

WHAT ARE WELFARE WORKERS?

Welfare workers work with individuals, families, groups and communities in order to improve quality of life by empowering, educating and supporting people and by helping them to change their social environment.

ROLES OF WELFARE WORKERS

Welfare workers may perform the following tasks:

- Provide support while exploring alternatives with clients who experience difficulties such as marital problems, unemployment, illness or drug abuse.
- Arrange for clients to be referred to appropriate specialist professionals or community agencies.
- Help clients with long term problems to bring about self- directed change in their lives.
- Assess risks and provide intensive short-term crisis counselling for victims of domestic violence or child abuse.
- Help to establish or administer neighbourhood house or community groups, such as support groups for parents who have lost a child to cot death.
- Evaluate data and write reports, including submissions requesting funding for continuing programs and new projects.
- Advocate (act) on behalf of clients who have a grievance against an organisation or government department.
- Arrange and evaluate support services, such as meals-on-wheels delivery to elderly people living alone, or support for people with disabilities recently relocated from institutions into the community.
- Recruit, train and coordinate volunteer staff.
- Assist community groups to identify and implement strategies to deal with local issues.

SPECIALISATIONS

Some welfare workers specialise in helping families, adolescents, people with substance abuse issues, homeless people, people with disabilities, people escaping domestic violence, victims of crime or criminals.

Welfare workers deal with problems which may include emotional, social and financial difficulties. They work individually or as part of a team. They may work in an office, visit clients in their homes and attend evening community meetings.

PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS OF A WELFARE WORKER

- Able to communicate effectively with a wide range of people
- A non-judgmental attitude
- Good planning and organisational skills
- Initiative
- Sense of responsibility
- Able to deal with conflict in stressful situations
- Commitment to human rights and social justice.

WELFARE WORKER

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