**Unit 1 Reflection**

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PSYC 300: Theories of Career Development

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**Part I: Activity – Client Perspective**

**What influences operated on my career development as a young person?**

 As a child and young adult (18-20 years old) my personal life experiences played a significant role in the development of my career. Growing up in poverty and spending the greater part of my childhood and teenage years in the foster care system have shaped not only me as a person, but who I aspired to be as a professional. Experiencing things such as abuse, addiction, hunger, and mental illness firsthand, at an incredibly early age, played a critical part in the development of my career choices and goals. Furthermore, the transition from youth to adulthood presented with a lot of the same challenges I once experienced as a child; addiction, mental illness, homelessness, and abuse became individual challenges that I overcome as a young adult. Today, the resilience and strength that I have found within myself regarding the life challenges and experiences I have overcame has provided me with a profound desire to help those who experience similar challenges and experiences.

**How have I integrated these influences?**

 Integrating these particular influences into the development of my career and my choice of career have been simple; I have used my individual experiences throughout life, whether they have been positive or negative in nature, to guide me in helping others. Through enlightenment, self growth, self development – through years of self discovery and finding myself – I have been able to integrate both my positive and negative experiences in my career in a way that allows me to be the best professional version of myself for vulnerable and marginalized populations. The struggles that I have faced and the experiences that I have endured have allowed me to find a deep-rooted understanding of the struggles and experiences that the clients I currently work with face.

**What is my career narrative? (In other words, tell the story of your career development.)**

 My career narrative begins with a desire to be in the Travel and Tourism industry. I first attended college with the goal of becoming a flight attendant and one day starting my own non-profit organization based in third world countries. However, I dropped out and never obtained my diploma in Travel and Tourism. Years later, I reconsidered my career options, aspirations, and goals, and obtained a diploma in Addiction Studies with an Aboriginal Focus. Immediately after receiving my diploma, I started at Athabasca University with the goal of obtaining my undergraduate degree in Human Services. At one point I considered trade school for Pastry Arts and Culinary, but much like Travel and Tourism I found that these things – food, cooking, baking, and travelling – were all hobbies rather than passions that I wanted to wake up everyday and incorporate into my career. I came to realize through the processes of obtaining my diploma that I have a powerful desire to make an impact, fight for change, and help those who I thought needed it most.

**What are the patterns and themes of my career development?**

 The most noticeable pattern within my career development journey is my passion for helping others and my desire to build a sustainable and meaningful career within the non-profit sector/working with vulnerable populations. Majority of the patterns and themes within my career development have been influenced by my firsthand experiences, as previously stated. The growth that I have experienced as an individual as a result of my own struggles with homelessness, poverty, addiction, mental illness, and abuse have shaped my desire to help others that have faced or do face similar things. My experiences have shaped patterns and themes of intent regarding social justice action, advocacy, and meaningful work that impacts society in a positive way. Furthermore, the patterns and themes of my career development continue to grow and be enhanced as my career and educational journey continue.

**What is the role of work in my life?**

 The role of work in my life holds significant meaning; I currently work as an Addiction Support Worker for Calgary Alpha House Society, a non-profit organization that tends to the homeless and substance using population within Calgary. For the past year, my work within the non-profit/harm reduction field has allowed me to gain meaningful frontline experience like no other – it has allowed me to express my true values and utilize my life experiences in a way that truly helps others. The role that work currently plays in my life is extremely important as it is supporting me in my path to developing a meaningful, worthwhile, and impactful career that I feel is necessary for the greater good of society at large.

**What other life roles do I hold, and what are my priorities?**

 In addition to work as a significant role in my life, I also play many other roles – a devoted friend, daughter, sister, pet owner, advocate, and student. Although I view every role that I hold as an individual as important, my priorities regarding my roles are unquestionable. My role as a professional and student are on the top of my priority list, as are my roles as a devoted friend, daughter, sister and pet owner. Without a questionable doubt, my priorities are my education and obtaining/maintaining a fulfilling career that adds substance and fulfillment in my day-to-day life. Much like a lot of other individuals, my priorities also include financial stability, a peaceful and calm life, stable living conditions, and interests such as travelling in the near future. Despite my priorities having a large focus on my education and career, I do have awareness that balance is key. Balance between my priorities, finding time for things that I enjoy doing and that bring excitement into my life, while also keeping my education, career, and other life priorities at the top of my list is crucial.

**What conflicts are there among my life roles, and how do I resolve them?**

Often times I face conflicts between my role as a student and a professional in day-to-day life; my job can be extremely demanding as can being a fulltime student. Conflicts with family matters and health matters also arise, which creates stress and often interferes with my roles as a student and a professional. I try to face these conflicts head on with optimism and strength by maintaining an appropriate balance between all of my life roles. By maintaining balance within all of my roles in life, I find that overcoming conflicts is more achievable overall.

**What values and attitudes do I hold about the following? (Note: It is important to recognize that a client may have completely different experiences, thoughts, or beliefs.)**

***employment status***

Employment status is important as it determines the stability of one’s life; the status of being unemployed comes with a plethora of struggles and life circumstances that determines quality of life.

***differences in educational attainment***

Although education is important to me and a principal factor in my own personal success and journey to a meaningful life, I do realize that this is not the case for everyone. Many people have found career success and financial stability without ever obtaining a post secondary education.

***socio-economic background***

Socio-economic background often plays a critical role in the success of people and/or the quality of life that we live. However, this is not always true – if someone wants something and has the desire to obtain whatever that is, they will put in the effort regardless of their socio-economic background. I come from poverty and a low-income background, yet I have worked extremely hard to overcome both factors to become financially stable and comfortable in life.

***personal lifestyle choices***

This is a multifaceted and complex topic of discussion as personal lifestyle choices are often influenced by a multitude of underlying factors and contributors. Yes, we have the power to change our own lifestyle accordingly, however, certain individuals, demographics, and/or populations are often times more susceptible to specific lifestyle choices and/or outcomes based on a multitude of factors and influences.

***Multiculturalism***

 As we currently live in an extremely multicultural society, understanding and accepting multiculturalism is a critical aspect in gaining societal acceptance all around. Multiculturalism is a valuable tool for the growth of society at large and a critical aspect in diminishing certain types of stigmas.

***Wellness: mental and physical health***

Mental and physical health and wellness is a critical aspect of living a sufficient quality of life. Without proper health management, intervention, treatments, and/or coping mechanisms the quality of life that one lives is impacted significantly. A healthy life requires appropriate physical and mental health.

***The impact of technology***

This is an extremely controversial topic. Although technology can be viewed as important within society and having a positive impact in multiple ways, I do believe technology has a negative impact more so than a positive one.

***Women/youth in the workplace***

 I stand pretty neutral on this topic; I am all for youth and women in the workplace, however I do not really have a strong stance of feminism regarding women in the workplace. Everyone deserves equal opportunity career wise, regardless of their gender and/or age. A**chievement in the workplace**

 I honestly believe that success and achievement within the workplace should be specifically determined on one’s abilities, goals, determinations and actions. I do not agree with double standards or unethical/immoral reasoning behind success and/or achievements within the workplace. Achievements and success should be strictly determined based on one’s work ethic, determination, and commitment regardless of their social status, age, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.

**Part II: Critique/Reflection – Practitioner Perspective**

**Describe the benefits and insights gained from this activity from a personal perspective—that is, as if you were a client. Discuss which questions, if any, failed to generate insights or benefits, and which questions raised disturbing answers.**

 I feel as though this activity really helped me narrow in on my career development path as well as my values, goal, and moral compass regarding such. Reflection regarding my path to educational and career success has been beneficial in the sense that it has allowed me to see where I have made growth and where further growth is still needed. I feel as though the last question in the first section was the least useful for me. Although I understand the intent and reasoning behind that part of the reflection, I feel as though it did not provide as much benefit and reflection for me as all the other questions did.

**Assume that you are a professional practitioner. From a practitioner’s perspective, how might the insights gained from this activity affect your professional practice and/or enhance your self-awareness as a career practitioner in the future.**

As a professional, the insights of this reflection might provide me with a greater understanding of how one’s individual experiences help shape their career path and goals. Moreover, the insights provided may also hold potential to see career development, from a professional standpoint, from a more holistic or broad perspective, rather than just from a professional or educational perspective. The insights would provide me with the acceptance that individual experiences and life overall can have a significant impact on an individual’s career development; the realization that career development and/or choice of career is not always centred around money or financial gain could be presented from a professional perspective.