A Knowledge and Skills Practice Framework: integrating theory and practice in social work

© Pamela Trevithick 2014

The importance of critical thinking, analysis and critical reflection/reflexivity – and locating the relationship at the heart of social work practice

Theoretical knowledge domain
(abstract theories)

Adapted abstract ‘parent’ theories developed, adapted, or ‘borrowed’ from other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, organizational theory, etc.

Abstract theories that analyse the role and task of social workers
theories that analyse the role, task and purpose of social work e.g. social work’s care and control functions

Abstract theories that analyse direct practice in relation to:
(i) generalist skills and interventions
(ii) fields of practice
(iii) practice approaches
(iv) values-based perspectives

Factual knowledge domain
(facts, statistics, evidence, research)

Law
knowledge of the principles of law and relevant legislation

Social policy
knowledge of relevant social policy

Agency
knowledge of relevant agency policy, procedures and practice

Problems
knowledge of particular problems

People
knowledge of specific groups of people

Practice knowledge/practical knowledge domain
(knowledge gained through direct practice/practice wisdom)

Professional use of self/the relationships we build: use of self-knowledge, intuition, tacit knowledge, self care

Knowledge and skills use/utilization
(i) generalist skills/interventions
(ii) fields of practice
(iii) practice approaches
(iv) values-based perspectives

Service users’ theoretical, factual, and practice knowledge

Skills and interventions

Knowledge creation and skills development
working creatively with complex and unpredictable contextual situations that have new or unique features

Interventions - how we communicate indicates the use of knowledge, skills and values in action, with the rapport and relationships that we create being the medium through which effective assessment, analysis, decision-making and action flows.

The importance of critical thinking, analysis and critical reflection/reflexivity – and locating the relationship at the heart of social work practice.