

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING IN THE SOCIAL WORK STUDENT'S INTERNSHIP

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Tyrimų kryptis (-ys): S007 Edukologija

Research topic, problem, goal. The social worker is a person who enables the client's /recipient's of social services and their environment to achieve the desired changes. The experience in the internship gives the student the ability to analyze the current situation and find the most appropriate solutions that is meeting the interests of clients. The internship is a dynamic process that occurs in a variety of sociocultural contexts. Mentoring of social work students has an influence on the quality of the internship and helps to achieve the study goals. The goal of the research - to reveal the importance of mentoring in the social work student's internship.

Important words: Internship, mentor, mentoring, social work

Research methods. The method of qualitative research (grounded theory). was chosen. Research stages: 1. the analysis of written reflections of student's internship mentors (32 reflections). 2. the analysis of focus group interviews of student's internship mentors (2 focus groups).

Results and conclusions. The analysis of the qualitative research data revealed that mentoring is a process that starts with becoming a mentor (situation, experience, motivation, knowledge). The results show that both the mentor and the student are developing during the mentoring process. Social work is a profession in which personal growth is very necessary, as this profession is constantly evolving. In this context, personal growth is also professional development, in other words personal growth also means the possibility of professional growth. The usual motives of becoming mentors are seeking of challenges; wish to learn, altruism, the earlier experience, the growth of personality, growth of professional competencies. The stages of organizing a student's internship starts with planning the mentor's working time, discussing internship expectations with the student. In this way, the boundaries of the relationship are determined and the future activities of the student are structured. In the third stage, the student is introduced to the institution and its clients, then the student is involved in „simpler“ activities, then there is a transition from „simpler to more complex activities“. The mentor, having gained more trust in the student, gives him more responsibility. In the fifth stage, open communication, collaboration and reflection on practical experiences and providing constructive feedback to the student are very important. The last stage is the completion of the internship, during which mutual sharing of experiences and farewell rituals take place.

Originality and practical relevance. The mentor's role in the student's internship is multifaceted and constantly changing. It depends on personal experience, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, circumstances of becoming a mentor and relationship with students.