

SLOVÁK, P. (2024). SOCIÁLNA PRÁCA A JEJ METAMORFÓZY V PRAXI

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Social work is one of the disciplines that is important for the development of social justice and well-being in every society. In addition to the ever-present economic inequalities, the last years have also brought a global pandemic, military conflict and many technological changes associated with cyber security threats, making this area increasingly important. Modern society is also characterized by dynamic changes in terms of social work that affect the lives of at-risk individuals and marginalized groups. Social work must therefore respond to these changes and adapt its approaches to new challenges. Social work touches on many aspects of life and society and requires a high level of empathy, combined with professional knowledge and the ability to resolve conflict situations. In addition to helping individuals, social work is also important from the perspective of maintaining stability and balance in society. Given the growing complexity of social challenges, it is essential to address this area and support its development, to which this scientific monograph titled *Social Work and its Metamorphoses in Practice* certainly contributes.

This monograph consists of 18 separate chapters, where the author describes specific topics that contemporary social work regularly deals with. Hence, it provides a comprehensive overview of the areas and topics that a future aspiring social worker will encounter during their or her career, brief characteristics of these topics and their specifics. Within these 18 chapters, in addition to the description of a specific issue and the presentation of its unique attributes, the reader will also find topics for reflection and discussion, which encourage the reader to further reflect on the lines read, or to investigate appropriately selected publications that the author utilised when writing this monograph.

The first chapter discusses the importance of social work in addressing CAN syndrome (Child Abuse and Neglect), which includes physical, psycho-

logical, sexual abuse, and neglect of children, the consequences of which can last a lifetime. In the second chapter, we read that mental health is an integral part of a person's overall health, while stress, anxiety, and unresolved conflicts can significantly affect their balance - especially in the current era marked by post-COVID conditions. The third chapter focuses on the existential dimension of social work and emphasizes that the foundation of social work is to help people find the meaning of life. According to Frankl's theory, suffering has the potential to become an impulse for personal growth, creativity and a reassessment of life priorities. As the author further explains, existential analysis and logotherapy represent effective approaches not only in psychotherapy, but also in social work. In the fourth chapter, the author views older age as a period full of paradoxes, where seniority is associated with increasing vulnerability and the need to maintain autonomy. Social services and facilities for seniors play a key role in this context and provide not only professional care, but also psychosocial support. The author also mentions the trend of home care, which allows seniors to remain in their familiar environment, thereby strengthening their physical and mental health, as well as the modern tool represented by a senior phone line, which offers immediate help, empathetic listening and spiritual encouragement, alleviating loneliness and promoting social cohesion. The fifth chapter points out the fact that social work plays a key role in increasing the quality of life and personal growth of people with disabilities. Included stories of two women demonstrate how a diagnosis can be faced with determination and adaptation, but also points out the persistent barriers that make it difficult for similar people to be independent and fully participate within society. The following chapter is devoted to the institute of professional parenting, where children from difficult backgrounds or dysfunctional families gain the opportunity to live in a substitute family environment. The author emphasizes that being a professional foster parent is noble and responsible area of social work, requiring personal sacrifices and a high level of empathy. This chapter also describes a current legislative framework of centres for children and families, which provide temporary care and support to children until they become independent. Next chapter is devoted to social work with clients with mental disorders, while discussing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in detail, as well as Alzheimer's disease as the most widespread type of dementia, which mainly affects the senior population. Social work plays a key role here, providing multidisciplinary support, which is often combined with support by NGOs and civic associations, for example. In the eighth chapter, the author addresses the significant physical, psychological, and spiritual burdens coming with the terminal phase of life. As discussed in this chapter, palliative care, especially through mobile hospice, provides clients and their families with multidisciplinary assistance directly in the home environment, allowing them to live out their remaining days with dignity. The author

emphasizes not only medical and nursing care, but also respect for spiritual needs and sensitive communication, which helps maintain the quality of life in the last days.

The ninth chapter is devoted to mental and behavioural disorders, emphasizing the importance of early intervention and preventive measures in social work. The author describes eating disorders, behavioural disorders including ADHD, but also cyberbullying as a modern form of digital bullying that abuses the anonymity of the online space and can cause serious psychological trauma as well. In the following section, the author describes social work within the issue of homelessness, which requires theoretical, factual, and practical knowledge, while the success of resocialization depends on several factors. Many of the challenges of homeless shelters lie within a limited room and funding, which can be considered a future challenge for public administration and public funding. The eleventh chapter focuses on social work with people with Down syndrome, which brings not only specific health challenges, but also demands for constant care, which significantly affects the lives of their families. In this context, the author highlights the work of the NGO Down Syndrome Society (Spoločnosť Downovho syndrómu), which helps to change the social perception of this disorder and supports successful integration of affected people in the field of sports, arts and education. The next chapter states that an important element of social work is not only education about hygiene and prevention, but also dissemination of knowledge about important awareness campaigns, such as those organized by the Slovak Red Cross (Slovenský Červený kríž). In chapter thirteen, we find an overview of social work with people affected by sensory disabilities, where the author emphasizes the need for integration and unconditional acceptance of people with visual impairments, introduces the Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovakia NGO (Únia nevidiacich a slabozrakých Slovenska) in the field of education, and points out the importance of compensating for vision loss through guide and assistance dogs. Chapter fourteen emphasizes that ecology and social work are inseparable, with man and his environment forming a single whole. The text draws attention to the problem of climate anxiety, which arises from a feeling of helplessness in the face of climate change and underlines the need for education in this area. Chapter fifteen appeals to the need to improve the financial competence of many individuals, since insufficient financial literacy often leads to debts and subsequent complications, therefore this area should be an integral part of modern social work. In the following chapter, the author points out the key role of charity centres, which provide accommodation and support for the integration of refugees into society through material and social assistance. It critically assesses the gradual weakening of the initial solidarity, while drawing attention to social tensions and discussions about positive discrimination, which complicate the process of inclusion. The penultimate chapter deals with autism, emphasizing

the need for an individual and multidisciplinary approach in social work, where the author cites the DEMY centre as an example of effective practice, where specialized educators use a wide range of modern procedures. The last, eighteenth chapter is dedicated to the limited competencies of midwives in the Slovak Republic, even though they provide invaluable support. The chapter analyses the dilemma between childbirth in the home environment and health facilities, while pointing out the importance of social work in this time of life as well. Finally, it summarizes the historical development of midwifery from traditional midwives to a modern, legislatively defined profession that reflects the need for the humanization of maternity care.

Although after reading the previous lines it may seem that this scientific monograph is from a different field than public administration and public policy, we find direct parallels with this field in several places. The monograph presents the reality from the area of implementation of several laws, since the entire field of social work and the conditions for its performance are governed by legislation, which may have shortcomings in certain aspects. The provision of social services and the powers of social workers in integrating clients into society are therefore directly influenced by legislation. Similarly, in addition to the state administration, the founders of social service facilities are also municipalities, self-governing regions and NGOs, so it is an area that intersects not only with public administration, but also with the non-profit sector. The monograph therefore not only analyses the practical aspects of social work from several perspectives, but also points out how legislation, public administration and public policies (including national programs and specific laws) form the basic framework for the provision of social services. Even in the field of social work, the legal and political context is an integral part of the entire area that the author presents to the reader, and in addition to the need for a multidisciplinary approach, he also points out the necessary connection between theory, legislation and practice.

Thus, paraphrasing and underlining some thoughts from the author's résumé, this scientific monograph highlights the fundamental role of social work in many areas, where it supports human integrity, as well as enables individuals to cope with psychosomatic and social challenges. It emphasizes the necessity of continually updating social work with current professional approaches to ensure its correct functioning. This publication explores how social work interacts with different client groups needing professional intervention, aiming to educate beginners in both social and psychosomatic aspects of this field. Social workers and other professionals play a crucial role in fostering solidarity, responsibility, and a feeling of belonging - especially for vulnerable groups of people affected by various crises. This monograph underscores the importance of trust in addressing social challenges and affirms that social work must transcend individualism

through goodwill, generosity, and mutual support. After reading this engaging scientific monograph, we have no other choice but to agree and recommend this text to all readers interested in exploring the field of social work.

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