

The contribution of CIT method to explore the development of social work values and ethics during practice placement

Eleni Papouli

Department of Social Work, TEI of Athens/Greece

The contribution of CIT method to explore the development of social work values and ethics during practice placement

Abstract

Background and purpose: The aim of this study was to explore the processes through which final year students at the Department of Social Work in Athens/Greece develop their knowledge and understanding of social work values and ethics in their professional practice placement.

Methods: The study adopted an exploratory qualitative approach, and used the critical incident technique (CIT) as a data collection method. 32 of 54 invited students were asked to provide written description of incidents -positive or negative (or unpleasant) - which they perceived as significant for ethics learning and development in practice settings. Critical incidents were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Results: Of the 32 critical incidents, 18 were classified as positive experiences and 14 were classified as negative experiences, according to the students' responses. The main categories that emerged from the analysis of positive critical incidents were associated with: a) the Client, b) Interprofessional Teamwork, c) the Practice Instructor, and d) the Student. Similarly, the main categories that emerged from the analysis of negative critical incidents were associated with: a) the Client, b) Interagency Work, c) Interprofessional Teamwork, d) Management, e) the Practice Instructor, f) Staff, and g) the Student.

Conclusions and implications: The CIT as a reflective method was found to be an effective tool to explore aspects of the process of the students' ethics learning and development in the course of their practice placement. Given that competency models of learning and assessment in social work education have been criticised for not dealing well with ethics, the CIT method could be part of the evaluation process of ethics learning and development in social work practice.

Key words CIT method, social work values and ethics, practice placement, final year social work students, Greece

Papouli Eleni BSW, MA (SW/ICW) Lecturer in Social Work Department of Social Work School of Health and Caring Professions TEI of Athens, Greece.