The Casework Relationship

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THE CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP

by

Mary Elizabeth Scully

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Social Work of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work

January

1954
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each profession has its own unique terminology. Time, constant usage, and periodic re-evaluations usually serve to refine and clarify the meaning of this terminology. It is conceded that simple, clear terminology serves to facilitate communication between members of a profession, as well as to make communication with other professions and with the community at large as easier task.

Social work too has its own special terminology. However, being a young profession, it has not as yet come to a common understanding of what is meant by many of the terms it uses. It has been said that social work can claim no mature professional status while, among other shortcomings, "we hide behind vagueness and generalizations to define what we do and how we do it."¹

One of the most commonly used words in social casework is the word relationship, yet the meaning of this term carries the vagueness of which Miss Henry speaks.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to search a body of literature published since 1920 for references to the concept of the casework relationship, and if possible, to use the material found as the basis for the formulation of a descriptive definition of the concept.

Scope

The information sought included ways in which the casework relationship was seen to resemble and differ from ordinary relationships; other words which have been used to signify the concept of the casework relationship; the elements of which it is composed; and the uses made of it. It did not include, except incidentally, a study of the limitations to the casework relationship. For the purposes of this study the limitations were assumed to be those set by the client's capacity for relationship, the framework of social and moral good, limitations arising from law and authority, the unwritten standards and norms of the community, and the function of the agency.

Source

The sources for the information used in this thesis were limited to a body of social work books published since 1920 as listed in the bibliography at the end of this thesis, and to the following books which were used principally in gathering
background material for Chapter II and Chapter IV, Part 6:


**Method**

A method of scanning was used. Material which seemed pertinent to the subject was posted on a card. This information was later sorted and arranged in chapters and headings according to a plan suggested by the material.
CHAPTER II

THE CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP AS ONE SPECIES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Before discussing the casework relationship per se, it seems appropriate for the sake of perspective to record something of what has been found in the literature concerning interpersonal relationships in general, the importance assigned to them, and the distinctions which have been made between the casework relationship and other species of interpersonal relationships.

A. What is Meant By Interpersonal Relations

Interpersonal relations have been variously defined in the literature. One writer describes it as a special type of interaction between people.

All social relations are to be thought of as a special type of interhuman activity, as a type of interaction. The term relation implies a reciprocal influence, a mutual connection among the elements. The concept of interaction has become one of the fundamental, and most nearly universal ideas to designate this process of mutual, ongoing relationship in each of the fields of knowledge—physical, biological, and social.1

These relationships are sometimes subject to distortions. One writer says that interpersonal relationships have been described as referring to more than what actually goes on between two or more factual people. There may be "fantastic personifications" such as for instance the idealization of a love object, or one may relate to a non-existent product of the imagination, e.g., "the perfect mate." Also one may endow people falsely with characteristics taken from significant people in one's past. An interpersonal relationship can be said to exist between a person and any one of these more or less phantastic people, as well as between a person or group evaluated without distortion.

The interaction in interpersonal relations differs from other types of interaction in that social interaction involves meaning, values, purpose, and symbols.

Social interaction differs from other types of interaction, such as the impact of billiard balls (physical interaction) or the contact of food with the stomach cells (Biological interaction), in that social interaction involves meaning, value, purpose, and symbols. A person responds not to what another individual says or does, but to the meaning he imputes to that which the individual has said or done. In physical or biological worlds there are no meanings.

Summary of Part A

Interpersonal relations are thought of as a special type of interhuman activity, an interaction, implying a


3 Gittler, Social Dynamics, 2.
mutual connection among the elements. These relationships are distorted or seen in their true light according to the meaning that a person gives to that which another person has said or done.

B. Relationships Communicated Not By Words Alone

It has been emphasized by many of the authors studied that relationships between people are established by non-verbal as well as verbal means, the non-verbal ones being more or less intelligible because of common biological background and cultural conditioning.

Each individual receives, of course, sense data of the ordinary kind in regard to the other; each sees and hears the other as a physical entity. But in addition each receives verbal and other symbolic matter from the other, and each has therefore the opportunity to combine those two types of data into a single more complex stream, enriching the verbal flow with simultaneous observations of bodily movement and the like. . . . Each person is able to get a multidimensional view of his vis-a-vis, enriching the stream of merely verbal symbols with a recognition of bodily processes in the other, and these are more or less intelligible because of common biological background and cultural conditioning.

The inadequacy of words alone in conveying meaning is illustrated by the following quotation:

It is not by words alone that meaning is conveyed, as is well illustrated by Arthur Train in his book The Prisoner at the Bar (New York, Charles Scribners Sons, 1925) p. 239. The author describes a case in which the

judge charged the jury in words which when examined by the appellate court from the stenographic report of the trial, appeared to be a model of judicial impartiality. But this stenographic report did not include the shrug of the shoulder, the change in emphasis, and the altered facial expression which accompanied the charge to the jury and left no doubt in their minds as to the verdict which the judge expected them to reach.5

The non-verbal forms of communication are considered of major importance in interpersonal relationships.

Frequently the most crucial factors determining the major psychological movements in human and professional relationships consist of intercommunications which are completely outside of or beyond the current of verbal intercommunications and which are usually not clearly represented in consciousness. We refer to the musical accompaniments of speech and such other visible bodily movements as are not directly connected with speech. A second person can hear, see, and react to these manifestations while the first person is completely unaware of why the second person is reacting as he is.6

Speech is considered but one way of communicating with another person.

After all, what the client is responding to is not merely the spoken words of the worker but the total impression that the worker's personality makes upon him.7

5 Margaret Cochran, Handbook on Social Case Recording, Chicago, 1936, n., 32.


Summary of Part B

In interpersonal relationships, meanings are conveyed in many ways other than by words: postures, tensions, blushing, etc. Frequently the most crucial factors determining the nature of relationships are non-verbal ones, and often not clearly recognized in the consciousness. People react to total impressions rather than to a specific aspect of interpersonal communication, or a combination of them.

C. Importance of Interpersonal Relationships

Although social nature is a real potential in man at birth, intrapersonal relations are necessary to actuate this potential.

Man, who is a homo sapiens is not born a social being, nor does he possess culture at birth. He is at birth, a plastic, pliable, biological entity which is constantly molded and shaped into a person, with meanings, values, interests, wishes, and attitudes by association with other persons. The patterns of these associations are group patterns. Various groups in society furnish different aspects of man's social nature. The primary group, such as the family and the child's play group, share his basic human social nature; secondary groups and institutions give him his human culture nature. In other words, man is born a biological individual who acquires a social nature and becomes a person.

8 Gittler, Social Dynamics, 1.
As one writer has put it "face to face relations activate intellectual processes, set attitudes and socialize the individual."9

Dr. Frederick Allen sees relationships as necessary for life itself and cites references to substantiate his belief that the essential dynamic in all living is contained in a relation with others.

There is no life that exists apart from life. No human being can live entirely to himself. It is impossible to envisage a biological phenomenon, in this instance a human being, having an existence entirely its own. Child has stated: "Every biological problem involves finally all of life and the environment of life" (p.5) and he further adds: "The organism as a pattern, a mechanism, has no meaning except in relation to environment." (p.7)10 He subscribes to Spencer's definition: "Life is the behavior of protoplasmic systems in relation to an external world." (p.11)11 These truths serve to re-emphasize here that the essential dynamic in all living is contained in a relationship with others.12

The vital necessity for interpersonal relationships has been attested to by people working with the mentally ill. One writer makes the flat statement that she has never seen a


11 Ibid.

12 Allen, Psychotherapy With Children, 58.
patient recovers until he has been able to make a constructive relationship with another human being.

I have never seen a patient recover, or even begin to recover, until he has made some sort of constructive relationship with another human being: with a nurse, an attendant, another patient, a social worker, a doctor, or the ground man or storekeeper. There is a potential here that can be deliberately exploited for the patient's good. It has been deliberately done and it works.13

Miss Witmer has pointed out the importance of interpersonal relations by stating simply that "The key to the whole puzzle is a clear realization that human beings cannot exist in isolation."14

Summary of Part C

Intrapersonal relations are considered of vital importance because it is through them that man's social nature, which is only a potential at birth, is actuated. Through them he acquires his meanings, values, attitudes, and wishes. Without interpersonal relationships there can be no life, for human beings cannot live to themselves. When the minds of men break down, no recovery can be made unless constructive interpersonal


relations can be fostered. The key to the importance of inter-
personal relationships lies in the fact that human beings cannot
live in isolation.

D. Social Work as Human Relations

In the early days, the primary purpose of most social
work organizations was the giving of relief "to relieve the
community from exactions and threatening dangers", but by the
1920's the concept of social work as being a profession which
deals with people having problems in the area of human relations-
ships had been well established. In 1926 Howard W. Odum said:

There are of course many ways of defining social work
in terms of both scope and function. One of the best ana-
logical statements would be to refer to social work as a
process of finding, restoring, and developing the lost in
the world of human relations.

Ten years later much the same was said by Frank Bruno:

The person is capable of a large number of vital social re-
lationships. Many- too often most- of these relationships
are destroyed by the socially inadequate. The discovery
and restoration of these broken relationships are the only
means of treatment social world has at its disposal. All

15 Virginia Robinson, A Changing Psychology in Social
Case Work, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1930, 4, citing a quota-
tion from the 1818 report of the Society for the Prevention of
Pauperism, in Edward T. Devine, The Principles of Relief, New
York, 1904, 292.

16 Howard W. Odum, Ph.D, An Approach to Public Wel-
fare and Social Work, North Carolina, 1926, 5.
its other methods—investigations, medical services, psychological diagnoses—are but preparatory.17

More recently this has been stated as follows:

What do we understand today to be the essential characteristics of modern social work? First of all, and implied in the concept of scientific orientation, is the characteristic that social work is concerned to understand the material with which it deals that is, the relationships of human beings to their world of other persons and social situations.18

A clue to the category of needs toward which social work is directed is furnished by the oft repeated statement that social work has to do with helping people18 who are in difficulty with their social relationships.19

At times, some writers have seemed to stress the relationships themselves more than the people having difficulties in their relationships.

This, then, is generic social work as I [Kenneth Pray] conceive it. In summary: it deals with problems not of the social environment as such, not with human personalities as such, but with the problems of relationships between them. Its objective is not in changes of social structure or of personality but in improvement and facilitation of the process by which people are enabled to find, sustain, and use constructive social relationships.20


19 Helen Witmer, Social Work, 67.

20 Kenneth Pray, Social Work in a Revolutionary Age, Penn., 1949, 278.
A warning against thinking that social relationships in themselves constitute the matter of casework is given by one writer:

What is meant, of course, is that casework deals with the individual in his social relationships, since the worker does not treat relationships or attitudes or difficulties, but persons. One of the basic concepts in casework is that the individual cannot be segmented. It is possible to consider him abstractly either in his social relationships or distinct from them, but casework does not deal with an abstraction, but, with man as he exists, in his totality. 21

Summary of Part D

In the early periods of social work history, the giving of relief was considered the primary function of social work, but it is now considered to be the helping of those who are having difficulties in their relationships with people or other aspects of their environment. The major emphasis is on helping people in their interpersonal relationships. This includes those having difficulties in relationships arising from environmental problems.

E. Difference Between The Casework Relationship and Other Relationships.

Although interpersonal relationships may involve two

or more people, our focus is on the relationship created when two people meet in a casework situation. The relationship created when any two people meet is not a simple one. "The simplest structurally but the most complex functionally of all groups is the interpersonal situation made up of two individuals."22 How the casework relationship differs from the ordinary relationship between two people has been given increasing attention in the literature. In 1931 Bertha Reynolds said:

We know so little at the present time that whatever we say sounds more like prophecy than actuality. We know that there is a difference between professional use of such a relationship and the mutual enjoyment of it that it is the normal thing between friends, where each gives and takes as freely as one would inhale and exhale in a pleasant breeze. In a professional role one must never become passive, one must always consciously use the situation as a bridge over which the client may cross to sounder and more secure relations in his life.23

Ten years later Herbert Aptekar emphasized the purposive nature of the casework relationship:

In other words there is such a thing as a professional relationship— one which contrasts with relationships of everyday life in that it is more controlled and purposive. In most professions, control of the relationship is inci-

The casework relationship differs from other relationships in that the focus is on the needs of but one of the two people involved— the client.

Social case work differs from the ordinary relationships in social life in one important respect. It is oriented one way— toward the client's need. The professional worker does not expect to get from the client, as he could rightly expect to get from his friends, sympathy or advice, nor does he ask the client to serve his interests. In the hours he gives to the professional relationship, he shelves his own interests as a member of a family, a church, or a political party, in order that his clients may realize themselves more fully in the social groupings of their own choice.²⁵

The good of others and the ways of attaining this are of prime importance in the casework relationship.

The professional relationship differs from most of conventional intercourse largely in the degree to which the aim must be the good of others (whether individual or group) in the amount of self awareness to be attained by the worker, and in the techniques to be assimilated and consciously utilized.²⁶

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It is possible but not probable that a relationship such as is experienced in the casework situation would exist in ordinary relationships.

Throughout his life experience the individual enters into many relationships and is subject to their influence. The type of relationship taught in casework differs from those usually experienced in the social environment; for to ordinary relationships each party brings the idea of some value he hopes to obtain from it for himself. Relationship, as it is employed in casework, is characterized by the fact that, without any "altruistic" violation of the client's freedom to choose not only the end but also the means, it is designed to serve the benefit of one party to the exclusion of benefit to the other. It is not intended to imply that such a relationship cannot exist outside of casework, nor that it always exists de facto in casework, but that casework does attempt to develop and use it in a controlled way, and with all the skills and refinements that experience and practice have brought about. 27

Summary of Part E

The casework relationship has the same essential characteristics of ordinary relationships between two people and it is possible, but not probable, for a somewhat similar relationship to exist outside of casework. The aim in casework is to have a relationship that is more controlled and purposive than ordinary relationships, and one where the needs and well-being of the client are considered to the exclusion of benefit to the worker. The relationship is developed and used by the worker.

with all the skills and refinements that experience and practice have brought about.

Summary of Chapter II

The casework relationship is but one species of interpersonal relations. Interpersonal relations may be thought of as a type of interhuman activity, an interaction among the elements of which they are composed. The interaction in social relationships differs from physical or biological interaction in that it involves values, purpose, and symbols. Interpersonal relationships are established by non-verbal as well as verbal forms of communication, the non-verbal and unrecognized ones frequently assuming more importance than the verbal forms.

These interpersonal relationships are necessary for man, the biological entity, in order that he may actuate his potential as a person with meanings, values, wishes, and attitudes. Man cannot live alone. He needs relationships for life. Because he needs these relationships for life, he has a natural right to them.

When man has unusual difficulties in the area of interpersonal relationships, he needs and has a right to a special type of relationship. Social work attempts to respect this right by meeting his special needs through providing a professional relationship that differs from ordinary relationships in
that it is more controlled and purposive, and is geared to meet the needs of the client with all the skills and refinements that experience and practice have brought about. This has been called the casework relationship.
CHAPTER III.

WORDS AND DEFINITIONS USED TO DESCRIBE THE
CONCEPT OF THE CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP

From the beginning many different words were used to signify the relationship between the worker and the client in the casework situation. Many of these terms signified only some aspect of the casework relationship as we think of it to-day. It was not until 1930\(^1\) that the word relationship itself was advanced to attempt to designate a more all-embracing concept. In this chapter will be recorded some of the terms used to signify the casework relationship, as well as definitions advanced to describe the casework relationship.

A. Some Terms Used to Denote Relationship in Casework.

1. Friendliness or Friendship

    In the early days the word friendship seemed to denote the most perfect relationship possible.

    This concept of a friendly contact in which the worker uses her own natural equipment spontaneously has been hard to resign. This the worker understands from her own experience. Perhaps in her experience the word friendship defines the most complete relationship possible.\(^2\)


\(^2\) Ibid, 128-129.
2. **Contact**

Contact is seen as a preliminary step leading to rapport and a treatment relationship.

One question commonly asked is whether all casework presupposes a treatment relationship. When one says that treatment begins in the first moment of contact, "contact" is used in a special sense. In meeting and talking with a person a relationship is not necessarily established. It is only when rapport is created for a professional purpose that there may be said to be a "client".³

Miss Robinson felt that the word "contact" did not adequately express what takes place as a result of a case worker's participation in a situation.

The word "contact" which has long established usage seems too one-sided an affair and ignores the dynamic interaction which is an essential characteristic of the process. In addition it carries a time limit in its meaning and must be modified to describe the continuing process of intensive case work.⁴

3. **Sympathy**

The word sympathy has been used to denote a necessary emotional requirement for successful communication with clients.

All the devices of personal communication often fail to win across the void and to bring the two beings closer together

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but the interviewer: "with a step of sympathetic spirit passis the gulf."5, 6

As early as 1910 Miss Mary Richmond wrote:

Friendly visiting means intimate and continuous knowledge of and sympathy with a . . . family's joys, sorrows, opinions, feelings and the entire outlook on life. The visitor that has this is unlikely to blunder either about relief or any other detail. Without it he is almost certain, in any charitable relations with members of the family, to blunder seriously. 7

4. Empathy

Professor E. W. Burgess, in his discussion of Clifford Shaw's technique in dealing with problem boys states that empathy, rather than sympathy, helps to establish rapport:

The first step in the course of treatment is the approach to the boy, not by sympathy, but by empathy. Through his life history the counselor is enabled to see his life as the boy conceived it rather than as an adult might imagine it. Empathy means entering into the experience of another person by the human and democratic method of sharing experiences. In this and other ways, rapport is established. Sympathy is the attempt through imagination to put one's self in another person's place, with all the fallacies which are almost necessarily involved. 8


6 Young, Interviewing, 302.

7 Ibid, 300, citing Mary Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, 180.

5. Identification

The need to identify with a client in order to be of help to him is suggested in these quotations:

Identification, or the ability to exchange experiences, is closely related to the problem of sympathetic insight.\(^9\)

Human relationships depend on our ability to identify with one another. This is the only basis for understanding. . . . Without identification the caseworker cannot get the emotional significance of her clients experiences or reach any real understanding of his problem.\(^10\)

6. Rapport

Rapport is seen as a vital factor in an interview.

The human equation is one of the most vital factors in the interview. . . . The personality of each individual plays upon the other. Until rapport has been established there is little chance to proceed with the collecting of materials.\(^11\)

Rapport has sometimes been used to connote an all-embracing relationship.

This natural, simple human friendliness and sincere identification with the client—whether we call it

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\(^9\) Young, Interviewing, 301.


"participant observation,""12 or "reciprocity,""13 or "dy-namic relationship,""14 or "response,""15 means the estab-lishment of a state of rapport characterized by a mutual understanding. This tends to release insecurity and anxiety and to promote a responsive friendliness— a social interaction.16

Whether this process is designated as friendliness, rapport, identification, transfer, relation, sympathetic insight, or empathy, it aims to establish a bridge across which an interviewer and interviewee can convey a sense of their mental and emotional natures to each other. . . .17

More recently rapport has been conceived by Dr. Maeder to be an object or speaking relationship.

In affecting rapport the caseworker will be in all in-terviews warm, natural, outgoing, at ease; she will take definite steps to establish a casework object relationship with the client as the so-called emotional bridge over which factual data regarding the client and his problem will pass to the caseworker and back over which interpre-tation, enlightenment, and guidance will pass from case-worker to client. Some transference and some type of ident-i-fication will play their roles in this relationship, but the main course and objective of the caseworker will be to establish and maintain this casework object relationship, as the indispensable prerequisite for two human beings working together toward a common objective and involving


14 Ibid, citing Otto Rank, Technik der Psychoanalyse.

15 Ibid, citing W. I. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl, Chapter I.

16 Ibid, 156.

17 Young, Interviewing, 353.
a meeting of their minds. 18

7. Leadership

In 1926 Porter Lee referred to a "leadership aspect of treatment" and expressed a need for more knowledge concerning it. Its use in the changing of attitudes is stressed.

In my judgment there is no greater problem before us as case workers than the problem of defining this leadership which is the task of winning confidence and changing attitudes. 19

8. Participation

By the late 1920's the client's part in relationship was receiving increasing attention. This is implied in the word "participation" but the amount of participation was questionable.

The Milford Conference defined this as "the method of giving to a client the fullest possible share in the process of working out an understanding of his difficulty and a desirable plan for meeting it." 20

When Miss Robinson was casting about for a good word


to use to denote the concept of relationship in case work she rejected "participation" because she said it "implies a subtle patronage of knowing what is right for the client and permitting him to help in the worker's plan." 21

9. Interview

The close connection between the interview and the casework relationship has been recognized by many writers. In one of her books, Gordon Hamilton said,

Skill in interviewing and the professional relationship are so intimately related to skill in the approach to the living experience and the social resources of the community. . . . that any separation here must be regarded as an arbitrary device for the sake of simplification. 22

Interviewing has been conceived of as a series of interacting relationships.

Interviewing is a series of interacting relationships between two or more people. At every stage of the process the interviewer-interviewee situation changes, the reaction of both tend to change from moment to moment according to each stimulus in the process. This process may be called the circular response. 23 In other words there is stimulus and response with every response becoming a stimulus for another response. Interviewer and interviewee generally stimulate each other in new ways as the interview proceeds step by step. 24

22 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 51.
23 Young, Interviewing, 2, citing Mary P. Follett, Creative Experience, 61.
24 Young, Interviewing, 2.
The interview may be thought of as a social process, with two people *en rapport* upon a problem. In its original meaning in French it connotes visiting each other and having mutual insight.

If this interpretation of the interview as a social process, as an interacting process, as a process of stimulus and response, of give and take, of two persons *en rapport* upon a given problem is accepted, then our whole terminology needs to be revised. The terms interviewer and interviewee as involving an aggressive person probing into the affairs of a person on the defensive becomes grotesque. The term interview, however, may still be kept if we accept its original meaning in the French where it connoted "visiting each other" and "having a mutual insight". 25

10. Transfer; Transference; Counter-Transference

In 1924, Jesse Taft introduced the term "transfer" which she described as "an emotional relationship to the client". She said, "A good many people, case workers, teachers and even some psychologists dislike very much the thought of an emotional relationship to the client, student, or patient." 26

The word transference has sometimes been thought of as a Freudian term for relationship.

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Case workers of all persuasions shared a common problem in those first days of psychological case work, that is how to comprehend the part played by "relationship" or, in Freudian terms, "transference." Miss Robinson objected to the word transfer saying that it is too directly borrowed from psychiatric terminology and leaves the caseworker again with a dependence upon another profession and a confused sense of likeness at this point instead of forcing her to analyze her own process in its unique difference from every other professional venture.

The term transference often has been used erroneously to connote any type of relationship. The term transference has become common property in all fields of psychology and connected areas, to the extent that it has become diluted and abused. Psychiatrists and social workers use the term for any kind of relationship particularly that of clients and patients to worker and therapist. Transference should be used only where the repetitional character of the relationship either has been proved or is suspected, although we will have to admit that there is hardly any important emotional relationship in which a considerable amount of transference from earlier objects does not participate.

Gordon Hamilton pointed out that transference is "only one aspect of relationship".

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The word counter-transference has been used to designate unreasonable emotional reactions on the part of the worker.

When the emotions are transferred onto the client from the worker's past we see the phenomenon of counter-transference. 31

The counter transference is the other side of the coin of relationship, for just as the client has feelings in the treatment situation so does the caseworker. 32

11. Relationship

The word "relationship" was chosen by Miss Robinson to connote the broad, all-embracing concept of the casework relationship. In discussing her selection of this name she said,

We may go all the way with the critics of "modern" casework and agree that there is very little conscious, controlled treatment in the casework job. This does not mean that nothing takes place as a result of the caseworker's participation in a situation. Because what does take place is so dynamic and as yet so unknown, so unanalyzed and uncontrolled, that there is much to be gained by giving it a name which implies process, not result, and which will enable us at the same time to concentrate upon it as a tangible and essential process of the casework job capable of being subjected to study and analysis... The word "relationship" which I have chosen here implies interaction and continuity. Further than this it

31 Benjamin Lyndon, "Development and Use," Transference in Casework, 16.
remains to be defined by whatever distinguishing characteristics we can find as we examine the use of this relationship on the part of the client and on the part of the case worker. 33

In commenting on this choice in 1953, Anita J. Faatz says, "The word relationship is still indispensible in present day thinking and practice." 34 She does, however, add another word to this - engagement.

12. Engagement

Miss Faatz states

I have made use of it [the word relationship], adding to it another indispensible word, engagement, one which carries some suggestion of the interaction of which Miss Robinson speaks above, and in addition the immediacy of response which constitutes so important a part of the process. 35

33 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 113-114.
35 Ibid.
B. Definitions of the Casework Relationship

The following is a group of statements that give the impression that a definition of the casework relationship or a concise explanation of its nature is being advanced. The italics have been added by the writer of this thesis.

1926, Bogardus: In the process of both diagnosis and treatment the interview is in reality an interplay of dynamic personalities which constantly act and react to each other's questions and answers, to each other's gestures, facial expressions, manners, and even dress. Generically an interview is a mutual exchange of each other's thoughts, feelings, and actions. (Interviewing in Social Work, 2.)

1927, Hocking: to communicate the philosophy not so much in the form of definite propositions as through the silent interchange of personal attitude. It is for that reason that I use the form 'osmosis' which implies the silent transmission of substance through barriers. This exchange of belief which brings about a new equilibrium in the small community of two is the main object of social work. (Goal of Social Work, 85-86.)

1927, Weiss: Love... is the one constructive relation between me and you. (Goal of Social Work, 23.)

1927, Morgan: The friendly and helpful attitude of the psychiatric social worker transmits itself to the patient creating an atmosphere in which he is at ease and winning his confidence, and he responds in a remarkable way. Without this rapport, knowledge and cleverness and skilled technique are of little avail if any. (The Social Worker in Family, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, 296.)

1929, Odencrantz: The personal approach is through the interview as it is employed to explore emotional reactions, interpret conflicts, suggest new points of view and stimulate interest in new lines of action. (The Social Worker in Family, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, 294.)
1929, Milford Conference: The creative use of methods and knowledge which would otherwise be but mechanical tools gives color, warmth, and vitality to that relationship between human beings which is the adventure of social casework. (Social Case Work: Generic and Specific, 31.)

1929, Milford Conference: The flesh and blood [in social case treatment] is the dynamic relationship between social case worker and the client, child, or foster parent. The interplay of personalities through which the individual is assisted to desire and achieves the fullest development of his personality. (Social Case Work: Generic and Specific, 29.)

1930, Robinson: The treatment relationship becomes the constructive new environment in which he [the client] is given an opportunity to strive for a better solution. (A Changing Psychology, 136.)

1930, Robinson: A treatment relationship whose essential characteristic is dynamic interaction between client and worker . . . (A Changing Psychology, 150.)

1930, Robinson: A relationship environment in which the individual growth pattern of the client can be released. This internal process then becomes the center, the growing point of change. . . . (A Changing Psychology, 166.)

1930, Robinson: The dynamic new experience in which therapeutic change may take place. (A Changing Psychology, 183.)

1931, Reynolds: One must always consciously use the situation as a bridge over which the client may cross to sounder and more secure relations in his life. (Institute for Child Guidance Series, 61.)

1935, Young: Whether this process is designated as friendliness, rapport, identification, transfer, relation, sympathetic insight, or empathy, it aims to establish a bridge across which an interviewer can convey a sense of their mental and emotional natures to each other whereby they can become "we" in another form, winning across the void which separates man from man and gaining a feeling of kinship. (Interviewing, 353.)
Hollis: There must be a warmth, a certain "outgoing" to the other person to form the bridge across which help can be given. (Social Case Work in Practice, 6.)

Shafer: The relation becomes in itself the medicine that works the cure. (Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Bread, 180.)

Shafer: At all times the caseworker must offer a relationship free from prejudice and anxiety, an open table cleared for cooperative action in solving a certain problem. (Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Bread, 180.)

Shafer: In the chemistry of the relationship between the caseworker and the seeker of help, the resulting product depends upon the interaction of ingredients from both parties. (Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Bread, 180.)

Aptekar: It [relationship] is the dynamic interaction which takes place between personalities, or better, between personality trends or drives. There is nothing mystical about it. When two persons get together--in case work or outside of it--something happens. What happens depends upon the two individuals who, it should be remembered, are participating simultaneously in other relationships. In addition much depends on the situation in which people get together. (Basic Concepts, 48.)

Aptekar: He knows that the clients' relationship to him and his behavior in relationship to the client constitutes a process which has in it many potentialities for growth. (Basic Concepts, 57.)

Aptekar: Relationship, in other words, is the means for carrying out function. (Basic Concepts, 58.)

Aptekar: The casework relationship is a special one-entered into by the client as a means of doing something about other, and to him usually more important relationships in which he participates simultaneously. (Basic Concepts, 65.)

Allen: Here, the therapeutic relationship is conceived as an immediate experience. (Psychotherapy With Children, 49.)
1942, Allen: One important medium through which that is made possible is the therapeutic experience emerging in the present therapist and patient build together. (Psychotherapy With Children, 54.)

1942, Robinson: Our search for this generic base has led us to define and abstract a process of relationship which we have called the "helping process." (Training for Skill in Social Case Work, 2.)

1948, Austin: The relationship is the medium through which the client is enabled to state his problem and through which attention can be focused on reality problems, which may be as full of conflict as emotional problems. (Principles and Techniques, 327.)

1948, Lyndon: Caseworkers in recent years have become increasingly aware of the full meaning of the casework relationship as the environment within which treatment takes place. (Transference in Casework, 1.)

1949, Lyndon: In its simplest terms a relationship may be defined as a connection between two persons for common satisfactions or purposes. A casework relationship is the professional meeting of two persons for the purpose of assisting one of them, the client to make a better, a more acceptable adjustment to a personal problem. Within its limits is found the emotional exchange that makes treatment possible. The relationship is the sum total of all that happens between the participants— all the words exchanged, the feelings, attitudes, actions, and thoughts expressed; everything, in fact, that the client and worker do whether open and overt or devious and hidden. (Transference in Casework, 16.)

1949, Hamilton: Relationship is the psychiatric thread running through all modern casework.

1950, A Diagnostic Concept: The relationship is recognized as the medium through which the client is enabled to find new ways of looking at his problems and handling himself. (A Comparison of Diagnostic and Functional Casework Concepts, 18.)

1950, A Functional Concept: It follows therefore that the central factor in casework help is a relationship—an experience in form—in which the client can experience a
new and constructive way of using himself and the other person. (Diagnostic and Functional, 11.)

1951, Hamilton: Within the democratic frame of reference the professional relationship involves a mutual process of shared responsibilities, recognition of the other's rights, acceptance of difference, with the goal, not of isolation, but of socialized attitudes and behavior stimulating growth through interaction. (Theory and Practice, 27.)

Summary of Chapter III

That the understanding of what is meant by the concept of the casework relationship has changed over the years is shown by a survey of the terms used to denote what goes on when two people meet in a professional relationship, and by a review of a list of definitions advanced by the authors studied.

Friendship, or friendliness, was one of the most generally accepted terms at first. This did not stress objectivity on the part of the caseworker. Then, as the need for refinement of meaning began to be recognized, more "scientific" words were advanced. Contact was one of these, but this did not seem to include either the warmth, or the dynamic interaction, thought necessary. Sympathy, empathy, and identification had always been used, but the word rapport seemed to include all of these, plus contact, and implied a deeper relationship as well. With the introduction of the words transfer and participation, the importance of the client and his reactions, as well as the self-awareness of the caseworker were stressed. The word inter-
view was often used but it was generally understood that it was not synonymous with relationship but that the relationship went on within the interview. In an effort to find a word that would include all aspects of the casework relationship the word relationship itself was advanced. This is still generally used although opinions still vary as to just what goes into a good casework relationship. Attempts are still made to define it, as suggested by Miss Robinson, "by whatever distinguishing characteristics we can find as we examine the use of this relationship on the part of the client and on the part of the caseworker."

The definitions which are listed in Part B reflect the search being made for a more definite understanding of what actually goes into a casework relationship. The difficulty of putting this into words is shown by the frequent use of analogies to explain what relationship is like rather than what it is: Relationship is an atmosphere, flesh and blood, a bridge, an adventure, medicine, an open table, etc. Through studies made of the interview, the concept of the dynamic interaction and circular response in relationship came to the fore, and attempts were made to isolate for study the elements of interaction. As Aptekar remarked in his definition, "There is nothing mystical about it." Lyndon feels that it is simply the sum total of what happens between the participants, but this concept seems to
over-simplify the explanation.

Seeing that the casework definition is to be defined in terms of use as well as its elements, the differences expressed in the diagnostic and functional definitions as regards use are important. In the 1941 definition by Aptekar and in the 1950 functional definition a great stress on the use of function and the clients "will" is brought out. This, however, does not seem to be the generally advanced concept in the definitions.
CHAPTER IV

SOME ELEMENTS OF INTERACTION IN
THE CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP

In this chapter we shall discuss some of the elements which are considered essential in the casework relationship. We shall also record references to those attributes in the caseworker which are considered pre-requisites to the professional use of the casework relationship.

A. Elements in the Casework Relationship

1. Self Determination

At the Milford Conference, participation was referred to as an essential ingredient in interviewing. It as stated that

the social worker has no passive canvas on which to paint his picture. The client himself must be a participant in the art of social case work . . . participation begins with the first contact between social case worker and client, and continues to the end. It is an essential ingredient of interviewing, of diagnosing, of planning and of the carrying out of plans.¹

Client self-determination in the casework relationship has been referred to as a right of the client.

In accepting a relationship which may change him personally, the client has a right to decide whether he wants treatment and how much. He must be willing to accept responsibility

¹ Milford Conference, 30.
for using what his professional counselor has to give, in such a way as to make it his own and apply it himself to his own problems of adjustment.  

The client should be made aware of this right.

What he may become she does not know but she gives him the spur of awareness that in his relationship to her, he, the client, is a free man.  

Self-help is considered essential in the rehabilitation and recovery of all people, rich or poor. Gordon Hamilton says that

the poor and the less fortunate have this desire to work out their own solutions just as strongly as the captains of industry. It is resources, capacity, and opportunity which fail them. Clients are usually satisfied in direct proportion to which this desire is recognized and means found to enlist them in efforts toward their own recovery.  

Caseworkers have learned pragmatically that self-help is essential in rehabilitation and recovery.  

A client never loses his desire for self-determination. It is conceded that

everyone wants to govern his own life and make his own decisions. Puzzled, bewildered, and buffeted though a man may be he never loses the urge to self expression. No matter how submissive he may have become to another's suggestion, no matter how prone he may be to turn to someone else for the solution of his problems, when he reaches

2 Reynolds, Between Client and Community, p.7.  


4 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 13.
that which to him is vital he wants to be the arbiter of his own desires.\(^5\)

**Summary of Part 1**

Client self-determination (or self-help, or client participation as it is sometimes called) is an essential element in the casework relationship. It is based on the natural right of a client to make his own decisions and choices. In order to exercise that right the client needs a relationship in which he feels free to do so. It is the duty of the caseworker to respect that right.

2. **Individuation**

The client should be made to feel that he is important not just as a human being but as a particular human being. This conviction should be stressed from the start so that the client can feel early that he is being recognized as a person.\(^6\) Contact should be made by workers who have "a sense of the value, loveliness, interest, and whimsicalities of human beings."\(^7\) The worker "must really want to add something to the comfort and happiness of the other person... because

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5 Karl De Schweinitz, *The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble*, Boston, 1924, 139-140.


7 Miriam Van Waters, Ph.D., *Youth in Conflict*, New York, 1925.
she really cares about what happens to this particular individual."

The need for individuation in casework was recognized early.

Classifications of our fellow men are apt to prove unsatisfactory under the tests of experience and acquaintance with the individual. The poor, and those in trouble worse than poverty have not in common any type of physical, intellectual, or moral development to group them as a class.9

In reference to the above quotation Miss Robinson said, "Here is the enunciation of the principle of individuation, the foundation of modern case work."10

That this right extended into the emotional sphere was not generally recognized at first:

That a client has a right to be himself ... is an extension of the deeply rooted case work belief in self-help. Earlier concepts ... were, however, almost wholly economic. ... Better understanding of the treatment relationship has refocused the same idea, now also in the emotional sphere.11

Miss Robinson, however, believes that it has always been practiced in successful casework. She states that we must assume that from the first the friendly visitor. ...

8 Florence Hollis, Social Case Work in Practice, New York, 1939, 6-7.


10 Robinson, Changing Psychology, 7.

11 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 29.
achieved her success with her families through a rare individualization of each one even though her understanding was intuitive only, and her methods . . . were advice, persuasion, and exhortation. 12

Individuation in the relationship is seen as a necessity in promoting change.

If the history of social case work teaches anything it teaches this one thing outstandingly, that only in this field of the individual's reaction patterns and in the possibilities of therapeutic change in these patterns can there be any possibility of a legitimate professional case work field. . . . 13

Summary of Part 2

Individuation has been recognized as the foundation of modern case work. It is based upon the right of an individual to be treated as a particular human being with differences that set him apart from all other human beings. It is necessary element in the casework relationship in order to make changes in the individual's reaction patterns possible.

3. The Non-Judgmental Attitude

Gordon Hamilton states that a client has a right to his own goals and standards. She states that social workers do not impose upon the clients their own goals or standards of behavior, their own solutions and

12 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 8.
13 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 185.
morals, but respect the clients right to be himself. They do not scold, or moralize, or threaten. Concrete services and practical assistance are "non-contingent" on conformity in behavior. Goods and services in modern social work, as in modern medicine, are given because the client has need of them, not because he is a "nice-Christian."\textsuperscript{14}

The client needs to feel free to express contradictory feelings about his problem without being judged by the worker.

The importance of the quality of the relationship is shown particularly in casework. In many cases the client will have contradictory feelings about his problem. If the worker should be suspicious, making judgments about the moral implications of the problem or the solutions entered into by the person in need, little of a helpful nature will emerge.\textsuperscript{15}

The relationship should be such that the client always feels free to express himself.

A client may not be ready to discuss certain materials, but permissiveness to do so must always be in the worker's mind.\textsuperscript{16}

This expression of feeling is seen as essential to treatment.

Sometimes the client expresses openly negative feelings which are disturbing to the young worker until he comes to realize that the expression of feeling is essential to

\textsuperscript{14} Hamilton "Growth of a Profession," Principles and Techniques, 87-88.

\textsuperscript{15} Stroup, Herbert, Social Work, An Introduction to The Field, New York, 1948, 27.

\textsuperscript{16} Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 55.
Permissiveness in relationship is important because it enables clients to release tensions that have been adversely affecting their behavior.

As a therapeutic measure listening becomes highly important when dealing with emotional clients who are given the opportunity to release their pent up feelings, which oftentimes hamper their thinking and their behavior. 18

The non-judgmental attitude permits a client's behavior to be accepted without praise or blame in order that it may be studied objectively in an effort to help him.

In order that the military psychiatric social worker develop the non-judgmental attitude, it is not necessary that he surrender his own standards of personal conduct or approve conduct in patients which is detrimental to order and military discipline. The patient will not be helped if he finds that the anti-social behavior for which he was sent for psychiatric evaluation is apparently approved by the social worker. The non-judgmental attitude in such a case would transmit to the patient the concept that his behavior is neither being praised nor, condemned, but is being studied objectively in order that he can be understood and helped with his difficulty. 19

In working through to attitudes that are neither moralistic nor coercive the worker must first be able to understand himself and his own emotional drives and impulses before he can truly accept the "bad" feelings, aggressions, or even love and gratitude in others. . . The place of value judgments is always assumed, but they do not take the con-

17 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 42.
18 Young, Interviewing, 71.
ventional form of praising or blaming the person who is to be helped. 20

Summary of Part 3

The non-judgmental attitude is based upon the client's right to be judged guilty or innocent only by a person having legitimate authority to do so. The worker recognizes that he does not have that right. The help he gives to the client is based upon the client's need, not upon his conformity to the worker's standards. One of the client's needs is to feel free to express himself in his most negative as well as positive aspects. This freedom of expression allows the release of tensions which may have hitherto immobilized the client. Only in a non-judgmental atmosphere will the client feel free to so express himself. The non-judgmental attitude does not imply that the worker is indifferent to values. He may objectively judge the attitudes, standards, or actions of the client in order to help him, but he does not judge the person himself.

20 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 40.
4. Controlled Emotional Envolvement

It is recognized in the literature that emotion is an essential element in any good casework relationship. In 1924, Jesse Taft said that "the basis of all case work is primarily emotional not rational or intellectual."21

However, to be of value to the client, emotions must be controlled. As Gordon Hamilton states it, "Love is a part of the dynamics of any real healing, but it must be a special sort of love, a disciplined concern, not indulgence for oneself."22

Conscious control of the worker's feelings is necessary so as not to adversely affect his response to the client. It is not that he suppresses his feelings, but that more of his feelings—both positive and negative—are brought into consciousness and under control and therefore do not so much affect his response to another's emotions.23

A controlled emotional envolvement is necessary in a relationship lest the worker's reasoning ability become blurred. A worker should

21 Young, Interviewing, 353, citing Jesse Taft, "The Use of the Transfer within the Limits of the Office Interview, "The Family, V (October, 1924) 143.


23 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 42.
maintain a professional attitude, and guard against emotion on her own part, or at least keep her own emotion in the background. Hard and unsympathetic? Not at all. Understanding and sympathetic she must be, but freedom of emotional response is a luxury which is apt to blur her reasoning ability and submerge her judgment so that she becomes just one more pitying or impatient friend. 24

A worker does not lack emotion, but controls it in order to use it constructively.

Actually the more the self grows, the more it is full of emotion, the more sensitively it responds, the more spontaneous it becomes. It is a matter of affirming, containing, recreating the self, courageously and spontaneously, in order to learn to help. 25

One worker writes of her growing awareness of the value of conscious control of emotion in a relationship. She summarizes it by saying, "Conscious control is a much safer tool than a blind impulse." 26

Summary of Part 4

A client has a right to life. Life is dependent on relationships with others as manifested through love. A client has a special need for this love, hence the response of the worker must be so controlled that the client becomes aware of

25 Faatz, The Nature of Choice, 76.
this love. The response of the worker must be geared to the client's needs. When the worker's reasoning power is not blurred because of his own needs, he is able to give the response needed by the client and thus contribute to the creation of the type of casework relationship essential for the client's growth.

5. Acceptance

Acceptance is seen as a necessity in all human relations.

It social casework accepts the individual—such as he is and with all his limitations—as he is expected to learn to accept others, without prejudice. Not out of personal friendship, but as a quality of life, it offers warmth, acceptance, and understanding, in quiet illustration of a quality in human relations that might have value everywhere. 27

Acceptance has been called a fundamental professional attitude.

Interviewing skill rests upon a fundamental professional attitude called "acceptance." This means acceptance of the other person as he is—in whatever situation, no matter how unpleasant or uncongenial to the interviewer, with whatever behavior, aggressiveness, hostility, dependency, or lack of frankness he may manifest. This attitude can come only from respect for people and a genuine desire to help anyone who is in need or trouble. It is translated through courtesy, patience, willingness to learn, and not being critical or disapproving of whatever the client may complain of,

request or reveal about himself. 28

Acceptance is seen as a needed element in a therapeutic relationship.

Respect for others, acceptance of others, as they are and potentially they can be, tends to induce between worker and client, between the one who seeks and the one who offers help, a relationship which is not only the medium for educational counseling, but for a therapeutic process. 29

The client needs to have his dependency needs accepted in a relationship before he can begin to rely on his own strength.

He the caseworker should understand more fully the principle of accepting dependency needs of the client before the latter feels free to use a relationship to see, accept, and rely on his own strength. 30

In a casework relationship the client should find an acceptance that he has not been able to find elsewhere. This acceptance should include all of his potentialities.

They clients may need the services of the social case worker because of all those who have sought to aid them, none has approached them and their problems with the idea of accepting them as they really are. 31

28 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, p. 52.


30 Elizabeth Chichester, Samuel Finestone, Leon Lucas, Dala Scott, "Field Work Criteria for Second Year Students," Principles and Techniques, 245.

He [the client] has been accepted for the moment as he is until his perspective is clarified, until he can see reflected back to him from the worker his own hope of what he might be.32

Meanwhile it is important to point out the essentially active quality of the analyst's acceptance of the patient. It implies a constant search for deeper meanings which the patient may be struggling to express, rather than a passive toleration of the attitudes he may assert on the surface. Furthermore the acceptance which the patient requires of the analyst must extend to his whole growth capacity. . . .33

Acceptance does not mean the surrender of values.

Of course, this acceptance on the part of the worker does not mean that he makes the persons problems and values his very own. That would be impossible and desirable. In fact it is always necessary and important for the worker to maintain professional standards.34

Summary of Part 5

Acceptance is based on the fundamental right of the client to be treated as a human being with the same needs, rights, dignity, and destiny as any other human being. It implies accepting him in his totality with all of his faults as well as his potentialities. It does not imply the surrender of values on the part of the caseworker.

32 Ibid, 28.
33 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 124.
34 Stroup, Social Work, An Introduction to the Field, 28.
6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality has been considered another necessary element in the casework relationship.

Implicit in the integrity of social case work as a profession is regard for the confidential nature of the whole relationship between client and case worker. It is essential to ease and rapport in all contacts with the client that he know his confidences will be respected. Information about clients and their affairs should not get beyond protected case records. 35

Confidentiality has been considered a right of the client.

The client has the right to count on the maximum of protection in the professional relationship. If other agencies are properly concerned, he should know the terms of their interest and the obligation to be assumed by the worker— to share or not to share the information with associated institutions. 36

It is the responsibility of the case worker to respect this right.

If interviewers are to build up respect for the confidential nature of their relationship with clients, they must in practice warrant this respect. . . . because of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, the interviewee is often led to reveal himself more fully than he has to others, and it is the interviewer's responsibility not to misuse these confidences. 37

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36 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 131.
Summary of Part 6

Confidentiality is a necessary element in the casework relationship. It is essential to ease and rapport in all contacts in order that the client can speak freely with the certain knowledge that his confidences will be respected. It is based on the right of the client to his own reputation. The caseworker has a responsibility to respect this right.

7. What Constitutes The Whole?

Although the six elements mentioned above have been isolated by the writer of this thesis for the purpose of investigation and study, it is recognized that this is an artificial device. The whole— in this case, the casework relationship—cannot be understood simply by understanding its elements in isolation.

As has been stated previously, some of the authors studied have conceived of relationship as being the sum of its parts. This point of view is not shared by all authors. The concept of "interaction" so frequently mentioned implies something different from a mere sum. This has been specifically stated by Strode:

The sum of the physical, psychological, and social factors in any situation does not give a true picture of that situation.38

38 Strode, Introduction to Casework, 135.
It is felt that something different is created through this process.

When two or more people get together processes of interaction and inter-stimulation operate to produce something new.39

This new whole is considered a dynamic, constantly changing unit. In clarifying the concept of circular response which is so frequently used in describing relationship and which is based upon writings of Mary P. Follett, Miss Follett says that an ethical unit gets its character of wholeness by an interweaving with the parts as well as interweaving of the parts. This is the characteristic of wholeness which has been disastrously overlooked but which the doctrine of circular response so illuminatingly gives.40

Miss Follett further clarifies this concept of wholeness by referring to a quotation by the British psychologist H. J. Watt in reference to sensory impulses:

An intimacy of connection between nerve-paths or impulses emanating from different sense organs, is of course, recognized in many forms. But this connection has been somewhat exclusively considered to consist in a mere coordination or association of afferent and efferent impulses with one another. Sufficient attention has hardly been paid to the possibility that upon these afferent impulses an afferent structure might be raised which is dependent upon but is essentially an addition to these. To distinguish it from

39 Ibid

40 Mary Follett, Creative Experience, New York, 1924, 113.
mere coordination such a structure might well be called integration.\footnote{Mary Follett, citing H. W. Watt, "Some Problems of Sensory Integration," British Journal of Psychology, 1910, 3, 323, ff.}

Summary of Part 7

Relationship is not necessarily the sum of its elements but something new that is created as a result of the dynamic inter-action and interstimulation of the elements. It is dependent on but different from these elements.

B. Attributes in The Caseworker

Many of the writers studied have considered self-awareness and objectivity on the part of the worker as essential for the professional use of relationship.

1. Self-awareness

Sterba\footnote{Sterba, Lyndon, and Katz, Transference in Casework, 15.} points out that early efforts to understand the implications of the worker-client relationship were focused upon the client, but that gradually the personality and attitudes of the worker came under professional scrutiny. In 1924, Jesse Taft said,

The caseworker who has seen to her own adjustment first, before undertaking to bring about adjustment in other human lives, need have no fear of the transfer, but will find in its conscious, skillfull, and impersonal use her most val-
The interplay of her personality and of her client's forms the medium of her work and sets in operation the casework process of disintegrating the present situation for the purpose of reintegrating it on a new and better level.

Since at every turn in the process of the case the worker's personality is involved, her first responsibility is to study her own reactions. 

In 1930, Miss Robinson recognized the need for the professional person to be aware of her own reactions in her contacts with the client.

As the training experience progresses, the student must become increasingly aware of herself in every contact, must become conscious and analytic of her naive identifications and forego her old security in spontaneous contact for a security painfully achieved in professional contact where the client's reality, not her own, is of paramount importance.

Gordon Hamilton refers to self-awareness as a prerequisite to the professional use of relationship.

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45 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 177.
Some of the things that we have come to recognize as affecting the worker-client relationship include: that insights and self-awareness are prerequisites in a professional use of relationship; that acceptance of one's self is important in being able to understand the feelings of others. Only if we understand to some extent our own motivation can we leave the client free to establish himself securely first with us and then again with others.  

A worker's pre-determined attitudes may seriously affect his relationship with the client.

All the things said about understanding human beings apply also to the interviewer for he too is a human being, with unconscious, as well as conscious motivation, ambivalence, prejudices, and objective and subjective reasons for his behavior. He brings to his relationship with the interviewee his own pre-determined attitudes, which may profoundly affect that relationship. He has a natural tendency to impute to others his own feelings and may thus seriously misunderstand his client's situation and problems.

If the client lacks self-awareness, his personal feelings will block movement in the relationship.

The worker must have a high degree of self-awareness, or his unconscious, bias, prejudice, self indulgent wishes to please others or to be liked will stand in the way of free movement in the client's use of the relationship.

Counter-transference responses by the worker are lessened when a worker has insight into his own feelings.


47 Annette Garrett, Interviewing, New York, 1942, 42.

The worker's development of insight into his own feelings through increased self-awareness is essential to minimize counter-transference responses in the treatment relationship.4-9

Social workers have a responsibility to become aware of their reactions in the relationship.

If analysts, with the benefit of specialized training including an analysis, must be watchful of reactions to their clients, it would seem that social workers who, in the main, are not analyzed, should be doubly sure to check their feelings about their clients. Accepting the existence of emotional reactions on the part of the caseworker as a reality, we therefore have a real responsibility to watch for our own reactions and learn to detect them. . . .50

2. Objectivity

The need for objectivity was recognized early.

The worker who allows herself to become entirely absorbed in her work is motivated by complete identification with her clients. . . . She becomes her client, and by this move loses the most valuable contribution she has to give, namely, her objective attitude toward his problem.51

Miss Robinson saw objectivity as an important characteristic of the caseworker's attitude.


50 Ibid, 27.

We arrive here at a fourth characteristic of the case-worker's attitude, her objectivity, her detachment from a personal stake in the client's problem. This perhaps more than any other factor in the entire situation created for the client a unique opportunity to change.

Objectivity has been seen as necessary to any successful therapist.

The successful therapist consciously or unconsciously identifies with the client, and at the same time is able to look objectively at the problem, formulate its structure, and see a possible resolution to it. It is this objective approach combined with an identification with the individual that results in the prompt, valid judgments that are necessary to successful treatment in any therapeutic situation.

Professor Lyndon has attempted to define objectivity.

When such reactions [counter-transference] enter the treatment relationships they inevitably distort it. . . . It is because of this inevitable distortion. . . . that the concept of casework objectivity has grown in the field to mean the awareness of one's own feelings as they are aroused by the client. An acknowledgment of the feeling rather than a denial of it is a sign of the worker's capacity for developing further skills.

A thorough understanding of the counter-transference aspects of relationship is necessary because "the degree of 'objectivity' in casework treatment is dependent upon the understanding of this phenomenon."}

52 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 150.
Summary of Chapter IV

In this chapter are recorded references to some elements which are considered to be essential to a good casework relationship. Also recorded are the attributes in the caseworker which are considered pre-requisites to the professional use of relationship.

Six elements were frequently mentioned by the writers studied: client self-determination, individuation, the non-judgmental attitude, controlled emotional involvement, acceptance, and confidentiality. Each was seen to be based upon a right and a need of the client, and implied a responsibility on the part of the caseworker to respect the right and meet the need.

Two attributes of the caseworker which were considered pre-requisites to the professional use of relationship were self-awareness and objectivity.

Self-awareness was considered essential because the worker's personality and reactions are involved at every turn in the case and may help or impede movement in the relationship. The writers studied have considered these counter-transference aspects as realities for which the caseworkers have a real responsibility to detect and control.
The degree of objectivity which a caseworker possesses has been thought to be greatly influenced by the amount of his self-awareness. Objectivity is considered necessary so that a worker may not reject or over-identify with a client thus losing one of this most valuable contributions to the casework relationship.

The question as to whether or not the casework relationship was the sum of all that happens between the worker and client was discussed. For the most part the definitions seemed to suggest that relationship was something new created as a result of the interaction of the elements in the situation— or as Pauline Young said in 1935 that it was "'we' in another form." The creation of this new or integrative whole was seen to be influenced by the worker's objectivity and self-awareness.
CHAPTER V

HOW THE CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP IS USED

In order to understand what relationship means in the casework situation it is helpful to know how it is used by case-workers. In this chapter will be recorded some of the uses mentioned by the writers studied.

In the 1920's the casework relationship was used more or less intuitively and often to influence the client to follow plans made by the worker. The worker herself took a very active part in carrying out these plans.

The visitor tries to get into the friendliest relations with the child and to carry out personally many items in the program, drawing upon her own resources to elaborate and to supplement the original plan.¹

Miss Odencrantz speaks of its use in the "modification of the environment"² and the "changing of attitudes."³

It was also used to encourage clients to follow advice given to them.

² Louise Odencrantz, The Social Worker in Family, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, New York, 1929, 270.
³ Ibid, 291.
In the handling of individuals, the fact that it is possible to create in our relationships with our patients a kind of positive feeling which leads them to be willing to follow our advice also needs to be understood in the simple analytic terminology of positive transference.4

However, in 1925 Lucia Clow recognized the importance of relationship as a basis for treatment. After stating that diagnosis, the case conference, and knowledge of the community were important, she added:

Yet we are realizing also that the success of any except a fool proof plan (and of such how many are there?) may be made or marred by the relationship between the client and visitor, and that more and more in the medium of this interplay the plans for the family evolve."5

At the Milford Conference the importance of its use as a means for achieving the ends of casework was forecast:

We could list the treatment services given on the statistical cards used by social case work agencies but they would give merely the bare bones of what is involved in social case treatment. The flesh and blood is in the dynamic relationship between the social case worker and the client, child, or foster parent; the interplay of personalities through which the individual is assisted to desire and achieve the fullest possible development of his personality.6

To this statement, Father Bowers has added the


6 Milford Conference, 29-30.
Perhaps an even more appropriate metaphor would be "the blood stream," for it is in the casework relationship that diagnostic testing is effected, and it is through the relationship that both the individuals own "antibodies" and the nutritive substances from outer sources are carried on in an assimilable form to meet local threats to the person's well-being.7

In 1930, with the introduction of Miss Robinson's "concept of social case work as individual therapy"8 the relationship was conceived of as a dynamic situation similar to Rank's concept of the analytic situation. It was to be used by the patient to work out "his own 'will', his conscious desires and his unconscious and unaccepted strivings, against the attitude of the analyst."9 This concept greatly influenced social caseworkers and for a time the social aspect of casework was given decreasing attention.

Referring to this period, Gordon Hamilton said,

Confronted with inevitable difficulties, some caseworkers... retreated into an almost mystical use of the worker client relationship. We are just recovering from what one of my friends calls 'a silly season'. What we have learned about relationship is pure gain, more particularly if we have rediscovered our social function... The important thing is that we should not be pushed into an either-or position, but that we develop a range or flexibility of approach in which the knowledge which may have been derived

8 Robinson, A Changing Psychology, 187.
9 Ibid, 122.
from psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and other disciplines can be utilized within social situations in the community.10 

Miss Robinson did, however, see relationship as being used in other than intensive relationships.

This concept of social work as individual therapy through a treatment relationship may seem to imply that the only legitimate and worthwhile case work efforts are in intensive relationships. On the contrary, however, this approach lends and increased interest and significance to the most limited contacts, to single interviews and refer work.11

At the present time the casework relationship is used in a variety of ways. It is used to further treatment objectives which may change as the client's need changes.

After the initial exploratory period, the caseworker proceeds with the contacts with client or clients, utilizing the relationship to further, in an integrated way, the tentative treatment objectives.12

It is used to enable the client to see himself in true perspective.

The relationship between the client and worker is of great importance. It is only as a client feels the warm acceptance of the worker that he is able to face hidden parts of his personality of which he may be afraid or ashamed.13


Relationship is involved in all aspects of casework, its depth determining the degree of help which can be given to the client.

While "relationship" is always involved in social casework, the more intimate the history and the more disturbed the person, the more it is essential that the relationship be strong enough to permit disclosure of the self.¹⁴

In treatment it is used to give clarification, support, and insight. In regard to clarification, Florence Hollis says,

Where the treatment is primarily clarification the relationship varies in strength depending on the nature of the matters upon which understanding is sought and the extent to which feeling about these matters emerge. In the simplest form of clarification strong emotion between worker and client are not involved. The caseworker has a friendly and intelligent interest in the client which the latter correctly perceives. When understanding is extended to matters of greater emotional significance the relationship deepens but is still based primarily on realistic responses to the workers interest rather than on transference.¹⁵

The relationship is used to give temporary support to the client.

The caseworkers understanding of the dynamics of relationship makes it possible to provide some gratification, protection, and guidance to the client when his ego needs support, and at the same time to help the client marshal strength to meet his life situations.¹⁶

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¹⁵ Hollis, Women in Marital Conflict, New York, 1949, 154.
¹⁶ Kasius, A Comparison, 19.
For the client, the sharing of painful experiences and feelings with a supporting person may result in a diminishing of disabling tension and anxiety. He may be helped to develop sufficient security to look at unacceptable and troublesome feelings and attitudes.\textsuperscript{17}

For this supportive treatment a strong relationship is used.

When psychological supportive treatment predominates, the real relationship is a strong one and a greater degree of transference is also present. \ldots Since, in this type of casework, the caseworker is consistently giving and reassuring, negative elements of the transference are usually elicited only slightly, if at all. The client is usually not encouraged to become aware of the transference but, instead, it is used to supply him temporarily with a supportive atmosphere that will carry him through a period of stress or enable him to develop new satisfactions or better ways of managing his life. \ldots\textsuperscript{18}

The relationship is used to help the client gain insight.

When the emphasis in treatment shifts to insight development, there are stronger elements of transference in the relationship. Here the transference is used to help the client understand his own psychological mechanisms and to elicit emotions and memories that need to be brought to the surface, if they are to be re-evaluated by the ego. Negative elements characteristically enter the transference to a greater degree in insight development than in psychological support.\textsuperscript{19}

Relationship is used in the administration of practical services.

\textsuperscript{17} Kasius, \textit{A Comparison}, 19.

\textsuperscript{18} Hollis, \textit{Women in Marital Conflict}, 155.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
A mature person may be scarcely conscious of the relationship, the resource itself being regarded as the important thing. If, however, the client is inform or ill, the relationship may be strongly supportive. .. If the client has little ability to deal with actual situations because of a weak "character" or "ego" structure, if he has a distorted sense of reality, if he must act out his impulse without regard to conditions, limits, or cultural moves, if he is too self-inhibiting to find satisfaction in and make his normal contribution to society, then an educational, manipulative, or therapeutic process may be initiated.20

The use of services and gifts is determined by the needs of the case and casework objectives but the worker-client relationship is implicit in every situation. .. It has a bearing on the effort which the client will put forth on his own behalf and the value which he will place on contributions of time, of effort, of relief. From contact with the worker as well as the use of her tools he may derive the emotional release, the confidence in himself which he needs for the accomplishment of his purposes.21

Relationship is used authoritively.

The psychologically well-equipped worker is not afraid to use authority on a positive basis after it has been diagnosed as appropriate for the individual and the function of the agency. Much protective work is simply casework with deeply disturbed or neurotic parents. .. Children need to be restrained, just as they need to be loved - restraints are internalized because of loving, nurturing relationships. .. Both caseworker and client act within reality situations of which authority is part of the framework.22

20 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 244.
22 Hamilton, Theory and Practice, 1951, 46-47.
In the functional school, relationship is focused less upon the client's need than on carrying out the function of the agency.

Relationship . . . is the means for carrying out function. It must not be looked upon as an end in itself but instead must remain incidental to function.  

In the functional school, the relationship is used to enable the client to experience himself as reflected by the worker.

The help he [the client] receives is the opportunity to experience himself in a relationship with a person who neither controls him nor allows him to control, but consistently reflects back to him his characteristic way of relating (which has failed him in this crisis) and thus enables him to take responsibility for this way of being and to find a new way and a new or more developed, self.  

Workers of the "functional" school place great stress on the client's "will" and the use that the client wants to make of agency function.

The terms under which a relationship between Mrs. L. and the agency will exist are set forth. . . The worker is a representative of the agency and is therefore interested in the use which Mrs. L. wants to make of the agency. Through her interest in this the worker will get to see what Mrs. L. is like as a person. The worker's interest, however, is not so much in what Mrs. L.'s total personality is like as in what Mrs. L. wants to do with the agency's service.

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23 See Kasius, A Comparison, for discussion of underlying differences between the functional and diagnostic points of view.

24 Aptekar, Basic Concepts, 58.

25 Kasius, A Comparison, 30.
Through the use of reasonable requirements and questions regarding various aspects of the client's intentions, the intake worker is able to test whether Mrs. L. really wants the agency's service and whether she is able to use it.26

In the diagnostic school, the client's need receives paramount consideration.

The important consideration... is that it is essential to meet the patient's relationship need rather than to become fixed in our own need to enact a certain prescribed therapeutic role.27

It is... recognized that the relationship has different value and meaning to different clients. The caseworker attempts to understand the meaning of the relationship to the particular client, and to respond according to the needs, the diagnosis, and the objectives in each situation.28

The casework relationship is used "aggressively" on behalf of people who have been so badly hurt that they need to learn its value through direct experience. Of those who work in this manner it has been said,

In addition to professional competence these workers must have social competence in the ability to establish easy, direct and warm relationships with people... They go out aggressively on behalf of the client— not against him. In this first going they are often just a shoulder to lean on, a friendly support.29

In "aggressive casework" the worker goes out to the

26 Aptekar, Basic Concepts, 56.
27 Charlotte Towle, Social Case Records, 1941, 8.
28 Kasius, A Comparison, 18.
resistive client until he is ready to accept and use a relationship.

But this kind of thinking involved our aggressive caseworkers' limited understanding of clients' "readiness" and clients' existing awareness of their problems. We had to face that what we usually meant by readiness amounted to our expectation of a rather sophisticated degree of insight. A review of case material indicated that when workers made a true effort to engage uncooperative and "inaccessible" clients, they could reach some of this group. This kind of reaching out goes beyond skills and includes genuine, warm, perceptible concern and definite feeling for the client.30

The relationship is the medium of casework help.

The relationship is recognized as the medium through which the client is enabled to find new ways of looking at his problems and handling himself. The therapeutic influences that operate, although subtle, have come to be understood and to be put to constructive use in case work help.31

In order to attain effective use of relationship, the worker must have skill in its use. Miss Robinson has defined skill as applied to casework.

Skill is the capacity to set in motion and control a process of change in specific material in such a way that the change that takes place in the material is effected with the greatest degree of consideration for and utilization of the quality and capacity of the material.32

Father Bowers believes that skill in relationship lies in the worker's use of self, and implies acceptance of the client,

30 Ibid, 43.
31 Kasius, A Comparison, 18.
client self-determination, and the deliberate use of the transference.

Skill in relationship is the medium through which the worker's knowledge of the science of human relations is applied. . . . The skill lies in the use of the worker's self in a constructively constructive relationship to the individual in his unique situation, and it implies acceptance of him with all his differences and uniqueness, allowing him to exercise freedom of choice, and a deliberate use of the transference factors inhering in the situation.33

Skill in the use of relationship depends a great deal upon the worker's understanding and use of transference.

Even in simple non-therapeutic worker-client relationships transferences are inevitable and must be both recognized and controlled. . . In this instance one may say that knowledge of the transference makes the difference between conscious control of the worker-client situation and merely intuitive procedures.

From what has been said above one may conclude that the understanding and use of the transference constitutes an indispensable element of the worker's technique, and presents for the client a medium for the re-establishment of emotional equilibrium.34


34 Sterba, Transference in Casework, 11.
Summary of Chapter V

In the early 1920's, the casework was often used to influence the client to carry out plans which had been made by the worker with the more or less cooperative help of the client. During the mid-twenties its value as a basis for treatment began to be recognized, and at the Milford Conference it was referred to as the "flesh and blood" of treatment. After Virginia Robinson focused increasing attention on it in 1930, it was attributed almost magical powers by some workers. They appeared to concentrate on its use in intensive relationships.

Attention was then re-focused on the social function of social work and relationship was used in a variety of ways. It was used in the administration of practical services. It was used authoritatively or aggressively when this was felt needed in a casework situation. In treatment, it was used to give clarification, support, or insight.

In the functional school, relationship was used to carry out the function of the agency. In the diagnostic school, it was used in a variety of ways, the particular use depending on the need of the client.

In summary, it was used as the medium of the entire casework process, as a part of casework help, and as a form of treatment, the effectiveness of its use being dependent on the skill of the worker.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis has been to search a body of literature published since 1920 for references to the concept of the casework relationship in order to formulate, if possible, a descriptive definition of the concept based upon the material found. Information sought included reasons why the casework relationship was considered important; ways in which the casework relationship was seen to resemble, and differ from, ordinary relationships; words and definitions used to signify the concept; the elements of which it was seen to be composed, and the uses made of it. In order to delimit the scope of the thesis, material concerning limitations to the casework relationship and philosophies upon which the uses of relationship are based were not used except incidentally. It will be important to examine these aspects in future studies in order to have a deeper understanding of the concept of the casework relationship. The definition which is given later in this chapter is a tentative one only.

In reviewing the material gathered for this thesis, it was seen that the meaning of the basic concept of relationship was not too clear, but that it was usually accepted as implying some sort of connection and interaction among elements. The definition of social or interpersonal relations raised more diffi-
culties because it involved meaning, value, purpose, and symbols. Attempts to define a particular species of interpersonal relationship, that is, the casework relationship, raised even more problems as it necessitated a further refining of meaning. In this study an attempt to refine this meaning has been made through isolating for study the elements which seemed essential to the casework relationship and through studying the uses made of the relationship.

In the material gathered for this thesis interpersonal relationships, as established by verbal and non-verbal means, were seen as necessary for life. Because man needs relationship for life, it was conceded that he has a natural right to them. According to the authors surveyed, there are times when people may have unusual difficulties in the area of interpersonal relationships. It was pointed out that at these times social workers, as representatives of society, attempt to meet the special needs of these people by providing a professional relationship that differs from ordinary relationships in that it is more controlled and purposive, and is geared to meet the needs of the client with all of the skills and refinements that experience and practice have brought about.

That the casework relationship was not always thought of as being controlled and purposive was shown by a review of the various words and definitions used to describe what went on
between two people in a casework situation. At one time friendliness seemed to imply a good casework relationship. Contact, sympathy, empathy, identification, and rapport were also used. They implied various degrees of emotional relationship, but did not imply much in the way of objectivity. With the introduction of the words transfer and participation came the awareness of the importance of the client and his reactions as well as the self-awareness of the worker. The word interview was often used in describing the interaction and circular response that went on between client and worker, but it was seen that the actual relationship was something that went on within the interview. In 1930, Virginia Robinson suggested the word relationship itself to denote the concept of the casework relationship and expressed the hope that it would be defined by its distinguishing characteristics and by the uses made of it by both worker and client.

A review of the attempts made by many writers to define the casework relationship revealed the difficulties encountered in attempting to define such an elusive concept. Analogies were often used. Relationship, they said, is an atmosphere, medicine, an open table, flesh and blood, a bridge, an adventure. It was again noted that through studies made of the interview, the concept of dynamic interaction and circular response came to the fore, and attempts were made to isolate for study the elements of interaction. It was implied by some of
the definitions that relationship was simply the sum total of all that happens between two individuals.

One difficulty met in defining the casework relationship was strongly pointed up in these definitions. That was the question of limitations. The followers of the functional school of thought stressed agency function and the clients "will" in a much different way than did most of the other writers. This aspect, however, was not studied in this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, the limitations were assumed to be those set by the client's capacity for relationship, the framework of social and moral good, limitations arising from law and authority, the unwritten standards and norms of the community, and the function of the agency - which, however, was not to supercede the client's need.

In the material studied, six elements were frequently mentioned as essential in a good casework relationship. All were stated to be based upon natural rights and needs of the client which it was the responsibility of the worker to respect and meet. These elements were client self-determination which is based on the right of a client to make his own decisions and choices; individuation which is based on his right to be treated as a particular human being with differences that set him apart from all other human beings; the non-judgmental attitude which is based upon the client's right to be judged guilty or innocent
only by a person having legitimate authority to do so; controlled emotional involvement which is based upon the client's right to the kind of love which is essential to life; acceptance which is based upon the fundamental right of the client to be treated as a human being with the same needs, rights, dignity, and destiny as any other human being; and confidentiality which is based upon the right of the client to his own good reputation.

Although it was sometimes stated that relationship is the sum of all the elements that go into it—including the six elements mentioned above—it was also at times implied that it was not the sum of the elements but something new created as a result of the interaction of these elements.

What was created was seen to be greatly influenced by the personality of the caseworker. Objectively and self-awareness were stated to be two pre-requisites to the professional use of relationship. The degree of objectivity possessed by the worker was thought to be conditioned by the amount of his awareness of the counter-transference aspects of relationship. Objectivity was considered necessary so that a worker might not reject or over-identify with a client thus losing one of his most valuable contributions to the casework relationship.

In the material gathered concerning the uses made of the casework relationship, a decided shift in emphasis was noted over the years. During the 1920's it was often used by the case-
worker to influence the client to follow plans made by the worker with more or less cooperation by the client. Gradually the focus was turned more upon the client's rights and needs, and the relationship was used more as a medium for recognizing these rights and meeting the needs.

Two divergent schools of thought emerged concerning the uses made of relationship. The functional school placed great emphasis on the relationship as an immediate experience in which the client worked out his "will" against that of the worker. In a search for limitations to the relationship this school set up agency function as the control.

The diagnostic school placed somewhat less emphasis upon the use of relationship as an immediate experience, less emphasis upon the "will" of the client as a pre-requisite for giving help, and less emphasis upon agency function as a control and more emphasis upon the client's needs. With these needs always uppermost in mind, the relationship could be used in many ways: as the medium of the entire casework process; as a form of treatment; and as a part of casework help.

Although the authors studied for this thesis seemed to have incorporated many of the "functional" ideas concerning relationship into their thinking, the consensus seemed to favor the diagnostic school as regards use of relationship. The two schools of thought seem to be based upon divergent philosophies.
Further study is greatly needed in this area.

The following descriptive definition of the casework relationship is a tentative one based upon the material gathered for this thesis.

The casework relationship is one species of interpersonal relationship. It is established by non-verbal as well as verbal means and involves value, purpose, symbols, and meaning. It provides the client of a social agency with a controlled, professional relationship that is geared to meet special needs of the client not met in ordinary interpersonal relationships. It is based upon natural rights of the client which it is the responsibility of the worker to respect.

Specifically, it is the integration resulting from the dynamic interaction of the total of the words, actions, feelings and attitudes of two people— the client who comes to the social agency and the worker who is the representative of the agency. It has two aspects— reality and transference. It is the medium of the entire casework process, a part of casework help, and may be a specific form of treatment.

Among its principle elements are client self-determination, individuation, the non-judgmental attitude, controlled emotional involvement, acceptance, and confidentiality. The integration of the elements in relationship is influenced by the degree of skill, self-awareness, and objectivity of the worker.

The casework relationship is limited by the client's capacity for relationship, the framework of social and moral good, limitations arising from law and authority, the unwritten standards and norms of the community, and the function of the agency.
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