

Competency Profile

Social Care Worker



Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Ausbildungsstätten
für Heilerziehungspflege, Heilerziehung und
Heilerziehungshilfe in Deutschland (BAG HEP)

State Federal Association of the Training
Institutions for Social Care Workers in Germany

Legal Notice

Responsible for the contents:
Board of Management of the State Federal Association
of the Training Institutions for Social Care Workers
vocational training in Germany (BAG HEP)
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Looking for Dialogue. Giving Impetus.

This competency profile has been created with the aim of documenting the current professional profile of Social Care Workers. It is considered a reply to the professional changes that have developed in the professional work with disabled people over the last years.

BAG HEP (the Federal Association for Social Care Workers vocational training) has always sought a dialogue with professional associations such as Caritas Mental Help and Psychiatry, the Federal Evangelical Association for the Disabled, the Federal Association of Lebenshilfe of people with intellectual disabilities and the Association for Anthroposophical Orthopaedogogy, Sociotherapy and Social Work, the Federal Association for Occupational Therapy and a number of political organisations. In addition, by training specialised staff, BAG HEP gives essential impetus to practical work. The competency profile for Social Care Workers invites everybody who takes an interest in people with intellectual disabilities to enter into a dialogue and to exchange professional knowledge.

We would like to thank our members of the BAG HEP education workshop (AK Ausbildung) for their strong commitment and to the member schools of BAG HEP for their critical feedback. This process has given us the opportunity to publish the competency profile in it's current version so that it can now be supported and represented by over one hundred training schools in the Federal Republic of Germany from all Federal States.

*February 2008
Board of Management*

Occupational Profile

Social Care Workers are professionals with socio-pedagogical, orthopaedagogical and social care qualifications. They work in residential and in-patient facilities, in non-residential services and as independent contractors with people with intellectual disabilities.

The contemporary perception of Social Care Workers' tasks includes training, accompanying, assisting, counselling, educating, supporting and caring for people with intellectual disabilities of all ages in their social environment.

The professional work of Social Care Workers is characterised by both a holistic and personalised approach.

Therefore the occupational image of Social Care Workers – which goes back to traditional large institutions of mental health care – has developed and accordingly become more complex. Against this background BAG HEP has created an up-dated occupational description together with the description of the competences required.

The main role of Social Care Workers is to uphold and/or develop (to the best extent possible) a self-determined life for the people supported, always in combination with the highest quality of life possible.

As a result Therapeutic Support Workers perceive themselves as part of a system in which exchange, co-operation and interdisciplinarity are an integral part of their professional identity.

The disabled person with his or her unique character is at the centre of care delivery. Social Care Workers are partners in dialogue. They support relationships of people with disabilities and their work is guided by empathy and appreciation.

Considering the fundamental and inalienable self-determination of every individual they act as advocates in asserting the rights and interests of people with disabilities, and support them in accessing the main stream health and social care services they require.

Social Care Workers are particularly qualified in that they can combine traditional competences and continuity (healing – educating – caring) with new tasks (assisting – counselling – accompanying – supporting) and take an active professional influence on changes in health and social care delivery.

The "common thing mental help" requires for all people involved to perceive themselves with the highest degree of attention, sensitivity and appreciation and get into touch with each other.

Working Fields

The Social Care concept makes a great contribution to the realisation of the "categorical imperative of solidarity" (Dörner 2006) going along with the new professional self-conception of the companion.

Social Care Workers work in facilities such as :

- Residential assisted living communities:
Complex needs centres, residential centres, home help groups, group homes with community integrated approach.
- Partly-residential and/or day care sectors:
Child nurseries as mainstream day care centre, special centre or integrated facilities.
Schools as special facilities or integrated schools.
Workshops.
The field of care of the elderly.
Day facilities.
- Outpatient care services:
They provide assistance for all daily routines and recreation activities in outpatient care services and in community integrated projects.

They work:

- In counselling.
- In further education.
- In recreational activities.
- As case manager and/or in outpatient case work.
- As budget assistance.
- In hospitals:
In centres for social psychiatry.
In rehabilitations hospitals
In hospices

Social Care Workers work for families:

- In early intervention.
- In family support and home care service.
- In family care.
- In sheltered accommodation for families.

Social Care Workers work as independent contractor, to provide support, companionship and assistance:

- In mobile disability care services.
- They run service points.
- In an integrated company as experts providing assistance when assessing the individual need.
- As caregivers for integration and/or assistances for inclusion.
- They offer further education for voluntary co-workers.

Don't hesitate to request for more information material under www.bag-hep.de

Basic Competences

The competences of Social Care Workers are based on substantiated and sophisticated knowledge about individual needs and abilities of people with disabilities in their lives. This special knowledge enables them to combine pedagogical and care skills. As a result they can identify different needs and act accordingly.

Therapeutic Support Workers maintain a positive, ethical, socio-political dedicated attitude. Their work centres on the dignity and self-determination of people with disabilities and their right to take part in all aspects of society.

Comprehensive Competences

Training, Education and Assistance

- During their training Social Care Workers acquire and develop the ability to analyse and reflect on the biographies of people with disabilities and their unique lives and individual needs and abilities.
- They can set up differentiated care plans and support and assist the developments and training processes in all stages of life.
- They accompany people with disabilities in their life-long learning processes with the goal of helping them become more autonomous and achieve the highest possible level of personal responsibility.

Care and Assistance

Social Care Workers have a typically holistic understanding of their occupation. Their understanding of care includes the classical types of basic care, specialist basic care and therapeutic interventions, which they combine with the client-oriented needs for a maximum of self-determination, self-sufficiency and independence. To them, care is professional, conceptual, age-related and communicational support.

Treatment care is a lifelong and development promoting process. It is designed along the needs of the person concerned and makes a contribution to realising the highest level of social participation, self-determination and independence possible.

With every social action and relationship between people comes an enhanced understanding of care.

*Continuity and change
are constitutional
elements of social care
work from the beginning*

Comprehensive Competences

Communication and Cooperation

Social Care Workers can be characterised by their special ability to communicate with people, regardless of the type or level of disability.

- They know how to communicate in various ways, for instance in a simple verbal and non verbal language, augmented communication methods, sign language and symbolsbasic communication types.

This will involve:

- co-operation in multi-professional teams
- co-operation with relatives and counselling them
- co-operation with volunteers and counselling them
- co-operation and maintaining contacts with representatives of public life

Management, Law, Administration

Social Care Workers are well familiarised with the relevant legal social care requirements and take economic requirements and financial framework conditions into consideration in their practice.

Social Care Workers have high levels of managerial skills. They are responsible for the quality assurance and development in their field of responsibilities.

Social Care Workers are the only experts in care for disabled people who have profound pedagogical, care and community-oriented knowledge and can draw on all these skills at the same time.

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