



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, THEOLOGY, HUMANITIES AND
EDUCATION**

NHCS 102: COMMUNICATION SKILLS II (SOCIAL WORK)

END OF FIRST SEMESTER FINAL EXAMINATIONS

NOVEMBER, 2019

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DURATION: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer **QUESTION 1** from **Section A (COMPULSORY)**

Answer **any TWO** questions from **Section B**

All questions carry equal marks (20).

DO NOT repeat material.

Write legibly.

SECTION A (Compulsory)

What follows is an ethical dilemma faced by a social worker working with a client suffering from colon cancer. Read the following case and give some thought to the dimensions of the ethical dilemma. Answer the questions that follow.

1. Case Study: John - The Untold Truth

At 30 years old, John is at the prime of his life, holding a good position as a financial advisor in a foreign bank. He is also preparing to marry his fiancée of 10 years after much prudent planning for his marriage and waiting for their “Built-To-Order” flat to be ready by the end of 2019. Little does he expect to suffer a relapse of colon cancer and be admitted to the hospital so soon. His illness was first diagnosed 6 years ago and in 2013, he went through a major surgery; a surgery that gave him only a 50% chance of recovery. Being a Christian and actively involved in his church since 1996, John then had a positive outlook on life and the surgery turned out to be a great success, allowing him to recover well. Unfortunately, this relapse in April 2019 unveils cancer cells that have spread to his bladder, and the prognosis is poor, averaging between 3–6 months to live according to his doctor.

John is the youngest in a family of four siblings. He is staying with his second sister and her family, while his parents and two other married siblings live in the same block of flats but on different levels. The family is a close-knit household, with the children coming home regularly for meals. His mother, Mrs. Moyo, is devastated by her son’s current relapse and is distressed by his condition. She expresses her grief at having her youngest son, who is obedient and filial, doing well in his career, and about to get married in May 2019, suffer “this terrible curse”. The oncologist-in-charge, Dr Mhara, is reluctant to release the news of the prognosis to John and his family. The main reason for Dr Mhara’s unwillingness to do so stems from John’s overly positive attitude that he will recover from his illness. Believing that miracles and healing can happen again, the bridegroom has begun his wedding preparations, trying on his wedding suit and pestering the hospital to discharge him soon.

His fiancée, another devout Christian, also believes that John will heal with “God’s help and grace”. Colleagues and church friends are, nevertheless, also supportive and visit him often in the hospital. The couple has plans for their future, based on the premise that John will recover; there is never a doubt in their minds about John’s recovery. Ruth, their assigned medical social worker, is informed by Dr Mhara that John has not been told that he is terminally ill; neither has his family. In a hospital-based setting, it is usually the doctor who releases the diagnosis to the patient and his/her family but Dr Mhara has taken an unusual stance of choosing not to reveal the severity of the relapse to John – and this puts Ruth in a dilemma. In Ruth’s area of work, she is expected to provide psychosocial support and counseling to patients and their families. This includes

managing expectations of the illness of both the patient and the family, looking at possible financial issues when it comes to medical expenses, loss of employment and income issues, advanced care planning and discussing with those concerned about their perceptions toward end-of-life care.

As for John, Ruth is assured that he is financially prepared for his hospitalization and treatment expenses, given his training as a financial advisor; and he has been frugal all this while as he has been saving for his marriage and new flat. However, Ruth is skeptical that John is emotionally prepared for a terminal illness after having a brush with death in 2013. His mother is already an emotional wreck, displaying difficulties accepting John's current relapse and fearing that she will not be able to cope with his illness upon discharge. She needs a great deal of emotional support from the social worker. Meanwhile, John's fiancée has been kept busy with their marriage preparations, genuinely believing that a miracle will happen: that John will recover.

Questions

- (a) What would you do if you were Ruth, would you tell John about the doctor's prognosis? Would this be an ethical dilemma for you as it is for Ruth? Support your answer.
- (b) Would you persuade Dr Mhara to reveal the prognosis to John or perhaps to his family? Or would you override Dr Mhara's decision of not wanting to reveal the prognosis and reveal it to Mrs. Moyo, John or his fiancée? What would guide your decision
- (c) What if Mrs. Moyo stops you in the corridors of the hospital during one of your rounds to ask what John's prognosis is? What would you tell her exactly? What factors would influence your decision.
- (d) As communicators, what do we learn from the passage about the role played by culture, cultural norms, values and beliefs in communicating information?
- (e) As a social worker what principles would guide your decisions?

Total (20 marks)

SECTION B: Answer any **TWO** questions from this section.

Question 2

Discuss some of the common ethical dilemmas encountered in social work. What precautions would you, as a social worker, take to manage them?

Question 3

Identify the five levels of therapeutic communication and explain in detail the characteristics of each level.

Question 4

"She listened to me but she didn't hear what I was saying about how difficult it is for me to keep on going on like I have been. So I'll just go back to my flat and I'm back to square one". Critique the given statement highlighting the non-therapeutic communication techniques that a social worker in this incident exhibited towards the client.

Question 5

Daniel Goleman (1995) in his book *"Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ"* asserts that "understanding one's own feelings, empathy for the feelings of others and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living" is important for personal success. Discuss how important emotional intelligence is in your area of specialization.

Question 6

"If you understand your own feelings you get a really great handle on how you're going to interact and perform with others" (Chuck Wolfe President, C. J. Wolfe Associates, LLC). Using the quotation as a basis, discuss the importance of social skills or competencies in building relations with others. Refer to specific social competencies from Daniel Goleman's *"Working with Emotional Intelligence"*.

Question 7

Identify an organization you might like to work for someday or one that interests you:

- (a) Describe why you chose this organization.
- (b) Briefly describe the organization's culture

Question 8

Write critical notes on the following terms regarding communication and leadership.

- (i) Authoritarian
- (ii) Laissez faire
- (iii) Democratic
- (iv) Bureaucratic

Discuss the differences between a Leader and a Manager.

End of Paper