

Sample Essay

Including Citations

Applicants Name

Introduction

Evidence based practice is something that is utilized significantly throughout social work practice. Evidence based practice is very broad and is used in social work practice to treat a variety of people such as adults, children, families, minorities, people with mental illnesses and more. Aisenberg (2008) provided two definitions for evidence based practice. The first definition stated that evidence based practice is, “any practice that has been established as effective through scientific research according to a clear set of explicit criteria” (Aisenberg, 2008, p. 299). The second definition which was more broad stated that evidence based practice is, “the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individuals [clients]” (Aisenberg, 2008, p. 299). Cooper and Lesser (2008) also defined evidence based practice but as, “the practice of selecting interventions that are based on their empirically demonstrated links to desired outcomes” (p. 224). Overall, evidence based practice and evaluating our professional work with our client systems are significant especially in the social work field because it allows us to see what interventions are and are not effective for our clients, as well the reasoning behind it.

Single System Design

Single system design is a form of research that it also utilized heavily in the social work profession. According to Cooper and Lesser (2008), single system designs are “quasi-experimental designs... time series designs...that overall demonstrates outcomes” (p. 227). Cooper and Lesser (2008) took that even a step further and stated the primary purpose of a single system design is to, “enable the practitioner to compare level of a client’s problems before and after an intervention, and to make inferences regarding causality” (p. 227). Although a single

system is beneficial to us as practitioners because it helps us to conduct research and see what interventions are most effective for our clients, it is also beneficially for our clients too.

According to Cooper and Lesser (2008), a single system design can help the client to “visually” see their progress and that can serve as a motivational factor in treatment (p. 228). Lastly single system designs also guides and determines evidence based practice.

According to Aisenberg (2008), a single system design must be theoretical, comprehensive and consistent. In order for this to be so, the single system design must be broken down into several parts. The single system design begins with picking a target issue that we or our client would like to change. Although Cooper and Lesser (2008) reading focused mostly on single system design with clients, this same form of research could also be used on a micro, mezzo or macro level. Once a problem is established, then an intervention to address this issue must be picked to be implemented in a later time in the experiment. After the problem and intervention are determined then begins the baseline phase which is also known as phase A (Cooper & Lesser, 2008, p. 228). According to Cooper and Lesser (2008) this baseline phase is the, “pre-intervention phase” which only observes the problem with no attempt to change it (p. 228). After the baseline phase comes the intervention phase which is known as phase B (Cooper & Lesser, 2008). During the intervention phase, the intervention is implemented and an attempt is made to change the problem (Cooper & Lesser, 2008).

In a single system design, there are a “variety of techniques” used in order to collect data (Cooper & Lesser, 2008, p. 228). Although Cooper and Lesser (2008) only spoke about scales which can measure anxiety, depression as well as a host of other things, there is also the counting method that is used to keep track of the occurrence of a behavior, incidents and more. Once this data is collected, the numbers are then transported typically onto a line graph that way the data

can be seen “visually” (Cooper & Lesser, 2008, p. 228). If the line on the graph moves upward between the baseline and intervention phase, then that shows that the intervention was effective. If the line moves downward, then the intervention was not effective and if the line remains straight, then that shows that no change was made and in my opinion that also means that the intervention was not effective (Cooper & Lesser, 2008).

Reflection/ Conclusion

In this assignment, I was able to gain the experience of developing my own research with a client system. In regards to addressing my client’s issue, this assignment taught me how to pick an intervention to address an issue that we both agreed needed changing. This assignment also provided me with the opportunity to learn the techniques behind changing a behavior and how to monitor its effectiveness. One thing this assignment also gave me insight on was the impact that a single system design could have on the client. Before this assignment, I thought that single system design was only beneficial for the practitioner because it allows us to see if our research was effective. This assignment however taught me that the client could also benefit from a single system design because it motivates them when they see their own progress in treatment.

References

Aisenberg, D. (2008). Evidence-based practice in mental health to ethnic minority communities: has its practice fallen short of its evidence? *Social Work*, 52(4), 297-306.

Cooper, M., Lesser, J. (2008). *Clinical social work practice: An integrated approach*, Ma: Allyn & Bacon.