FOCUSING ON VALUES IN THEORETICAL MODELS OF SOCIAL WORK

Simona Rodat
Professor, PhD, Adventus University, Cernica, Ilfov, Romania, simona.rodat@uadventus.ro
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2916-7002

Abstract

Values are at the basis of a large part of social work. They are states or modes of action considered to be desirable, assessments and orientations included in the systems of preference and reference of individuals, groups, and communities. Although the values represent beliefs or convictions that are not based on scientific arguments, they lead and direct the professional activities in social work, being an integral part, often with a directive role in the theoretical and methodological models that guide the action in this field. Starting from the outline of the definitions of values and the delineation of the types of values, this paper deals further with the ways in which the significance and the roles of values are highlighted in the theoretical and methodological models of intervention developed over time in social work.

Introduction

In the field of social work, values are understood as beliefs about people and the most appropriate ways to treat people, these beliefs being reflected in daily activity and in the direction of professional approaches (Alexiu, 2003). However, values are not abstract beliefs, separated from the socio-historical and cultural context. The social work profession is carried out in a wider social and cultural context, which means that it reflects and operationalizes the value premises that already exist in society. According to Schwartz (1961), the values used in social work primarily express the general norms of society. Along with these, the functions of the social work agency, as well as the contract with the client system, are other instances that outline the values of social work. They are too influenced by the broader social and cultural context in which social work agencies operate.

The essential values of social work practice are the belief in the uniqueness and dignity of each person, respectively the belief in the client's right to self-determination (Alexiu, 2003: 322). At the base of a large part of social work are values, a fact revealed not only in the theories used and developed in the field, but also in the difficulties associated with the application of methods specific to scientific knowledge. A number of ethical and deontological principles make the application of the scientific method more difficult in social work than in other fields. Among these principles can be mentioned (Rodat, 2016: 33): the difficulty or impossibility of quantification (often the problems that are the subject of social work cannot be quantified); confidentiality (the principle of confidentiality does not allow certain approaches or certain studies); the difficulty or impossibility of comparison (due to the principle of confidentiality, the identical situations of those assisted can rarely be rigorously compared and tested); the difficulty of disseminating information (the principles of deontology do not allow the presentation of the situations of the vulnerable); difficulties in evaluation (when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, it is difficult to determine the impact of some factors or variables).

The fact that values underpin much of social work is reflected in the theoretical and methodological models that guide the practice of social work, whether they are taken from other sciences and adapted to the field, whether they are theories developed in the field, precisely based on the practice and experience of social work.

The present paper addresses values as essential components and guiding factors in the theoretical models of social work. After delineating the main meanings of the concept of "value", as well as outlining some typologies

of values, the paper deals further, chronologically, with the theoretical and methodological models of intervention developed in in the field, and, within them, with the significance and the roles of values in shaping their specific theoretical ideas, respectively their practical models of action and intervention procedures.

Conceptual delimitations: Definitions and types of values

Values refer to the appreciations that human subjects manifest towards an object (thing, idea, attribute, relationship) according to the socially shared criterion of satisfying a need or an ideal (Geană, 1993: 661). Values therefore include a social relationship, because not every individual option, desire, or appreciation is recommended itself by consistency, but only those that go in line with group options, desires, and appreciations. According to Schwartz (1994: 21), values are "desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity". Thus, they "function as standards for judging and justifying action", but also "motivate action, giving it direction and emotional intensity" (idem). In order to be distinguished from individual values, group values are also called "value orientations", and these can be divided into dominant value orientations (large categories of values) and variant orientations (differentiated by ethnicity, social class, role, etc.). Dominant value orientations represent a universal pattern of human value orientations (Geană, 1993: 662). Different social groups may relate to the same values but invest them with very different ideological content (van Dijk, 1998: 76).

In sociology, values are analyzed as assessments and orientations included in the systems of preference and reference of individuals, groups, communities. They are considered social facts (Durkheim, 1938) with an essential role in ensuring social unity, order, and functionality of society. In this vision, values are not individual subjective preferences, but socialized, supra-individual preferences, which are promoted and transmitted through social mechanisms (Zamfir, 1993: 662). They refer to states or modes of action considered to be desirable, with a fundamental role in the orientation of human actions, in establishing objectives and goals to be achieved, and in determining strategies, methods, and courses of action (Rodat, 2023: 17).

Therefore, the notion of value, which refers to what must/should be, and which differs from that of truth (what it is), is a practical notion, which has meaning only in relation to the experience of will or action, involving, thus, both a subjective and dynamic element, in the form of a desire or a sensitivity on the part of the subject, and an objective or 'static' aspect, through the social, traditional or universal human character of value (Julia, 1999: 354).

All values form a complex and as yet imperfectly known system (Hartmann, 2003). Many of the values are moral, as they convey the property of what is good, desirable, important, significant. There are, however, other types of values too, which have been typified by different authors in various ways (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2010). Rokeach (1973) distinguished between personal (e.g., salvation) and social (e.g., world peace) values, and between moral (e.g., honest) and competence (e.g., logical) values.

Schwartz (1994: 21-25; 31) discussed about ten motivational types of values: a) achievement values (e.g., success, ambition, influence, intelligence), b) security values (sense of belonging, health, social order, family), c) conformity values (obedience, honor, [self-]discipline, politeness), d) tradition values (respect for tradition, devotion, moderation), e) power values (authority, social power, social recognition, wealth), f) hedonism values (pleasure, enjoying life), g) stimulation values (daring, exciting life, varied life), h) self-direction values (freedom, creativity, curiosity, choosing own goals, independence, self-respect), i) benevolence values (honesty, loyalty, helpfulness, friendship, forgiveness, responsibility), and j) universal values (peace, wisdom, equality, social justice, protection of environment). It can be said that, beside maybe hedonism and stimulation values, in this typology all other values are moral or ethical, as they express what is good, desirable, requested, important in a society. To the types of values already mentioned, one can add political values (equality, civil liberties, patriotism) (Schwartz et al., 2010), which are to a certain degree ethical too, but also other values with a less moral side, such as aesthetic values (beauty, ugliness, the sublime, the tragic, the comic) (Chandler, 1921: 409), and religious values (sacrifice, exaltation, obedience, repentance, ethical eating, etc.) (Rodat, 2022a: 212).

Most people, and virtually all cultures, admit the existence of the specific type of moral or ethical values (Iliescu, 2007: 23). As Nielsen 1972 pointed out, talking about moral values means talking about what is good or bad to do or to have done, about what is good to pursue, or about how it should be or should have been. In these cases, however, it is certain that we are not talking about what it is, but about what it should be (Nielsen, 1972).

In the socio-cognitive discourse approach, values are described as "ethically charged notions" (Krzyżanowski et al., 2009: 263), "shared mental objects of social cognition", situated in the social memory (van Dijk, 1998: 74). In other words, in this vision as well, values are, beyond their mental reality, social constructions. Values cannot be reduced to individuals, but have a socio-cultural status, which involves observing and incorporating everyday social experiences (Rodat, 2022b: 87). All ideologies "are based on a selection and combination of values drawn

from a cultural common ground" (van Dijk, 1998: 286), which means that values determine what is permitted or prohibited in society, and what are the goals to be aspired to both by individuals and societies (Rodat, 2023: 18).

Values in the theoretical models of social work

Theory development in social work

Values are beliefs or convictions that are not based on scientific arguments, but they are directions, norms and desiderata that guide and direct professional activity. Values are not only the prerogative of professionals, but are elements of general culture, being shared by individuals belonging to the same culture (Alexiu, 2003: 322). Therefore, considering that the values are not based on scientific arguments, it can be said that the social work profession cannot be considered entirely scientific. However, although social work cannot be considered a science to the same extent as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, on the one hand it is based on the scientific knowledge developed in other fields, and on the other hand, it uses the scientific method in developing its theoretical frameworks and in evaluating its efficiency and effectiveness (Rodat, 2016: 33). In this process, the development and application of theories in social work practice represented an important step in the professionalization of the field.

A possible typology of social work theories (Sibeon, 1989; Payne, 2011) differentiates, on the one hand, between: a) formal theories and b) informal theories, and on the other hand between: a) theories about what social work is; b) theories about how social work is done and c) theories regarding the client's world.

While formal theories emerge and are debated within the professional and academic world, informal theories represent broader ideas and values that exist in society, as well as interpretations arising from practical experience. Informal theories sum up moral, political, cultural values developed by practitioners to define the "functions" of social work. While formal theories are deductive, informal theories are inductively derived. Deduction means concluding about a particular situation starting from a general theory, while induction means generalizing from particular examples (Payne, 2011: 26).

Theories about what social work is are part of a debate about the meaning and nature of social work. The theories about how social work is done represent the theories of practice, and the theories about the client's world are those theories about the phenomena, problems and social realities that social workers face. One such a theory is the attachment theory, which was born from psychotherapeutic work with children and bereaved people, and which evolved into a theory of practice (idem). Theories about the client's world can be seen as knowledge transfer devices developed for another purpose to support social work practice. Sometimes these latter types of theories are also known as social work knowledge.

Theoretical approaches in social work: from psychological theories to sociological ones

In the first stage of development of the theory in social work, also called the phase of investigation (Howe, 2001), which can be placed at the beginning of the 20th century, the social workers were those who "executed, not those who thought" (idem). During this period, social work was defined as "the art of helping" or "using common sense in difficult situations" (Goldstein, 1984).

In the 20-30s years of the twentieth century, along with the development of psychoanalysis, the theoretical advance in social work entered a second evolutionary stage, the focus being shifted from the practical to the psychological, therapeutic side of helping. Psychoanalytic therapy has shaped the relationship style of social work, from one directive and based on the exercise of control, to one permissive, open, based on listening. As psychoanalysis influenced the shift of emphasis in social work on feelings, and especially on unconscious factors (and not so much on conscious thoughts and events), psychoanalytic therapy encouraged, through listening, not so much the action, but the seeking of explanations and understanding the personality of the person listened to.

An important practical application of the *psychodynamic perspective* is represented by therapeutic settings and residential care (Rodat, 2016). The most influential practice model in residential institutions is the therapeutic community (Payne, 2011: 112). According to D. Kennard (1998), common values are among the main attributes of therapeutic communities, namely: individual problems are generally related to relationships with others; therapy is a learning process (of the *insight* type – that is, through understanding, psychological inwardness, self-knowledge); members share a fundamental psychological equality as human beings.

The *systemic approach* has its origins in the general theory of systems developed in the 40s and 50s of the 20th century in sciences such as biology, management, cultural anthropology, sociology. In social work, the adoption of this theoretical perspective took place in the 1970s, as a reaction against the psychodynamic perspective and its failure to address the "social" aspects of social work. The systemic perspective represented a change of perspective in social work. Unlike psychoanalysis, this theoretical view shows that the individual is influenced not only by psychological factors, but also by external factors, contexts and social experiences. Moreover, as a result

of this change in perspective, one of the most important principles of action in social work takes shape during this period, namely that the profession of social worker must be exercised *together with* the client, and not *on* them. In other words, the assisted person is no longer seen as a "patient" but as a "client" of some services.

Within the systemic perspective, the *theory of ecological systems*, sometimes also called the *theory of human ecology*, which was formulated by the psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), considers that people constantly adapt to the multitude of changes made within the interactions with the environment. Individuals are influenced by the environment, and they in turn influence the environment, with mutual adaptation or adjustment taking place all the time. Bronfenbrenner identified five systems in the environment with which the individual interacts, and which need to be taken into account when addressing their relationship with the community and the wider social environment: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem. He represented the individual's relationship to these systems as an arrangement of concentric circles: the individual is placed in the centre, and around them are the systems mentioned. Among these systems, the macrosystem, which refers to the society and culture in which the individual lives, plays a key role. It involves cultural values and norms, beliefs and attitudes, ideologies, prejudices, mentalities, customs, thus, all the cultural constants of social systems (Roth and Rebeleanu, 2011: 320).

Alongside the systemic perspective, another theoretical perspective that became influential in social work in the 1970s was the *radical perspective*. The radical approaches, and later the critical ones, also emerged as a sociological response to the inability of psychological approaches (psychoanalysis, behaviorism) to deal with the numerous social aspects and issues involved in social work. However, unlike systemic theory, radical theories did not propose a social work practice within the existing social order, but rejected this order, arguing for the need to promote a new social order. Radical and critical theories are transformational, that is, they propose that social work/care should aim to change the way societies create social problems, and emancipatory, as they are concerned with freeing people from the restrictions imposed by the existing social order (Payne, 2011: 253).

Principles in radical social work practice include (de Maria, 1992, apud Payne, 2011: 260):

- The social work action should be sensitive to the relevant social causes;
- The practice must be constantly adapted to the situation in which the social workers carry it out;
- Social work is fundamentally based on humanity, and no political or theoretical position holds the monopoly on the values that support such goals;
- Critical thinking should lead to action;
- Assistance should focus on things that are marginalised by conventional thinking, and it should also maintain real-life narratives that show and explain injustices.

In a radical theoretical view, various approaches to anti-discrimination and cultural and ethnic awareness were formulated in the 1980s as a consequence of the increased concerns during this period about various forms of discrimination, racism and ethnic conflicts. There is a long history of racism and discrimination, and changes since the 1980s, particularly as a result of migration due to disasters, wars, but also in the search of jobs, have contributed to the accentuation of various forms of oppression based on race, ethnicity or other physical, cultural or social traits (Rodat, 2016: 125).

Within these approaches, *structuralism* takes as its basic idea that ethnic and cultural divisions are strengthened by the economic and cultural dominance of elite groups. Power is exercised by these dominant groups in such a way as to avoid acknowledging the oppression of minorities, leading to racism and institutional discrimination. In social work, values should be changed so that anti-racial practice is promoted. When targeting groups of people of color, structuralist social work involves working in alliance with black communities and organizations, following their priorities, and working with families of color, accepting their expectations and values. Another radical/critical view focuses on aging and older people, particularly advocating against the exclusion of older people from the labor market, an exclusion that makes them economically and socially dependent on others.

Also in the radical vision, *empowerment* and *advocacy* perspectives have been developed since the 1970s, originating in critical, feminist and anti-discriminatory theories, but also in socio-democratic practices aimed at empowering people to overcome barriers in achieving goals and gaining access to services. In terms of empowerment, current trends are mainly towards self-help and group work. The social work with groups has the advantage of focusing on democratic, participatory and humanist values. It can also help to overcome the effects of dependency building as a result of institutional care. Empowerment is particularly suitable for adults, and has proven its effectiveness, for example, in working with older people. This is because mutual support in adulthood allows people to share experiences of stigma and reduces isolation. According to E. O. Cox (1989), group social work can be used to help older people respond to problems such as maintaining income, health care and combating abuse against them.

Humanism and humanist practice in social work

The philosophical current of *humanism* has also exerted an important influence on the theoretical developments in sociology, psychology, and also in social work.

The humanist current, which was the basis of the Renaissance, and which rehabilitated both the literature of Greco-Latin Antiquity and personal reflection (Julia, 1999: 351), advanced a moral doctrine that recognized human being as the supreme value, opposing both religious fanaticism and political statism, which sacrificed the individual in the name of state reasons. According to the humanist conception, as the supreme value, the human being itself is a self-purpose, and not a means. The basic idea of humanism is the ability of conscious human beings to reason, to make choices and to act freely, uninfluenced by gods and religion. Humanism is also associated with democracy, as a result of the belief in people's ability to value and participate together in controlling their own destinies.

The theories and models of practice in social work based on humanist views focus on the idea that human beings are trying to make sense of the surrounding environment and to understand the world they are experiencing. Humanist models take into account the fact that people's self-interpretations, as well as the interpretations they give to the social world, are valid and valuable. Therefore, social workers should help people acquire skills to analyse themselves and to explore the personal significations they give to the perceived world, and which affect them (Payne, 2011: 208).

In the humanistic practice of social work, social workers must be in an equal relationship with clients. They do not enter this relationship as 'experts', as technicians specialized in 'fixing' the client's psyche. Social workers do not make value judgements about clients, they do not tell them what to do or how to do it but accept them entirely as they are. Rather, they become 'companions' to clients, spending a lot of time with them, exploring together who the client is and where they are going and focusing mostly on the 'here and now' (Howe, 2001: 82). Being rather descriptive and expressive, the humanistic approach argues that the goal of social workers should be to identify the client's perspective on the problem and to draw out its meanings, which will help the client to recognise the value and significance of their life experience.

Radical humanist practice, a theoretical approach that combines humanist ideas with radical ones, argues that people should become aware of how social experience, especially in capitalist society, limits their thinking, shapes their perceptions, and channels their desires (ibid.: 91). Radical humanist practice proposes two social work goals: 1) to raise the level of awareness and understanding of those who are part of disadvantaged groups, which are subject to various forms of subjugation, and 2) the clients should regain control of their own destinies.

To achieve these goals, one of the methods considered effective by radical humanists is the method of working with groups of people who have encountered similar problems. The group helps people to better explore their experience and situation, to recognize how they are influenced, as well as the values and the norms imposed by society (Rodat, 2016: 151). In the group, people help each other to understand one another better (themselves and others), and in this way, the increase of responsibility, freedom and power is facilitated.

In conclusion, humanistic practice and theories not only promote a relationship of equality between client and social worker, but also emphasise that respect for all people and for the common good represents an essential part of effective practice and the core value of social work. All this makes humanist theory and practice deeply human, contributing to that side of social work that goes beyond its strictly scientific, neutral character and makes it a humane profession, concerned with the good of others.

Constructivism in the social and human sciences: intervention models in social work from the perspective of constructivist theories

Another important direction of understanding and intervention in social work is inspired by the constructivist movement developed in the social sciences. A number of theoretical models used in social work, such as role theory, communication theory, and narrative theory, were developed within the framework of *the constructivist perspective*. Constructivism played an important role in the revival of social studies in the 70's of the twentieth century, through the innovative character of its endeavours. This theoretical current claims both explanations for the microsocial space (individuals and small groups) and the macrosocial space (institutions, social norms, society). In the constructivist view, the world is made up of institutions, norms, customs, values, ideas or opinions that precede situations, and that is why the social actors' competences are important in making sense of these situations.

In this sense, for example, according to *communication theory*, the action in social work involves an initial stage and a primary evaluation stage, which are followed by the intervention stage itself. In this phase of the actual intervention, a first sub-phase is the establishment of a therapeutic relationship, which is followed by the sub-phase of defining the problem. At this stage it is necessary to consider how the client defines the problem, as well

as all the underlying causes of their problems, including their poor relationship with the social environment in which they live, as well as the values and norms that govern this environment.

In the *narrative theory model of intervention*, another constructivist theory, the social worker's role is to listen and ask questions that stimulate the client's reflection. Starting from the identification of the client's values, knowledge and skills in their personal history, the social worker helps to reinterpret events and experiences in a way that benefits the client (White & Epston, 1990). The goal of therapy based on narrative theory is to recreate or reconstruct the client's life experience, by changing the story dominated by problems into one that also presents 'other truths' (Buzducea, 2005: 151). By discovering other views of reality, clients can experience relief from the burden of frustrations and problems and more easily identify alternatives and solutions to break through impasses. They can also be stimulated to emphasise their values and mobilise the qualities they have, which, as a result of focusing exclusively on difficulties, may have been ignored. The aim of the intervention is therefore to understand and change the life stories around which clients have organised their lives.

Casework models and the place of values in these intervention models

Since the 1960s, a new trend has increasingly made its presence felt in social work, namely the tendency towards concise, structured and concentrated theories that deal with immediate concrete problems. Thus, there were developed the theoretical and methodological perspectives of individualized social work, i.e., *casework models*, such as crisis intervention theory, task-centred practice, and problem-solving model. Such models are part of the individualist-reformist tradition, which has not paid too much attention to social change, but which reflected the need for short intervention methods in social work practice (Rodat, 2016: 207).

The problem-solving model is based on the idea that life itself is a continuous problem-solving process. The intervention proposed by this model focuses on the social worker's concern to help the client and, where appropriate, to teach them to define their problem and goals, and to acquire and practice the skills needed to reach those goals. Another fundamental idea of this perspective is that the social worker and the client are able to communicate with each other about problems, goals, resources, planning and implementation. One of the fundamental criteria stipulated by this model for setting intervention goals is that these goals should be in line with the values of the person or group being assisted.

This theoretical model also discussed a number of roles that social workers can assume in the intervention process, depending on the client's situation and needs. The role of mediator, for example, involves the social worker's efforts to resolve disputes between the client and other people or organizations. To fulfil this role, the social worker assists the client (person or group) and the opposing party to find "common ground to resolve the conflict" (Alexiu, 2003: 337). In this respect, several techniques can be used to improve the situation, reduce the conflict and reach a convergence of the values of both parties. Another role that social workers can assume is the role of social broker or agent, who guides people in need, builds relationships, and connects clients with community resources. In terms of supporting social groups, by assuming this role, social worker stands in the middle assessing the needs and building the capacity of a community to strategically plan and implement data-driven solutions. Other roles that a social worker can assume are: enabler or facilitator, social planner, teacher or educator, researcher, advocate, which means defending the client's interests and advocating on their behalf , as well as the role of activist or lobbyist, who aims to change social policies, services and institutions, laws, regulations, values, etc. in order to gain rights for certain disadvantaged groups of people.

Among other contributions, various techniques for implementing roles have been developed and perfectioned in this model, such as modelling and identification, logical discussion, raising awareness of one's actions and other people's behaviour, orienting and giving advice, encouraging, etc. In order to succeed in applying all these techniques, a positive atmosphere of the meetings between the social worker and the client is needed, the latter being given the freedom to express any kind of feelings and thoughts. The social worker must offer understanding and support, convey confidence in the client's abilities, and show patience, reflection of the messages received, respect, and active listening (Rodat, 2019: 146).

It should be noted that the effectiveness of applying various intervention and role implementation methods and techniques is influenced by the client's values and beliefs, the nature of the relationship that has been built between the social worker and the client, and the conditions that are required to solve the problem and achieve change.

Conclusion

Values play an essential role in people's lives, as they constantly guide decisions and actions. Respect for the values of people and groups is a fundamental principle in social work, and this is reflected in most theoretical models of social work intervention that have been developed over time in this field. Thus, since the early twentieth

century, psychoanalytic therapy, which was also taken into social work, encouraged the understanding and seeking of explanations in the personality of the person listened to. Moreover, as the therapeutic communities are concerned, one principle is that common values should be among the main attributes of such communities.

Within the systemic perspective, which became a dominant theoretical view in social work in the second half of the 20th century, especially in the 1970s, the theory of ecological systems, also called the theory of human ecology, considers that people constantly adapt to the multitude of changes made within the interactions with the environment. According to this theory, social workers must pay attention not only to the individual, but also to all the other systems with which the individual interacts, such as the macrosystem, that is, the society and culture in which the individual lives, involving cultural values and norms, beliefs and attitudes, ideologies, prejudices, mentalities, customs, thus, all the cultural constants of social systems.

The radical perspective, another theoretical approach that, alongside the systemic one, became influential in social work in the 1970s, has led to the development of transformational and emancipatory theories, which emphasized the need to promote a new social order. One principle of radical social work practice (de Maria, 1992) is that the basis of social work is humanity, and no political or theoretical position should hold the monopoly on the values that support this goal. Structuralist, critical, feminist and anti-discrimination theories are theoretical approaches that promote the value of equity in society, proposing viewpoints and active measures to combat discrimination, racism, oppression, subjugation, and social injustice. Some of these theories aim at empowering people to overcome barriers in achieving goals and gaining access to services. Moreover, radical theoretical models have contributed to the development of useful and effective methods of intervention in social work, such as ways of working with the clients and/or for the benefit of them, like group work, advocating against the exclusion, empowerment through self-help and working with groups.

In the humanistic perspective, another influential theoretical view in social work, the social worker's approach should be non-directive, tolerant, involving empathy, active listening, and even friendship (Rodat, 2020: 14). According to this theoretical viewpoint, social workers do not make value judgements about clients, but accept them solely as they are. The human being is the supreme value, itself a self-purpose, and not a means. Humanism is also associated with democracy, because it stresses the confidence in people's capacity to value and participate together in controlling their own destinies.

Another important direction of intervention in social work has been inspired by the constructivist movement developed in the social sciences. In the constructivist perspective, the world is made up of institutions, norms, customs, values, ideas or opinions that precede situations, and that is why the social actors' competences are important in making sense of these situations. Constructivist theories applied in social work, such as communication theory and narrative theory, have developed concrete models of intervention in social work practice. One of the early phases of intervention should be, according to this theoretical framework, the identification of the client's values, a particularly important step both for understanding and defining the problem and for finding appropriate solutions.

Finally, the casework models, such as crisis intervention theory, task-centred theory, and problem-solving model, developed since the 1960s based on the social work practice, have proposed concise, structured and concentrated intervention processes. One of the fundamental criteria stipulated by these theoretical models for setting intervention objectives is that they should be in line with the values of the person or group being assisted. The intervention should include clear steps to be followed, some of them specifying respecting clients' values as a basis for identifying and defining problems, analysing the feelings and encouraging self-disclosure, ensuring client's safety, and providing support.

In conclusion, focusing on values is a basic sequence in the communication between social worker and client, and is fundamental in all social contexts involved in the practice of social work. This is emphasized, as outlined above, by most theoretical and practical intervention models in this field.

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