How Social Media Is Changing the Human Service Field

Ruth Roman

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Goodwin College

Abstract

In recent years many have seen how technology has grown from just a simple experiment to a worldwide revolution. According to the article, *Invention of the Internet,* there is not just one creator of the internet. It got start more than 50 years ago in the United States as a government weapon in the Cold War. Ever since internet was introduced many have used it to communicate and share information with each another. This paper will focus on how social media has changed the human service field. It will show how human services workers started providing services and how that in 2014 social media has helped in expanding the services available.

How Social Media Is Changing the Human Service Field

Social networking is a growing way for people to communicate with each other without having to see each other. With new technology also comes with more responsibility on behalf of the human service professional. It is very important to understand how the new technology will benefit human service professionals. With the population growing so does the need to get familiar with the new technology that every day is evolving. In what was seen as a difficult learning pattern it is really seen now as a useful way for people to receive what they need in their convenience within a shorter time elapse. It is such a popular tool that it is used by many of all ages. Many years ago the versions that were accessible would help the clients in the moment but with the growing social networking technology long term help is available at the client's leisure.

According to Shorkey and Uebel (2014) in the mid-1960s the uses of closed-circuit video recording produced instructional programs and enhanced the interviewing and counseling skills. These recordings had to be performed by a highly skilled worker that used it for training, supervision, and even consultations. This was a beginning to teach others how to prepare themselves when working with clients. With written consent, human service workers began recording their client interviews. Face to face was the only way a person could be attended. The helper would use this time to assess the client. Home visits were also required depending on the services the human service worker needed to provide. The home visits consist of family evaluations. They interview the person, evaluate their environment and provide the client with the information to the services they needed. These visits could be done weekly, monthly or even yearly. The most important part of the human services workers was the paperwork. In those they had to write down their thoughts, their opinions, and everything concerning their clients. With so many clients many of the human services workers fell behind on all the paperwork they had.

The reconstructed versions of training the human service workers were done by various ways. There were the magnetic tape recorders, students that acted out different scenarios and also the use of interactive videodisc. Frank Itzin (1960), argued that to enhance the student field supervision learning experience they would have to use audiotape recordings. They use an actress that would follow a detailed script for the interview. Some of the tape recorders were played to students that were preparing to begin in their field of choice. The interactive videodisc was used also as a learning concept. This interesting form taught numerous students for many years but as technology has changed the way of teaching it has also changed.

It could be seen that as the years passed the social networking technology has become an important tool for many. Now there are various ways people can communicate with each other in a quicker and virtual way. One tool that has been used by many is called webinars. According to Merriam-Webster a webinar is "a live online educational presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments." It is like a seminar conducted over the internet. This tool is a great help for an organization that is trying to save in spending travels or in scheduling many deadlines. Another tool is podcasts. With podcasts people can download educational units, reinforce skills in writing or just create research with each other without having to do it at the same time. This method is not only done by schools but also within organizations itself. Also live distance video interactions are tools where professors teach their students without being in the same room providing web-based courses and programs. A benefit of this tool is that many can participate from various locations while teaching the models and methods among others programs to all.

With so many new technologies there are many challenges human services workers experience every day. Some of those challenges that human service professionals experience

have a lot to do with outdated technology. Not having the right tool can lead to serious problems.

Some challenges could have human services workers experience with burnout, high caseloads,

policy and fiscal constraints, powerful financial lack of encouragement, hard to make critical,

life-shaping decisions based on fragmented, inaccurate and out-of-date information, regulations,

and budgets. "Burnout can occur in any workplace; however, higher proportions are found

among human service professionals such as physicians, nurses, teachers and social workers."

(Moods Magazine, 2014) Smith, Segal J., and Segal R. (2014) stated that burnout is a state of

emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. They also

pointed out that burnout can occur when the person feels overwhelmed and unable to meet the

constant demands their work place require. This could lead to workers feeling that they or the

organization would be better if they stop working. And some have chosen to just leave their

employment. Burnout is a serious problem that many go through. This needs to be taken care of

as soon as it occurs because it can lead to other serious problems. Another challenge that human

services workers would experience is high caseloads. Case Commons pointed out that "too often,

agencies have overwhelming caseloads, allocate resources inefficiently, and struggle to

distinguish between what is working and what is not." Without receiving the support they need

the situation can lead to everyone to suffer. Feely and Gill (2011) indicated that public human

service agencies and providers have continued to fall further it is, in large part, because policy

and fiscal constraints, powerful financial disincentives for change, and constraining procurement

processes have frustrated efforts to implement technology innovation in an effective way. Feely

and Gill (2011) also shared that caseworkers and supervisors have to make critical, life-shaping

decisions based on fragmented, inaccurate and out-of-date information. Some additional

challenges are regulations and budgets. This can cause an agency to cut down on services and people they serve.

Even though there are challenges there are also opportunities that human service workers can obtain by using social networking. This will not only benefit the worker but it will also benefit the client and the agency. Some opportunities are providing online classes, workshops, or training to their clients, and updating the system with Casebook technology. Casebook technology makes it easier to share with different organizations at a faster pace the information of their clients, while being able to track, analyze, and apply the services each client needs. Organizations can provide online classes, workshops, and training to their clients. This benefits the worker and enables them to choose to take the classes on their own time and also at their own pace. A new technology is named Casebook. Kathleen Feely (2013) reported that

> the result of this effort has been Casebook, the first government enterprise application
> with social networking technology at its core. Casebook is an example of how we can
> transform human services by introducing into case management the same 21st century
> tools we (and the emerging workforce) are familiar with from business and our private
> lives. (p. 48)

This technology was created so it would be faster to share with different organizations the information of their clients. The Annie E. Casey Foundation concluded that they created this

> technology with the aligning with the day-today flow of casework, making data entry
> easy and its retrieval immediate and convenient - on a laptop or tablet in mind. And, by
> putting real-time data in the hands of caseworkers and administrators, Casebook helps
> inform the critical, life-altering decisions they make every day. (p. 48)

Case Commons state that with this technology supervisors will be able to track family progress and would not have to worry whether caseworkers are losing track of their cases. Their main goal with this technology is that human service workers can work more efficiently and effectively without compromising their time or their services.

In Connecticut there are several human services organizations. The human services organizations in Connecticut provide training to their workers so they can earn advanced degrees and/or gain additional skills. The training is based on generalization on human services and not only on certain organizations. These trainings prepare the worker for updated information. They also provide conferences to their workers. These conferences can help the worker in networking with people from different organizations. In Connecticut, they have the Federal Pell Grant Program which provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduates. This grant program helps the human service professional to focus on the education and not on how or what they need to pay. There are also ways that organizations can help their workers become members with other societies.

In conclusion, many years ago human services workers had a hard time working efficiently. They had several issues with how they were helping the client. And their main goal was to provide the best care for their clients. In many of the ways the services were conducted it took various attempts to provide that best service for the individual. For some the services were received too late whereas others it was not enough. Human service workers experience hard times due to the budget that some services had to be eliminated. This made the worker become overwhelmed with the situation. As the paper states at the beginning there were several ways technology has changed through the years. The goal is to meet the needs of the client without

harming them. This new technology will benefit the human services field, in accomplishing

many more objectives.

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