

Doctoral dissertation abstract

Social competences of social workers working with the elderly and their subjective conditions

Aleksander Herman, MA

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to the issues of social competences of social workers working with the elderly and their subjective conditions. The discussed topic is related to the dynamically progressing process of aging of the society and the need to educate professional gerontology personnel. Due to the fact that working with the elderly is extremely difficult and requires appropriate competences, attention was brought to their subjective conditions.

The work consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the discussion of theoretical foundations of social work with the elderly. It describes the social situation of the elderly, modern theories of aging and of old age, bio-psycho-social consequences of aging and the specific nature of social work with the elderly.

The second chapter deals with issues related to social competences presented in the literature on the subject as well as the models and theoretical concepts supporting the undertaken issues. Their importance in the helping process was characterised with particular emphasis on supporting the elderly. The chapter ends with an overview of research in the field of social competences.

The third chapter is dedicated to subjective conditions of social competences. It characterizes the variables included in the research: the value system, self-esteem, self-efficacy, stress coping styles and the sense of occupational burnout in social workers who work with the elderly.

The fourth chapter discusses the methodological assumptions adopted in the author's own research and specifies the subject, purpose of the research, research problems, hypotheses and variables. It describes the method, technique and tools employed for collecting empirical data. The characteristics of the surveyed community in terms of socio-demographic features have been presented. The statistical analyses used in the work have been presented.

The fifth chapter that begins the empirical part of the work contains the characteristics of the social competences of the surveyed social workers working with the elderly. It describes the knowledge and beliefs of the respondents, the ability to cope with social situations and motivation to work. The summary of the chapter is an attempt at typology of social competences of social workers to work with seniors.

Chapter six describes the conditions of social competences of representatives of the welfare professions to work with elderly who took part in the research.

The last, seventh chapter contains an analysis of the correlation of the types of social competences of social workers with individual subjective factors, such as: the system of values, self-esteem, self-efficacy, styles of coping with stress and the feeling of professional burnout. The adopted working hypotheses were also verified.

In the summary, the obtained results of own research were summarized and interpreted. Practical conclusions have been drawn and proposed, which are applicable in the education and support of social workers working with the elderly. The presented state and conditions of social competences of the respondents find their dimension not only cognitive, but above all practical. The acquired knowledge can be an important aspect of facilitating the improvement and development of social skills that are desirable in welfare professions.

The work was provided with a bibliography, list of tables, figures and charts. The research tools used during the conducted research are included in the Annex.

Key words: *social worker, social competences, the elderly, old age, aging*

Alexzander Hermon