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Human services: a discussion paper

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**Faculty of Health and Human Sciences
School of Community Studies
Centre for Disability Research & Development
Social Research and Development Report No. 43**

**HUMAN SERVICES:
*A DISCUSSION PAPER***

Dr David Wiles



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**CENTRE FOR DISABILITY RESEARCH
& DEVELOPMENT**

Social Research and Development Report No. 43

**HUMAN SERVICES:
A DISCUSSION PAPER**

**EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY**

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FOREWORD

Edith Dircksey Cowan (1861-1932) made a lifelong commitment to community service. While she is best remembered for being the first woman elected to an Australian parliament in 1921, her contributions to social justice and the human services extend well beyond her parliamentary career. The many notable endeavours with which Edith Cowan was associated include: the formation of the Children's Protection Society and the establishment of the Children's Court in 1906; the first State maternity hospital; day nurseries for children of working mothers, and infant health centres. Her Women's Legal Status Bill opened membership of the legal profession to women; the Guidance of Infants Act gave deserted wives access to the courts for child maintenance and she fought for the appointment of women Justices of the Peace.

Edith Cowan University continues the commitment of its namesake to the field of human services. The University was the first Australian university to offer a degree in Human Services. Programs in aged studies, children studies, women's studies and youth work are available through the School of Community Studies. A course for Justices of the Peace has been recently introduced.

David Wiles has contributed to the academic development of the human service field at the University for more than ten years. While he has a special interest in services for the aged, David has been able to conceptualise the provision of human services in Australia from the broadest perspective. In his latest monograph David provides us with a rich historical overview of the field and builds a model for the analysis of the diverse set of interrelated activities subsumed under the rubric of 'Human Services'. Through his scholarly efforts we are introduced to the multidimensional nature of the field in an Australian context. Yet again, David has made an erudite contribution which will be appreciated by scholars and students with an interest in the field.

Rod Underwood
Professor of Human Services
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13 November 1997

ABSTRACT

Human services is an emergent field of study and work in Australia. Its definition is complex, needing continuing theoretical and empirical clarification. Despite the contemporary decline of the Australian welfare state, human services has emerged in cultural congruence with historic Australian notions of a 'fair go', of social equity, and of social egalitarianism. Human services constitutes a nascent profession, which - in the main - helps people with problems, particularly including members of the social 'underclass'. With much of its origins in volunteerism and the voluntary sector, human service organisational theory is now developing, and is helping workers and students to understand agency environments. Human services draws upon a variety of practice models, but the generic 'problem-solving' methodology applies across all its fields of service. Thus human service interventions seek to alleviate immediate problems, such as locating resources or addressing crises, mainly through counselling and short-term therapy. However, human services also includes longer term case management, along with sweeping social development in its professional agendas. Arising out of present issues and challenges, in many ways the future of Australian human services remains open to speculation.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCING HUMAN SERVICES

Human services is a recent field of study and professional work in Australia, and at present the term 'human services' still tends to elicit puzzled debate rather than provide definitional clarity. Even in North America, where human services has been well accepted for one quarter of a century, definitional questions still arise for beginning students embarking upon their formal university studies in human service education (Woodside & McClam, 1994, p.1). Thus this booklet provides an overview of Australian human services for students according to the themes of its context, players, auspices, models, and interventions.

First, human services will be considered in terms of its 'context', its contemporary definition and historical emergence. Second, the exploration of human services will occur in terms of its 'players', the clients and workers who participate within its arena of agencies and communities. Third, the agency 'auspices' of human services are considered in terms of the 'organisational theory' pertaining to the human services along with the 'voluntary' origins and character of much within the present field of service. Fourth, the theories and therapies or mental 'models' which underpin the human services enterprise are examined to delineate its intellectual and professional processes. Fifth, human service 'interventions' are explicated in relation to individual counselling and crisis intervention along with collectivist community intervention, demonstrating the broad range of human services concerns. Finally, the scope of Australian human services is summarised in relation to some theoretical and practical challenges which must be addressed, so as to suggest possible futures.

SECTION 2: DEFINING HUMAN SERVICES

The first point to note about the definition of 'human services' is its complexity. This term first emerged in the North American intellectual and practice context of the 1960s and 1970s. On the Australian scene, Kim and Underwood (1991) suggest that human service is about 'meeting human needs'. Furthermore, according to Kim (1991) human services may be conceptualised as a response to 'problems arising from being human'.

The North American 'founding parents' of human services demonstrate additional approaches to its definition. Mehr (1988) writes about human services as being principally addressed to people falling 'outside the mainstream' of society. Thus human services is often concerned with people identified as belonging to the social 'underclass'. In an analogous way, Woodside and McClam (1994) describe human services as being about helping people to meet their 'problems in living'. Interestingly, everybody at some time or other will experience such 'problems in living' within the human life cycle, so the suggestion may be that the agenda of human services includes everyone! Another view is that derived from Harold McPheeters (quoted in Woodside & McClam, 1994, p.15) that human services is concerned with 'psychosocially dysfunctioning people', demonstrating a more 'psychological' approach, that is, seeking to help individuals to adjust to their problems in a favourable manner. So that is similar to a traditional 'welfare' methodology, face-to-face counselling of those in some type of personal trouble.

Human services may also be defined from an 'organisational' perspective, and according to Hasenfeld and English (1978) such human service organisations include concerns with socialisation, social control, and social integration. Obviously such concerns span very different types of roles and functions, from the educative role of 'socialisation', through the policing role of 'social control', to the happier and constructive role of 'social integration'.

Moving to the more recent Australian context, Associate Professor Michael Lee (1996) of Edith Cowan University makes the following definitional suggestions:

Human services has a much broader definition than previously understood. I think it means a number of things, one being about the service provided for the community largely through the non-government agencies, the services are - and I don't like the word 'welfare' - but they are providing for people who aren't able to sustain themselves, people who have some sort of special need in the community. So it's a broad ranging definition which would go all the way from employment schemes through to support services for people in institutions, correctional services, residential institutions, and so on.... I think that human services incorporates any sort of work that improves the life of people in the community.

Human services, as well, can be considered as an emergent area. It has appeared in reaction to extant disciplines and professions. For instance, psychology and psychologists have been around for decades, and the notion has been around for as long that the best way of addressing problems of individual adaptation is to 'talk them out' to a professional counsellor on a weekly basis, possibly for years, but human services suggests that for us there are limits to the 'talking cure'. Human services is much more focussed on immediate solutions to the dramatic and pressing problems experienced by the client in distress.

According to the literature and our experience of graduates in the field, the human service worker employs a cluster of values, knowledge, and skills which can be used from agency setting to agency setting, and from target group to target group, and further, human services may be seen as an emerging 'profession' or occupational group. Of course, there are contradictory arguments about whether such increasing 'professionalisation' is to be welcomed or lamented (Sinclair, 1991). The human service literature also exhibits some ambivalence about the issue of professionalisation. On the one hand, the special characteristic of human services - at least in its origins - is said to be its relative closeness to the clients, unrestrained by the protocols and formalities and distance of professional boundaries. On the other hand, writers in human services document proudly the emerging sense of 'discipline' and 'profession' as being praiseworthy in promoting effective service

to clients, along with improving the career path opportunities of the new 'professionals' (Neukrug, 1994; Woodside & McClam, 1994). If this trend continues in Australia, then perhaps we may anticipate events such as 'Australian Human Service Workers Conferences', guidelines like a 'Code of Ethics for Human Service Workers', along with the establishment of such academic or professional publications as an 'Australian Journal of Human Services'.

In defining Australian human services, then, we see that at present such definition is no easy matter, but we look to its North American intellectual and practice origins and see the discipline assisting people, that is, individuals and communities, towards change through a 'problem-solving' approach, with the suggestion that human services itself constitutes an emerging helping profession.

SECTION 3: HELPING IN HISTORY

It is interesting to observe that the historical origins of modern human services and community work lie in the previous 'charity' sector. The word 'charity' seems to have acquired a sense of stigma over time, perhaps due to the past image of the middle-class, 'busybody' charity worker who sought to 'help', but did so in an offensive, judgemental, patronising, status-seeking, and ineffective manner. However, in its original sense of 'love and care' for others, charity is obviously a laudable social trait, and it is worth noting that present mainstream, western human services derives much of its origins from the historical 'church and charity' sector.

Remembering our historical origins in Australia, at any rate since white settlement two centuries ago, this nation was first established as a gaol (Hughes, 1988). This unpleasant fact suggests that the convicts and their keepers brought along their 'cultural baggage', ideas about society and social welfare, from the Old World to this country. In this context Caroline Chisholm (1808-1877) arguably the 'founding mother' of Australian human services, pursued her goals of social justice and social reform (Burdon, 1993). Now back in Christianity and even further back in Judaism, there was a cultural and social recognition that the poor, the aged, the disabled, the widows, the orphans, and the inmates of gaols had not necessarily entirely created their own miseries, and even if they had should still be the subjects of welfare concern. While not transplanted directly to the Australian colonies, the English Poor Law of 1601 is often cited as the first official acceptance that society was in some way responsible for the plight of the poor, and that the State had a moral responsibility to provide programs of relief. In Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was increasing intellectual speculation about what should be done about the social problems generated by the new industrial societies. Thus Voltaire and Marx and Weber and so on developed theories of society, of social reform and social revolution.

Charity began to get organised. A most interesting pioneer group of this time was the Charity Organisation Society (COS). This group sought to dispense social welfare handouts in a 'scientific' manner to those assessed to be the 'deserving' poor, that is, the concern was with the efficient and economical distribution of scarce philanthropic resources. So the welfare 'goodies' were not distributed according to need or request, but rather were dispensed selectively to those judged to be the 'deserving' and 'eligible'. Conversely, those assessed as 'undeserving' were not considered to be suitable subjects for assistance. At the same time in the North American context, Woodside and McClam (1994) draw attention to the Settlement House workers, those who assisted the migrants in their adjustment to American society, as the forerunners of modern social work and human services. In a similar style, a local project funded by the Edith Cowan University is exploring the past experience of Jewish settlement in Perth, so as to draw out the implications for this local aspect of Australian human service history (Anderson, Wiles, & Weatherill, forthcoming). Now over two decades ago, Piven and Cloward (1971) in their classic text on economy and poverty documented the generation of a social underclass of unemployed or underemployed people, as an inherent and inevitable dynamic within modern capitalist societies.

It is also noteworthy to reflect that over the past century, Australia - in international terms - has tended to go backwards in relation to its social welfare ideas and institutions. Thus, one hundred years ago, Australia, along with New Zealand, was considered as a 'social laboratory', exploring new ways to care for socially disadvantaged people. Across real class barriers, a common culture existed which proclaimed that 'fair play', 'equity', and 'social justice' should mediate social relations (Ward, 1970; Macintyre, 1981). The emerging Union movement grew against the backdrop of antagonism to authority in all its forms, a culture of collectivism and egalitarianism, along with the behavioural evidence of the nineties as to the realities of class conflict between 'bosses' and 'workers'. A century ago the concept of the Australian 'social laboratory' was that in this new country, favoured with natural resources and pleasant climate, far from the entrenched social conflicts and economic dislocations and class struggles of the 'old world', equitable and progressive social policies and programs could be established and developed. Unfortunately, though, Australia is not at the international forefront of social experimentation nowadays.

Looking back into history, then, we see that across the centuries there have always been social reformers in existence who have cared for the socially disadvantaged sectors of the community, though sometimes these 'charity' workers were rather less than client-centred and non-judgemental in their approaches to the poor. The history and overview of Australian human services have been discussed elsewhere (Wiles, 1996; Underwood & Lee, 1996). Despite its unpromising origins as a gaol, early Australian social policies were pioneering and full of potential, as shown in the early establishment of an Old Age Pension system. However, by the mid-twentieth century large pockets of poverty across society still remained to be documented by the *Henderson Poverty Inquiry* (1975), even before our Welfare State began to retreat under the impact of economic rationalism from the early eighties. This follows an international trend away from the caring philosophies and programs of the formal Welfare State (Graycar & Jamrozik, 1993; Wearing & Berreen, 1994; Ife, 1995; Jones, 1996; Healy, 1997). Thus the question of historical 'progress' remains open, as it seems that Australia is now set upon reducing the established levels of social protection for its citizens, suggesting that issues of 'eligibility' for 'deserving' clients will become even more pronounced, as welfare entitlements are reduced in the context of expanding social problems and contracting social welfare resources.

SECTION 4: HUMAN SERVICE CLIENTS

Human service workers address their professional attention to assisting individuals who derive from a range of target groups in society, those at whom intervention is 'aimed'. Debates exist about the best terminology to describe the 'clients' or 'consumers' of human services. For instance, the term 'consumer' may imply a commercial aspect while the category 'client' has overtones of dependency. Probably no perfect term exists, though Woodside and McClam utilise the concept of 'client' throughout their text. Similarly, Norman (1988, pp.85-86) argues for the term 'client':

The most frequently used term in human services for those who receive services is client. It connotes a relationship of dependence on the case manager in relation to professional knowledge and access to resources but generally has no negative connotation. The term consumer of services is used where development of increased client independence is the major service goal as in independent living programs. It connotes a more egalitarian relationship...

Human problems may arise according to four main themes, these being problems of a 'developmental' type, those of a 'situational' nature, those of meeting 'hierarchical' needs, and those emerging due to 'societal change' (Woodside & McClam, 1994). Each one of us as an individual necessarily deals with the fairly predictable 'developmental' changes and problems arising out of the maturational and ageing processes of the human life cycle. Some problems of course, cannot be anticipated, and these 'situational' problems carry an element of being arbitrary, surprising, and unpredictable in nature. Yet other problems emerge from the difficulty of meeting the 'hierarchical' needs of the individual, the notion - following Maslow - that after meeting certain basic requirements each person attempts to clamber towards the 'self-actualised' peak of the psychological pyramid. Further problems for individuals are generated by society at large. An example of such 'societal change' is the current national level of unemployment, caused through economic restructuring and governmental inattention and community unconcern, but creating severe problems of living for individuals in terms of access to resources and opportunities.

Interestingly, there is by no means a 'fixed agenda' of social problems, but the contemporary agenda emerges out of the existence and visibility of various social issues, the advocacy efforts of welfare lobby groups, media attention, and the political arena (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). In any pre-election year, for example, the politicians all become highly concerned about the problems experienced by disadvantaged sectors of society, and the sincerity of such concern is most intense in marginal electoral seats! So out of this competitive intellectual and publicity arena only a few social issues gain attention as the dominant 'social problems' of the day.

The corollary of this situation is, of course, the existence of 'hidden' social problems that for whatever reason do not gain media attention, provoke academic debate, or generate public interest. For example, an emergent social problem - at least in terms of these perceptions - is that of 'elder abuse'. Though books were published in America on elder abuse since the turn of the eighties, and though there is even an overseas academic journal (*Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*) on this very topic, the subject only began to gain much local attention a decade later, with seminars, research, and publicity (Kingsley, 1992). So questions arise about the very existence, incidence, and recognition of any particular 'social problem'.

Human service workers address a range of problems within their client and target groups, including everything from individual distress through to social poverty. In terms of working with individual clients, human service workers often draw upon an Eriksonian view of the life cycle of humankind. In Erikson's theoretical formulation of 'epigenetic' development, over the life cycle humans pass through some eight stages of growth and development, with each stage needing successful resolution for constructive and positive adaptation (Erikson, 1977; Peterson, 1996). These individual human service clients, then, may be suffering from problems related to their point in chronological development, or

problems with activity, or else problems related to personal adjustment. Sometimes, in the case of 'involuntary' clients, there may be strong resistance to the helping efforts of the worker. This suggests that the more 'peaceful' jobs in the human services industry are those which serve 'voluntary' clients who may be more grateful and gracious about the intervention. In any case, in assisting clients the human service worker could be said to be concerned with enhancing the 'problem-solving' capacities of the client (McClam & Woodside, 1994), and also oriented to preventive initiatives, as reflected in the journal entitled *Prevention in Human Services*.

In review of clients, then, the human service worker assists such consumers from a range of social groups in dealing with a great variety of problems. Some clients have problems related to individual adjustment, while other problems are generated through societal change. Interestingly, the public 'agenda' of social problems is subject to fashion, and emerges out of the turmoil of competing interest groups, media activity, and social and political debates. In general, human service workers seek to 'empower' their clients and consumer groups, through identifying and strengthening their 'problem-solving' capacities.

SECTION 5: HUMAN SERVICE WORKERS

The term 'human service worker', then, is often used to describe this newly emerging helping professional. The human service worker is a 'generalist', an agent who can move about from agency to agency, and from target group to target group, constantly improving the repertoire of intervention skills. Thus an interesting and creative aspect of human service work is the possibility it suggests of constant self-fulfilment through service to others in the wider community. This vocational role has the potential for continuing personal and professional self-improvement. Other motivations for human service work include the sense of identity provided, the need for a livelihood - any livelihood - and the people-meeting character of the work. Human service work though, is not very lucrative, at least in general and at present.

A range of key values in human services can be identified, that is, implicit values without which it would not be able to function at all effectively. Across modern human service agencies the key cluster of essential values includes 'acceptance', 'tolerance', 'individuality', 'self-determination', and 'confidentiality' (Woodside & McClam, 1994). While these common or shared values obtain across the human service organisations as the 'conventional practice wisdom', it is also clear that the personal values or 'world view' of the human service worker will shape the helping process. What is required is an awareness of how personal value systems may influence the perception of clients and the subsequent worker intervention. Thus increasing levels of self-awareness, developing throughout the professional career path, should enhance the effectiveness of the human service worker.

An interesting theoretical tension exists within much of this human service literature. The story-line of these books (Mehr, 1988; Woodside & McClam, 1994) suggests that the distinctive quality and value of human services in the past has been its closeness to consumers, its lack of professionalisation and professional distance, almost its amateur aspect. Yet as these texts proceed the stories seem to change somewhat, and the increasing 'professionalisation' of human services is portrayed as an inevitable, positive, and progressive development, which should be promoted by educators and field practitioners alike.

The human services literature suggests that graduates emerging from courses such as the Edith Cowan award should be called 'entry-level professionals'. In contrast, many workers in a lot of the local agencies have been around for so long that their voluntary or career paths have preceded the contemporary drives towards more formal education within the human services workforce. The issue of 'credentialism' arises, and while training and certification in human services education is presumably 'a good thing', the question emerges as to whether Australia is currently heading towards an obsessive concern with 'paper qualifications'. In psychology, for example, the Master level degree has recently become the minimum practice requirement. One can foresee that at some time in the future the minimum qualification for running one of our little community-based human service agencies will be a similar level award. Whether such a scenario amounts to appropriate preparation or excessive credentialism remains open to some debate.

Reviewing human service workers, then, the field shows an uneasy balance between the history of 'amateur' helping and the rising concern with qualification and certification. This tension will continue as educational institutions across Australia continue to expand their formal 'human service' course offerings. In the course of their education, the human service workers are sensitised to the role of personal, professional, and organisational values in the helping process, within core values such as client 'self-determination'. Human service work provides various intrinsic motivations, meeting people, helping others, reforming society, and so forth, which suggests that daily work can also enhance self-fulfilment and continuing personal growth.

SECTION 6: HUMAN SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

It is interesting to reflect on the human service organisations as a subset of the much broader concerns of organisational theory in general. Now the emergence of 'bureaucracy' or large-scale organisation is usually suggested as an outcome of earlier social and historical forces that brought about the sweeping changes of modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, and secularisation within the western world (Giddens, 1989; Ife, 1995). Arguably, the human service organisations are motivated by rather different considerations from the commercial ethos of organisations such as Coca Cola or General Motors or the Myer Emporium. Thus Martin (1997) identifies the distinctive features of human service organisations, but also suggests that they are increasingly under pressure within the turbulent economic and societal environment of the nineties.

Most usually the human services are delivered within the context of bureaucracy, as the structure for 'getting the job done', whether such organisations are local or voluntary or else perhaps national and statutory in character. In general terms the human service organisations are usually thought to be concerned with 'people-processing', while providing a 'service' of some type, and are always directed towards some concept of improving the 'welfare' of the clients (Hasenfeld & English, 1978; Donovan & Jackson, 1991). Obviously there is some variety within the understandings of 'welfare' or 'people-processing', as such disparate agencies could range from 'adoptions' through to 'corrections', including very different types of clients and approaches.

It is only recently that there has been anything much in the way of Australian literature focussing upon the human service organisations. Jones and May (1992) suggest that such agencies may be viewed according to no less than ten differing theoretical perspectives. Within their theoretical overview, the classical Weberian understanding of 'bureaucracy' underlies a range of subsequently developed schools of theory. Some schools stand in opposition, for instance, 'scientific management' emphasises productivity and labour control while 'human relations' concentrates upon the social and emotional underpinnings of work. While 'decision' theorists analyse the way in which organisations may make less than optimal choices, theorists of a 'systems or ecological' persuasion attempt to decipher the broader context of organisational operations. Along with the decline of the welfare state and the contingent rise of internationalisation, deregulation, and privatisation, 'market' theory suggesting that allocation decisions made by organisations and society should be determined by the abstract forces of the 'free market' has gained a certain popularity in the eighties and nineties.

Jones and May (1992) also identify four schools of 'radical' theory arising in opposition to such a purely market orientation, these being models that could be described as 'neo-Marxian', 'feminist', 'aboriginal', or those operating from a 'political economy' framework. Thus theoretical diversity is characteristic not only of thought and practice in the Human Services, but also in the ways of conceptualising and understanding its service delivery organisations. The implication for students of the human services is that critical analysis is necessary in terms of understanding such organisations in both theory and practice, particularly in the context of contemporary agencies which are often under-resourced and overburdened.

SECTION 7: VOLUNTEERISM IN HUMAN SERVICES

The character of human services often draws upon its original history in the 'church and charity' and philanthropic sector, which predated the establishment of the more modern formal and statutory human services. On both the international and Australian scene many of the present 'voluntary' agencies were originally created by networks of concerned citizens or parents who formed support or advocacy groups on behalf of some designated client target group or other, so as to better address their level of unmet needs. Taking seniors as an example, it was a meeting of concerned citizens held in Perth on 16 June 1959 that established the 'Old People's Welfare Council of Western Australia', the 'peak' advocacy organisation for community-dwelling seniors in this State ever since, and which was - following national trends - later retitled as the 'Council on the Ageing' (Hooper, 1990, p.1).

Along with the notion of the 'voluntary' sector in human services come the concepts of 'volunteering' and 'volunteerism' which emphasise that such work is done by choice, without remuneration, and underpinned by a sense of community belonging and contribution (Siver, 1990; Kupke, 1991; Noble, 1991). Looking way back into human service history we find the original concept of 'friendly visiting', where the charitable visitors saw the clients and their families within their humble abodes. Of course, some of these visitors were not so 'friendly', but were rather patronising and sermonising in style, so that the term 'charity worker' came to acquire a sense of stigma. Also from these earlier times we note the careful differentiation between those perceived to be the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' clients, a distinction still implicit within many assessment procedures down to the present day. Similarly, times past saw the emergence of the quaintly-termed 'indoor' and 'outdoor' relief, which nowadays would be described more in terms of 'residential care' when the client is collectively housed with others so as to meet their common needs, or 'community care' where the client may be visited at home or else attend a local human service agency to obtain their rations, payment, or service.

Following the welfare practice of the times, the church and charity sector in Australia provided relief and care for a range of client groups, and was supported financially by the colonial governments (Challen, 1996). From Federation through to 1975, State and Federal governments - in general - tended to adopt more responsibility for the condition of the people, but since that zenith in social care the Welfare State has been in retreat under the insidious impact of the doctrine of 'economic rationalism' (Graycar, 1983; Webster, 1995). In very broad terms these social and political currents can be dated back to the terms in office of Thatcher in the United Kingdom, Reagan in the United States, and Fraser in Australia.

The retreat from the Welfare State has coincided with the rise of volunteerism, particularly within the human services sector (Wiles, 1988). Furthermore, the profile of 'volunteerism' has changed in that nowadays there is a greater diversity of age, class, and gender characteristics amongst the volunteers, in contrast to the 'olden days' stereotype of the older, middle class, female volunteer (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995; Australian Council of Social Service, 1996). These co-existing community trends have combined to promote volunteerism as a 'theoretical arena' supported by academic journals such as *Voluntas* and the *Australian Journal on Volunteering*, and as a 'social movement' motivated by the understanding that community progress can be facilitated through grass-roots democracy and participation, all underpinned by the notion of the increasing 'professionalisation' of voluntary work.

Now the theory and practice of volunteerism in human services illustrate a conflict or contradiction between those who see voluntary work as 'empowerment' and others who interpret any such work as 'exploitation'. On the one hand the critics argue that community care based on volunteerism exploits people and particularly women, the unemployed, and

the retired, along with undermining the solidarity and working conditions of those in the paid welfare industry (Baldock, 1990; Stehlik, 1993; Chappell, Penning, & Behie, 1996). On the other hand the supporters of volunteerism suggest that it should be appreciated in terms of individual opportunity for self-fulfilment and social service, and as an exercise in community democracy and development (Davies, 1989; Kupke, 1991; Kingsley & Tomlins, 1992; Rosenberg-Russell, 1995).

As with many issues in the human services, then, there is no clear or easy answer to such debates. However, in the context of the continuing retreat of the Welfare State along with the surge in deinstitutionalisation, it seems that the care of our various human service target groups must be played out in relation to the voluntary sector and the associated dynamics of volunteerism.

SECTION 8: MODELS AND THEORIES

In human services, as in the wider world, as in daily life, human beings negotiate reality through reference to implicit - and sometimes explicit - 'models' and 'theories'. In this general sense, theories are mental 'maps' of our world, provisional approximations of reality, subject to expansion, revision, and rejection. Through our study and work it is important to remember that humans never achieve complete comprehension of any particular reality. So as human beings we try to grasp the 'truth' of any matter, and we keep trying, and we never quite get it, so then we try some more!

Interestingly, wider reading suggests that even in the so-called 'hard' sciences, theory is still constructed in an 'artistic' and 'subjective' way (Kuhn, 1970). Thinking about the human services in formal academic terms, Fullerton (1996, p.113) suggests that:

A theory is a coherent statement of assumptions regarding a set of phenomena that provides a basis for explanation and prediction of those phenomena.

Thus theory in the human services hopefully provides us with some rational bases for interventions with clients. In the specific sense of human services, according to Ainsworth (1993): *'theories are conceptualisations of practice wisdom'*. As an example, the work of theory-building in the human services, with specific reference to people with disabilities, is explored in a local report (Cocks, 1994).

An important point here is that as human beings we are quite capable of perceiving reality in ways which suit our personal or ideological perspectives. Furthermore, such paradigmatic rivalries are also emotively charged (Haworth, 1991). Therefore, theories are important in human services both in terms of the perception of social reality and the subsequent human services intervention.

Another aspect of the 'mental life' of human service organisations is the role of 'ideology'. This term can be taken in two quite different ways, as the 'science of ideas', or more usually in our literature as 'doctrine' or 'dogma'. Thus Pinker (1982, p.18) contrasts ideology with theory:

Theories are highly summarised versions of reality to begin with, and, when they are shielded from full exposure to the evidence of the social world, they become ideologies.

Now most human service organisations demonstrate some sort of official orthodoxy - if not ideology - a 'conventional wisdom' about how things should be done.

An example of theory and ideology is that of 'community care' in Australia. Fifteen years ago the author was studying at the (then) Social Welfare Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, when people there at the time began rushing around, and flashing the bright yellow-covered *McLeay Report* (1982), and saying: 'Oh, this is important, this is exciting!' At that time for a government report to emerge saying that too many frail aged persons were in residential care, and to argue that community services should be expanded to prevent such premature or unnecessary institutionalisation, this was brand new social theory and social policy. Nowadays, this has become the conventional wisdom and practice in aged care. Indeed, policy and provision seem to have gone to an opposite extreme, where frail seniors who might really need aged residential care cannot obtain it, due in part to much stricter 'gatekeeping' of these facilities, along with the new 'ideology' of community care which - somewhat unrealistically - wants to keep all people out of institutions.

Woodside and McClam (1994) suggest that there are three main models of helping, these being the 'medical' model, the 'public health' model, and then the 'human service' model. The medical model assumes that individual problems are based in 'sickness', so it follows that the client must be diagnosed, prescribed, and treated. In contrast, the public health model - more sociological and educational in its emphases - suggests that the environment in which individuals face common problems may need reform or restructuring. Then there is the human service model which views individuals as experiencing problems in living, and utilises 'problem-solving' as a working methodology and a goal for consumers (McClam &

Woodside, 1994). Thus human service workers employ a problem-solving methodology as they enhance the problem-solving capacities of their clients as well.

This problem-solving method also flows on to the use of 'peer therapy' and 'mutual self-help', where we are considering groups of clients in need. Peer therapy uses people of the same or similar subculture, or class, or category, to assist folk to address common problems of living. Mutual self-help uses group processes to help individuals solve their own problems and to advocate on behalf of target groups. Self-help has a 'duality' to it, though. On the one hand, mutual self-help is a 'good thing' in that clients get together, get motivated, and help each other and empower themselves. On the other hand, the existence of self-help groups can allow governments to shirk their proper responsibilities towards disadvantaged groups by saying: 'Oh, you go away and help yourselves!'

In thinking about social theory, it seems that we can only ever approximate reality in our theoretical explanations of it. However, the perception of people and problems shapes human service intervention and action. The human services intellectual arena is subject to fads and fashions, similar to the wider society, but the responsibility of teachers and practitioners in human services is to establish models of theoretical and practical utility, models that describe reality realistically and promote effective intervention. The human services model, then, uses a 'problem-solving' methodology to assist clients and reform society.

SECTION 9: HELPING THERAPIES

Human service workers employ a problem-solving technique to help clients address their problems. However, there are debates as to whether workers can claim to indulge in 'therapy'. The term 'therapy' it seems has a precise clinical usage (Bender, 1994, p.40), but also may suggest a broad interactional approach to human problems (Neukrug, 1994, p.43). Interestingly, with the professionalisation of human services, what used to be considered just 'helping behaviour' may tend more and more to be classified as 'therapy'. For example, playing music to nursing home residents is nowadays sometimes called 'music therapy', while helping clients gain reading materials is labelled 'bibliotherapy'. Olley (cited in Wiles, 1988) debunks such approaches by asserting that all many human service clients need is a 'shoulder to cry on', a 'sympathetic listener', and playfully coins the notion of 'cup of tea therapy'! Nevertheless, it is important for human service workers to have some sense of the variety of the psychotherapies, in terms of the history of helping and an awareness of appropriate referral of clients to psychological services.

Though Freud is now part of western intellectual and cultural history, debates continue about the helping theories and therapies arising out of this tradition. For the purposes of human service workers it is important to note the six common assumptions of the psychotherapies, as explicated by Mehr (1988). First, it is suggested that the emergence of problems relates to the personality of the individual. Second, the source of these problems is seen as internal to the personality, rather than being environmental in nature. Third, the past biography of the subject has a strong influence on present perceptions and behaviour. Fourth, there is the psychological concept of 'overdetermination', that behaviour becomes entrenched over time so that, for example, New Year Resolutions are notoriously difficult to keep! Fifth, there is the notion that there is an optimum personality structure within each one of us, a 'butterfly' waiting to be released. Sixth, human beings are always capable of psychological growth and development throughout the life cycle.

While human service workers do not intervene directly as clinical 'therapists', they need to be aware that there are psychological 'fashions' in the psychotherapies, in a similar way to the fluid agenda of social problems. The range of therapies includes Rogerianism, Gestalt, Reality, and Rational Emotive therapies. For instance, ten to fifteen years ago the theory of Transactional Analysis (Berne, 1979) was very popular, with workers and students buying the books and attending professional workshops on this particular helping method, yet recent course intakes have rarely heard of this approach to human problems at all! Similarly, 'family therapy' has followed a similar course of illustrating a practice gap, gaining popularity amongst practitioners, being promoted within academy and field, though perhaps waning in its present popularity. So the selection of the intervention method will be influenced by the intellectual or practice trends of the day, as well as the psychological predisposition of the therapist.

Around the field agencies of Perth, though, many of the ideas originally propounded by Carl Rogers (1976) have been absorbed into the professional ethos of how helping should be done. From Rogers derives the concept of client-centred therapy, the notion of non-directive counselling, the value of non-judgmentalism, the idea of 'holding up a mirror' to help clients perceive their real situations and options more clearly, the scope for personality reorganisation, along with the incorporation of new adaptive skills.

In helping, human service workers draw implicitly upon the broad Freudian tradition in terms of western intellectual heritage and need professional sensitivity to suggest appropriate client referral. The psychotherapies - being individualistic, intensive, and expensive - deal with the deeper aspects of client malaise, and are different in scope from the more immediate and short-term character of human service intervention. Philosophies of intervention are subject to fashion, as well as ongoing theoretical and empirical development, and a veritable 'supermarket' of therapies exists to suit practice requirements. Across most human service agencies the general Rogerian contribution can be detected in the service ideals of non-judgmentalism and client-centred intervention.

SECTION 10: CRISIS INTERVENTION

Human service workers often assist clients through 'crisis' situations. Indeed Kim (1992) asserts that as the human services field expands its general thrust includes 'counselling and face-to-face intervention'. Thus crises usually propel clients through the human service agency doorway.

It is interesting to observe that objective situations or 'problems' and subjective responses to those situations are quite different from each other. It is the emotional response to a situation that actually causes the sense of stress or crisis. Further, there is a distinction to be made between two types of crises, these being the 'developmental' and the 'situational' forms of crisis (Woodside & McClam, 1994). Developmental crises are those transitions that each one of us as an individual fairly predictably may face in the course of the unique odyssey through the human life cycle, growing up, getting an education, getting a job, getting a spouse, raising children, retiring from paid employment, preparing for death, and so on. Situational crises, in contrast, cannot be foreseen, with examples including sudden bereavement or natural disaster. Bushfires provide a dramatic Australian example, while the events of Port Arthur in 1996 demonstrate a more sinister phenomenon.

The 'crisis intervention' work seeks to identify and to enhance the problem-solving strengths and skills of the distressed client. It is important to remember that people are 'survivors', and indeed each of us is a survivor, so the human services strategy is to latch onto the competencies and capacities that have served well in the past. Thus the 'problem-solving' aspect of human service work, previously noted, applies strongly to crisis intervention theory and practice.

A recent summary of crisis intervention theory is provided by Greenstone and Leviton (1993), while a basic overview of counselling techniques suitable for human service workers may be found in Meier and Davis (1997). Crises generally have a number of common characteristics. Such situations are beyond the established coping capacities of the individual. Those suffering a crisis generally find that their 'sense' of personal control over life declines, the sense of pain or distress or anxiety increases, the sense of social support may diminish, and there may be some type of avoidance behaviour to escape the difficult situation altogether. So individuals in crisis are essentially experiencing a state of psychological disequilibrium, in situations beyond those that they have survived previously in life.

Crises, though, can be resolved in positive and adaptive ways, so the crisis intervention worker seeks to facilitate a positive, creative resolution of the crisis, so that the client emerges from the trauma as a better, stronger person. Insofar as human service crisis intervention is concerned, we are generally talking about short-term intensive intervention, and the view in the literature is that the period of client susceptibility to worker influence extends for about six weeks. More entrenched problems suggest either referral for deeper psychological intervention, or else perhaps human service case management (Applebaum & Austin, 1990; Moxley, 1990).

In crisis intervention the human service worker must assist the client towards an adaptive transcendence of the problem situation. Thus the problem-solving methodology applies to both client and worker. In a crisis situation the individual feels less 'in control' of life than usual, and more 'anxious' about the situation, leading to personal and social disequilibrium. Predictable 'developmental' crises and arbitrary 'situational' crises alike tax the coping capacities of the protagonist beyond established boundaries. Thus in working with clients the subjective meaning of any 'crisis' needs to be distinguished from its objective reality. The human service worker needs to combine sensitivity to the consumer and empathy with their life passages and contingencies in a short-term intervention program.

SECTION 11: COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

In contrast to the concept of individual crisis intervention previously explored, there is the much more proactive process of 'community intervention' or 'community development' or 'community work' (Mehr, 1988; Homan, 1994; Kenny, 1994; Ife, 1995). For instance, there are in existence many advocacy groups, that seek to reform society on behalf of their nominated targets and clients. For example, an overview of advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities is provided by Cocks and Duffy (1993). Similarly, some local government authorities employ workers known as 'community development managers'. So here is a concept of 'prevention', of reforming the social system, so that the number of persons seeking individual crisis intervention might be reduced.

Mehr (1988) distinguishes between 'limited social intervention' and 'comprehensive social intervention', and suggests that human services includes both types of work. Limited social intervention would be at the level of 'group work', where problem-solving capacities of clients could be developed through the affirmative group processes. Comprehensive social intervention is rather more ambitious, including consumer advocacy, mobilisation, and empowerment. Mehr has a sweeping vision, for instance, he suggests optimistically that the problem of 'poverty' could and should be tackled within the context of comprehensive social intervention.

Human service workers are very likely to be recruited into advocacy groups, where they make professional contributions in such areas as submission writing, political representation, research projects, or community development programs. Advocacy groups - on behalf of whatever target groups - seek to represent the disempowered, alter the distribution of social welfare resources, and facilitate mobilisation and unity of the target group.

As an example, we have already noted that the social problem of poverty is part of the reform agenda of human service, and the *Henderson Poverty Inquiry* (1975) documented that seniors constitute a significant social group living in a state of poverty. The Social Security Review of the 1980s and its examination of retirement incomes policy for the twenty-first century provides some insight into the processes of community intervention. Late in 1988, when all the Ageing advocacy groups were about to go into summer recess, the Federal Government released its report on retirement incomes policy (Foster, 1988) with the invitation for interested individuals and parties to make submissions as to what should be done on this social policy issue.

As a result the local Council on the Ageing - the peak 'ageing' body for the community-dwelling seniors - contributed to hearings on the matter as well as forwarding its views to the (then) Minister Brian Howe (Wiles, 1989; Walker, Wiles, Wilson, & Zilko, 1989). When the August 1989 Federal Budget was announced, the Government had - in the main - adopted most of the suggestions of the various social welfare lobby groups, at least in the short term. However, with the hindsight of history, it now appears that this was a case of the advocacy groups 'winning the battle, but losing the war'. Since that time the 'privatisation' of retirement incomes provision has intensified apace. In 1988 some four fifths of seniors were either totally or mainly reliant on the Age Pension, but by 1997 this proportion had dropped to two thirds of seniors. Thus nowadays seniors cannot rely upon the former 'intergenerational contract' to provide for their financial, health, or welfare care, and furthermore, young Australians must plan towards their eventual retirement relying entirely upon themselves (McCallum & Geiselhart, 1996; Olsberg, 1996). So in review it appears that with regard to social justice considerations, retirement income security for the average Australian had reached a 'high point' by the time of the *Foster Report*, but that sadly it has been regressing ever since (Wiles, 1993).

In reviewing community intervention, the professional concept is to fix societal problems so as to reduce the emergence of individual cases of distress. Human service workers are often involved within advocacy groups, which seek to fight for, mobilise, and empower their

client populations. Human services hopes to ameliorate societal problems at the level of group work (limited social intervention) and at the level of social engineering (comprehensive social intervention). Thus human services deals with the range of problems from individual counselling through to widespread social reformism, as for example, in seeking a solution to the perennial problem of poverty.

SECTION 12: REVIEWING HUMAN SERVICES

Futurology is a difficult 'science', but it is clear that the future of human services in this country will grow out of its present realities. Those realities have been explored in this paper in terms of five main themes of human services, its 'context', its 'players', its 'auspices', its 'models', and its 'interventions'.

First, human services was seen in view of its 'context', its definition and history. The definition of human services is not entirely easy, as it is only a decade since the term has been used at all widely in Australia. Such definition emerges out of educational and agency auspices. In Western Australia, the Edith Cowan University has labelled its course clearly as 'human services', while in employment advertisements local agencies now use the term quite frequently. In regard to its intellectual origins human services seems something of a North American import, which has transplanted smoothly to the local scene. The protagonists of human services see it as a new and emerging profession filling a market niche, and addressing human needs neglected by the more traditional helping professions. So the definition of Australian human services will be an ongoing development into the twenty-first century.

Reflection on the past assists speculation about future societal trends. In noting the 'history' of Australian human services, a mix of general western background and specifically Australian context was observed. Of course, across the centuries, and amongst the range of countries and cultures, there have always been some idealistic social reformers and interpersonal helpers seeking to ameliorate the plight of those in pain or poverty. In the west the philanthropist and charity worker provided prototypes for modern human services and community development.

In Australia in earlier times, the 'social laboratory' metaphor expressed the extant social idealism that in this new country, blessed with fine climate and abounding in natural resources, far from the politics and pollution and class struggles of the old European order, a progressive political culture of redistribution and egalitarianism would provide a 'fair go' for every citizen to enjoy the good things of life. This idealism and egalitarianism was illustrated in the design and delivery of an Age Pension in 1909, early in comparative international terms. Australia, though, has failed to deliver its initial social policy promise as shown in the 1975 *Henderson Poverty Inquiry* which found that many sectors of Australian citizens were not included in the 'lucky country'.

Since the start of the 1980s there has been a general international retreat away from the principles and philosophies of the Welfare State. For example, the Social Security Review examined the range of beneficiaries with a view to more effective provision, and always with an eye to tighter targeting. Similarly, the shift to privatisation in retirement incomes policy within the past decade has been a depressing scenario for the policy gerontologist. While income security for the Aged was one of the first programs of the early Australian welfare state, successive governments have shifted the onus of provision back onto the 'individual', a policy reversal over ninety years. So the human services enterprise is seeking to be established during the dismantling of much of the existing Australian welfare state.

Second, human services has been considered, within this paper, according to its 'players' or participants, its clients and workers. Now many of the clients of human services may be said to derive mainly from the underclass, those outside the social mainstream. Such clients experience problems across a broad range, from difficulties of individual adjustment through to those arising from economic and social dislocation. Interestingly, the agenda of social problems is highly fluid, and develops out of variables such as advocacy activities, media portrayals, the state of the social conscience, as well as the objective difficulties faced by particular social welfare target groups. These agendas change, and sometimes

have included juvenile car thieves, elder abuse, and gun control. Who can tell which issue will become perceived as the most pressing social problem? Human services intervention with clients seeks to enhance their existing problem-solving capacities and skills. Thus the concept is to assist clients and target groups towards 'empowerment'.

Insofar as human service workers are concerned, a tension appears within the literature between praising the amateurism and voluntarism of early workers, yet exhorting the growth and development of professionalism. The inexorable trend, particularly as Australian educational institutions continue to produce cohorts of 'human services' graduates, is towards increasing professionalism.

Having established 'generalist' human service work as an occupation, and then as an emerging profession, the next trend seems to be towards ongoing 'specialisation'. Does this suggest that as human services moves onward and upward - improving its professional status, prestige, and perks - yet another occupational vacuum may occur as human service workers become too expensive and too specialised to perform certain tasks such as helping the 'underclass'?

At any rate, those working within the human services at present are often intrinsically motivated to help others and reform society, which is just as well since the human services industry - at least for the front-line providers - is still relatively poorly paid in terms of Australia's occupational hierarchy. Fortunately, the inherent motivations of working with people include the potential for ongoing personal and professional development. Human service education, hopefully, equips the entry-level graduates with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for critical and creative practice.

Third, human services has been considered according to its 'auspices', that is, in terms of the organisational structures through which policies, programs, and provisions are mediated, including the voluntary sector of service. Models explaining the human service organisations may be understood as a subset of broader organisational theory. It is modern society that has generated the need for large-scale organisation. Now the human service organisations are generally directed towards improving the 'welfare' of people, but there exists an enormous range of diversity within their various fields of service. In general terms, the Weberian paradigm of 'bureaucracy' provides a framework for an understanding of human service bureaucracies, which may be statutory or voluntary in character. In the wider context of the 'marketisation' of welfare some of the notions originally derived from 'scientific management', such as the obsessive emphases upon increasing efficiency and productivity, have gained a certain currency, even in the caring agencies. Thus a sharper appreciation of the human service organisations may be assisted through awareness of a range of possible theoretical perspectives. Quite possibly, a 'critical' framework for the analysis of organisational environment, structure, and behaviour may well help the worker or student to negotiate their way within the complexities of human service agency life.

Furthermore, volunteerism and human services exist in uneasy relations of co-operation and tension. The 1980s and the 1990s have witnessed the retreat of the Australian welfare state, the push towards localism in social welfare, and the reduction of formal human service provision for many target groups, but the same period has also seen the rise of volunteerism as an organised 'social movement', and some suggestion of the 'professionalisation' of volunteering itself. At the same time the profile of Australian volunteerism has shifted, with regard to the age, gender, and class position of many volunteers. Social welfare history notes traditional patterns of 'friendly visiting' and 'indoor and outdoor relief', which show the primitive origins of much in the present character of the human services industry. In Australian services, a high proportion of care provision for the frail seniors and people with disabilities is mediated through the voluntary sector and the use of volunteers, as illustrated in the Home and Community Care (HACC) program instituted in 1985. Thus commentators on the issue of volunteerism and human services are sharply divided between the critics who interpret such volunteerism as 'exploitation', and the advocates who assess it as an exercise in individual 'empowerment' and community development.

Fourth, this paper has explored human services in relation to its mental 'models' of reality, its theories and therapies through which it seeks to deliver programs and assist clients. In terms of theories, it is clear that in general our ongoing attempts to define 'reality' lead to a series of theories which only ever approximate it. In human services, as helping clients is the stated purpose, theory development provides not only intrinsic intellectual challenge but also contains a practical or utilitarian dimension, that of promoting effective and efficient service provision. In broad intellectual life as in the specific helping professions, models and theories are subject to philosophical popularity and fashion, particularly as organisations may adopt a particular model as a received version of reality. The border between ideology and theory is easily crossed, but then working life in the human services does not generally allow for a great amount of personal theoretical speculation either! The literature seems to suggest that inasmuch as there can be any one overarching theoretical paradigm across the human services, it is the 'problem-solving' methodology that applies throughout the diversity of its client groups and social institutions.

The therapies used by human services similarly demonstrate a variety of approaches. Like its general western intellectual background, human services draws upon the Freudian legacy in conceptualising problems of individuals, of looking out for subconscious motivations to human behaviour. However, human services is much more concerned with immediate and short-term interventions to solve direct, often dramatic, problems faced by clients. Nevertheless, the generalist human service worker will draw upon the various products of the 'therapy supermarket', so as to find the method and approach that may suit any particular client or client group. In general though, the gentle Rogerian ethos of client-centred, non-judgmentalism appears as an implicit orthodoxy within human service helping across many field agencies nowadays.

Fifth, the human services enterprise has been reviewed according to its 'interventions'. As noted, such intervention includes a broad range from face-to-face counselling of the client suffering a crisis situation through to long-term advocacy in pursuit of widespread social reform. In regard to crisis intervention, the human service worker supports the innate problem-solving capacities of the client, and seeks to expand such strengths and skills. It is the subjective perception - as distinct from the objective reality - of problem situations that causes them to be interpreted in 'crisis' terms, so the worker assists the client towards clarity of perception as to the problem itself, as well as the possible range of coping strategies and options. Crisis intervention, essentially a short-term therapy, helps the client to return to a state of psychological equilibrium, hopefully equipped with additional coping capacities acquired through transcendence of the situation.

While crisis intervention is not restricted to human services operations - indeed its literature is drawn from psychology and social work - human services also includes the concept of 'community intervention' or 'comprehensive social intervention', the reform of social structures so as to reduce the generation of individual crisis situations. In this ambitious way human services seeks to diminish the incidence and intensity of difficulties experienced by individuals. Thus 'preventive' social policies and human services may use resources more efficiently than providing a myriad of personal cures. In this manner human services work often involves the creation and development of advocacy groups to protect disadvantaged citizens and to agitate for social reform. Thus clients and client groups may be empowered to take their proper place in society and polity. However, given the entrenched nature of the social problem of poverty, the human services enterprise has a huge task ahead of it!

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