

# **Serving the individual**

## **1- Serving the Individual:**

The credit for the emergence and progress of the individual service and its crystallisation into a specific scientific framework goes to the American researcher Mary Richmond, who published her famous book "Social Diagnosis" in 1917. After that, individualised service evolved to become what it is now.

It is the first method that emerged in social service, as it was initially formed in the face of spontaneous individual services. It was characterised by improvisation and randomness as it was practiced by relatives, influential people and the elderly in places of worship such as churches and mosques, as well as money houses. Until the emergence in the 17th century of the Poor Laws in Britain, which led to the emergence of correctional and service institutions with various functions, such as the visiting nurse, the master of charity, the school visitor, etc.

It is the process of translating psychological and behavioural concepts into important skills used by social service professionals to help individuals and families resolve internal, interpersonal, social, economic and environmental issues through face-to-face relationships. Many social workers consider (serving the individual) as a synonym for psychotherapeutic social work, so we note that it has known a remarkable development with the progress of psychiatry, especially the emergence of the psychoanalytic method, which helped to pay attention to the personality of the client or individual as well as the surrounding social environment. The definitions of this text have varied, the most important of which we mention:

- Helen Perlman's definition in 1957: He considered individual service as a process practised in social institutions to help individuals to effectively cope with the problems that hinder the performance of their social functions.
- Abdel Fattah Othman defines it as a process that relies on knowledge and skill to help individuals and their families maximise their ability to cope with obstacles to perform their social functions within the framework of the organisation's philosophy.(2)

As for Fatima Al-Harouni's definition, he considers serving the individual as the social work profession's way of helping the maladjusted individual who falls

within its field. This is done by utilising personal energies and the environment to correct his adaptation.(3)

As a general conclusion, individual service can be defined as one of the methods in social work used by the social worker with the intention of helping the individual to adapt to himself and the environment in which he lives.

## **2- Characteristics of individual service:**

The characteristics of the individual's service can be identified in the following points:

1- Serving the individual is a method that has fixed foundations reached by individual service scientists or researchers in sociology, psychology and other sciences.

1- It deals with one individual and considers him/her as an individual. Therefore, the methods of dealing with it differ from one individual to another according to what suits him within the general framework of the profession.

3- Social service clients, despite their differences, share one characteristic: they suffer from the existence of issues that hinder their progress in society, which prompted them to resort to social service organisations.

4- The individual's problem is the result of the interaction of his personality with the surrounding environment.

5- Believing that the individual possesses latent powers such as intelligence, intellect and determination, and relying on these factors by employing them to the maximum degree in order to solve the client's problem and help him achieve his happiness.

6- - Individual service relies on the direct relationship between the social worker and the client through a professional relationship that is materialised through a series of interviews.

7- This method is practised by specialists who are theoretically and practically prepared for this purpose.

8- The individual's service is practised through organisations that have their own therapeutic objectives without forgetting the preventive aspect.

9- The individual service has its own professional principles and ethical values that determine the work style of the specialist.

10- The treatment process in individual counselling involves influencing the client and his/her environment.

### **3- The rules of individual counselling:**

They can be considered the same principles on which social work is based:

1- The professional relationship: It is the process of professional interaction that arises between the social worker and the client. This relationship ends with the realisation of the individual's goals and the resolution of his/her problem. Therefore, it is a temporary relationship in which feelings and especially ideas interact, during which the client feels comfortable and confident in the specialist, and is free from fear and anxiety, which helps in the success of the treatment process.

2- Acceptance: This means accepting the client regardless of his/her condition, appearance and behaviour, because he/she is basically suffering from an issue and needs help to overcome it. The therapist must be tolerant and willing to help clients regardless of their gender, religion, or appearance. However, this does not mean that deviant social values or deviant client behaviour should be accepted.

3- - Self-determination: It consists of giving the responsible client the ability to act freely in his/her own affairs inside and outside the organisation, as well as the right to make the decision to accept or reject the organisation's services. This is achieved by pushing the client to participate in solving his/her problem and expressing his/her opinion on it, and even participating in developing a treatment plan and applying it. This helps to develop the social and psychological aspect of the customer. However, this rule and principle does not apply to the cases of children, the mentally impaired and the mentally ill.

4- Confidentiality: This is a sensitive point in the individual's relationship with the therapist, so the latter must instil confidence in the client's psyche from the very beginning of the relationship. This will help in obtaining the right information as the owner of the issue. In addition, the organisation providing the service should keep its clients' files in a safe place and only allow access to them with the clients' consent. It is also important to ensure that the location of the meeting between the two parties is out of earshot of the other parties in order to increase the customer's comfort and reassurance. This principle excludes cases of contagious disease, negligent parents and dangerous criminals who threaten the security of society.

## **- Steps to serve the individual:**

The social worker's work in his/her relationship with the individual takes place in three basic stages:

A- Study: This is the process of collecting information about the client and the issue he/she is suffering from. This is done through various interviews that the social worker conducts with the client, as well as visits to the client's home so that there is greater friction between the two parties. We rely on various sources that may clarify the client's issue, such as documents, family, friends, co-workers and supervisors, doctors, lawyers and psychologists. This stage is based on the therapist's ability to observe, listen, comment and then ask questions.

It is noteworthy that the questions at this stage are not only based on knowing the client's personality and his/her problem, but also the client's surroundings or the so-called study areas such as family, school, housing, neighbourhood, work and economic conditions, etc. In the end, the social research form or social history of the client is developed, which provides us with all the information about the client, which is studied and examined by the specialist before any interview or meeting with the client.

B- Diagnosis: This is the professional opinion reached by the social worker after being exposed to all the information about the client and the causes of his/her problem. This stage is mainly based on (the specialist's objectivity in analysing the facts without bias, so that the strengths and weaknesses of the client's personality emerge and rely on them in developing an appropriate solution to the client's problem).

In general, this stage provides answers to the following questions:

What is the problem? What are the factors causing it? What is the relationship of the factors to each other? What are the stages of the problem since its occurrence? What aspects need to be changed and how do we bring about this change? What is the client's capacity and ability to change? How willing is the client to participate in bringing about change, and what are his capabilities that need to be supported and utilised?

C- Treatment: It is represented by the efforts and services provided to the client, which can bring about a desirable change in his attitude and enable him to achieve a state of social harmony that satisfies him and the society in which he lives. Since treatment can only take place after the study and diagnosis of the client and the

environment in which he lives, which has a major role in the emergence of the issue, treatment is always divided into two main types:

- Environmental therapy: This treatment is directed at the circumstances surrounding the client, such as family, school, work and friends, and is done in two ways:
  - Direct (hands-on) services: These are services that are provided directly to the client from the organisation or from environmental resources, such as a grant, assistance in obtaining a job or housing, or placement in an appropriate institution to resolve the issue. These services may have a positive impact in addressing the issue.
  - Indirect services: These are those that aim to change the attitude of those around the client, who have a role in causing the issue or can play a role in the therapeutic process: For example, modifying the family's attitude towards the child or the husband's attitude towards his wife and vice versa.
- Self-directed therapy: It is the treatment directed to the client based on the components of his physical, psychological, mental and social personality to remove the factors that hinder the individual's adaptation to society, such as treating some diseases, modifying his thoughts and attitudes, discovering his abilities and working to utilise them. This is achieved through various methods such as professional relationship, elimination and alleviation of anxiety, maturity, etc.

### **Reference list :**

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