wasting time" (Murphy, 2008, pg. 396).

Although there are many things that professional should know I believe that these three are the largest things that one must know. Transferring this into a classroom can be difficult. In our core class I already feel that we have a good atmosphere of respect. We also need to be prepared for times when we don't agree with each other, or can't completely understand someone else's point of view; but just like in our professional life we need to find empathy for each other. Leaving our stereotypes outside the classroom door. This is a place to practice and fine-tune our skills so when we leave this safe environment and step out into the big scary world we can always come back to what we learned. If we consistently practice within the classroom it will start to become natural, take less thought.

As a class we all come in with a natural hope to one day be helpful to others. Through our education we will be slowly learn to use our natural talents and gain new skills, so that when we leave we will hopefully be that much closer to being professionals and with continued education we can truly understand the term professionalism.

References

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Murphy, Bianca Cody, and Dillon, Carolyn (2008). *Interviewing in Action in a Multicultural World – 3rd edition*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.