

## **THE SOCIAL WORKER IN THE FAMILY MEDICINE GROUP (FMG)**

The social worker's objective is to foster and reinforce the ability of individuals and communities to actively exercise their rights, in order to fulfill their social roles, their interpersonal relationships and their civic participation, within the context of their social development.

He/she assesses the situation of vulnerable individuals of all ages, who have multiple or complex difficulties, while providing the means to address psychosocial factors that could interfere with the individual's treatment or ability to function in a social setting.

Equipped with an understanding of law, policy and available resources, the social worker acts as a resource person for individuals and other professionals.

### **CLIENTELE**

The social worker serves individuals of all ages, whose needs are defined primarily by the intensity of the interventions that are required.

The activity of the social worker within the FMG is short-term. The nature of the problem, the intensity of the intervention, the recurrence of the problem, and the individual's general level of functioning determine whether that person can be followed in an FMG, or whether he/she should be referred to a specific front-line program (i.e., mental health, youth in difficulty) or for second- or third-line services.

### **ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER**

#### **1. Receiving, analyzing, orienting and referring (WAOR)<sup>1</sup>**

The social worker receives all social and psychosocial service requests that are referred to him/her. He/she analyzes, orients and refers them, if needed, according to the psychosocial need identified.

By prioritizing to meet the needs of the individual, the social worker identifies the most appropriate responder, the best resource, and the ideal timing.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health and Social Services, *General Social Services – Service Offering*, 2013.

## **2. Support and advice**

He/she acts as a resource person for the team—namely, for clinical teaching activities related to his/her psychosocial expertise, including:

- Highlighting psychosocial problems that could affect the treatment or the general well-being of individuals or their relatives
- Supporting the members of the interdisciplinary team, according to their various needs, with regard to serving the clientele (individual/family/relatives)
- Identifying potential and actual ethical dilemmas, and participating in their resolution.

## **3. Liaison**

The social worker promotes appropriate information sharing as a means of providing comprehensive service to the individual, including:

- Promoting interaction with other members of the team, while demonstrating leadership
- Facilitating access to services by directing the individual to the most appropriate resources—for example, CIUSSS programs and community resources in the area
- Facilitating access to the most appropriate resources, depending on the situation, by developing and maintaining links with these resources, in order to ensure continuity of the service that is provided to the individual.

## **4. Intervention**

The social worker intervenes in crisis situations to provide one-time support or short-term intervention. His/her role consists of:

### ***a) Crisis intervention***

- Evaluate the social functioning and needs of the individual who is in distress or in a crisis situation
- Defuse the crisis and manage the psychosocial risk
- Put a safety net in place, in collaboration with the individual's network and the appropriate resources
- Motivate the individual to pursue treatment or specialized services, as needed<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Côté, N. & Lachance, N. (2013). *La valeur ajoutée d'un travailleur social en GMF*. CSSS de la Vieille-Capitale, p. 2.

***b) Intervening in regular, short-term follow-up***

- Assess the social functioning and needs of an individual who has adaptation problems or multiple social problems
- Assess the individual's ability to fulfill his/her social role (parent, student, worker, spouse)
- Assess stress factors and living conditions (housing, income, difficulty accessing support services or programs, etc.)
- Recognize and uncover various problems: conjugal or family violence, abuse, addiction
- Assess the individual's ability to ensure his/her own safety and that of his/her children
- Assess the risk of suicide or homicide
- Assess the individual's comprehension, the degree to which he/she accepts the current situation, and the ability to take care of oneself with respect to health and the general situation
- Assess the capacities of a person whose competency is in question.
- Assess a child's developmental delays
- Assess the ability of the family and social network to support the individual or compensate for his/her weaknesses, if any.
- Provide information and teaching—customized to the individual and his/her relatives—about the available resources, laws, policies and rights.

In September 2012, the implementation of Bill 21 (Law 28)—modifying the *Act to amend the professional code and other legislative provisions in the field of mental health and human relations*—specified the scope of practice of professionals in the field of mental health and human relations. This reserve of activities targets various specific interventions that would place an individual at high risk of negative consequences in the field of mental health and human relations.

In an FMG, the **reserved activities** for social workers are:

***Evaluate the social functioning of an individual who suffers from a mental health problem or a neuropsychological problem that has been confirmed by a diagnosis***

***Proceed to a psychosocial evaluation of an individual, with regard to the protective supervision of those at the age of majority, or with regard to a mandate that has been submitted in anticipation of the mandator's incapacity***

## 5. Prevention and promotion

The social worker seeks to promote the autonomy of an individual and to prevent social problems by:

- Screening and identifying psychosocial situations that could negatively affect the treatment or well-being of the individual
- Empowering individual to take action.

### PROBLEMS TREATED BY THE SOCIAL WORKER

- **Relationship problems:** conflicts with parents, friends, employer and classmates, an absence of friends, inadequate social support, etc.
- **Difficulty in adapting to change** as it pertains to development: adolescent crisis, aging, retirement, difficulty transitioning to a new role in life, difficulty engaging in certain parenting roles (overprotection, neglect, inadequate discipline, etc.)
- **Change in social functioning** as it pertains to physical incapacity or mental problems
- **Difficulty in adapting to damaging or traumatic events** in the community.
- **Presence of various types of trauma** linked to violence, sexual assault, abuse, neglect, etc.
- **Professional difficulties:** unemployment, difficult work conditions, potential job loss, workplace dissatisfaction, change of employment, inability to maintain employment, illiteracy, problems at school, dropping out of school, inadequate school environment, etc.
- **Socio-economic difficulties:** poverty, debt, bankruptcy, lack of food, inadequate lodging, etc.
- **Difficulty establishing social links:** bereavement, dissolution of a relationship, divorce, discrimination, etc.
- **Personal difficulties:** difficulty in evaluating a situation, confusion, loss frame of reference, distress, suicidal thoughts, etc.
- Difficulties pertaining to **behavior that is inappropriate or contrary to socio-judiciary norms:** criminal activity, vagrancy, social deviance, aggression, delinquency, addiction, prostitution, etc.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> CSSS de Lac-Saint-Jean-Est. (2014). *Offer of service: Integration of social workers in family medicine groups and medical clinics for the territory of Lac-Saint-Jean-Est.*

## INTERVENTION MODALITIES

- The social worker can intervene with or without a medical referral
- 1 to 12 appointments per user, according to the identified needs
- Appointments lasting 50 to 90 minutes, depending on the level of intervention and the type of individual
- Short-term interventions based on recognized approaches in the field of social intervention (i.e., Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral approach)
- Steps for the user outside appointments

## SPACE END MATERIAL REQUIRED

- Access to a private office with a layout that facilitates dialogue and ensures the confidentiality of conversations
- Access to a room where the professional can meet with more than two people, for family meetings or to meet with the person's network
- Access to electronic medical files (reading and writing)
- Access to a computer, telephone and voice mail.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree in social work OR technical diploma in social work, with acquired rights for reserved activities:
  - Assess the social functioning of an individual who suffers from a mental health problem or a neuropsychological problem that has been confirmed by a diagnosis
  - Proceed to a psychosocial evaluation of an individual, with regard to protective supervision of those at the age of majority, or with regard to a mandate that has been submitted in anticipation of the mandator's incapacity
- Member in good standing of the *Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec*
- Fluent in French and English, with a third language an asset.

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING REQUIRED FOR THE FMG

- *Approche motivationnelle* (CIUSSS)
- *Formation en interculturel* (SHERPA)
- *Intervention brève et travail social* (OTSTCFQ)
- *La thérapie cognitive-comportementale (TCC) en santé mentale : atelier d'introduction au modèle et à ses applications* (OTSTCFQ)

- *Agressivité, colère, violence : s'y retrouver... Pour intervenir de façon appropriée (OTSTCFQ)*
- *Évaluation psychosociale en rapport avec les régimes de protection de la personne majeure (OTSTCFQ)*
- *Repérer la personne vulnérable au suicide et appliquer les mesures de 4 requises (SAM)*
- *Intervenir auprès de la personne suicidaire à l'aide de bonnes pratiques (SAM)*
- *Évaluation homicide (CIUSSS)*
- *Rédaction de dossiers : normes et guide de pratique pour les T.S. et les T.C.F. (OTSTCFQ)*

## **CLINICAL EVALUATION AND SUPERVISION**

The CIUSSS is responsible for the quality of the acts carried out by social workers in the course of performing their duties in the FMG. The CIUSSS ensures professional supervision by defining the standards of practice and by providing the appropriate clinical support to the social worker. In conjunction with the FMG, the CIUSSS takes the necessary means to evaluate the quality of the social worker's professional activities (including auditing files and clinical supervision) and ensures follow-up. In addition, the social worker is subject to inspections by his/her professional order (OTSTCFQ) to ensure that the public is protected, as required by the professional code.

The social worker has a professional obligation to maintain and develop his/her skills through continuing education. During work hours, time should be set aside for training, to participate in clinical supervision, or to attend professional meetings of the CIUSSS.

The social worker practices his/her profession under the functional authority of the FMG's doctors and the administrative authority of the CIUSSS, and in accordance with applicable collective agreements.

## RÉFÉRENCES

CSSS de Lac-Saint-Jean-Est. (2014). *Offre de service : Intégration des travailleuses sociales dans les groupes de médecine familiale et les cliniques médicales pour le territoire Lac-Saint-Jean-Est.*

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*Rôles du travailleur social en GMF et autres cliniques médicales.*(s.d.)