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Coaching : an innovative new methodology for occupational social workers?

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DECLARATION

I, Maxine Dorkin declare that this research report is my own unaided work and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources I have used. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Social Work in Industrial Social Work at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Maxine Dorkin

9 February 2009

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ABSTRACT

The 21st Century has ushered in complex global and economic challenges which have highlighted the need for innovative solutions to meet these challenges. Occupational social work is similarly challenged to investigate alternative methods of service delivery to meet the new workplace demands. Coaching is currently the single most planned developmental tool used in the workplace (O' Flaherty, 2004). The aim of this study was to investigate occupational social workers knowledge, opinions, skill and interest in coaching as a possible occupational social work intervention. An exploratory research design was utilised in the study. Target sampling was appropriate for the purposes of this study as a target of occupational social workers was required for the final sample. Twelve occupational social workers were approached to participate in the pilot study. The final pilot study sample consisted of eight occupational social workers. The study sample consisted of twenty-eight occupational social workers from the Gauteng province. Data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire which was available to respondents in either paper-based or web-based format. The main findings indicated that the majority of occupational social workers (83%) do not possess a comprehensive understanding of coaching. Most (23) respondents (92%) agreed that the attributes of coaching and social work were similar. Ninety-six percent (25) indicated that they would be interested in attending a coaching course. Findings from the study assisted in the development of themes for an introductory coaching course for occupational social workers. The potential value of the study is that it could assist occupational social work educators in curriculum planning for future occupational social work programmes. The major recommendation for occupational social workers is to take personal responsibility for their learning and development and engage in continuing education as a lifestyle in order to remain relevant and keep abreast with organisational developments.

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