Professional Intent

As a social worker, I want to pursue a career working with the older adult population. I have found my passion for helping this population through my life experiences and undergraduate course learning. As a social worker, I want to assist older adults to age with dignity. This population is growing rapidly and is underserved. I want to be able to make a positive impact in the lives of this client population.

At the start of my undergraduate program, I was unaware of the role social workers have with the aging population. When learning about this field of social work in my Intro to Social Work course I found myself drawn to serve this population. I was able to relate my first-hand personal experiences of spending time with older adults to the course content. One of my favorite classes I took at the undergraduate level was Social Work with Older Adults. This course went through the roles of social workers through different stages of aging. I have been lucky to be able have close relationships when with many older adults throughout my life. I have gained wisdom from spending time with them from their life experiences as well as seeing the difficulties that can come with aging. A life experience that drew me to work with older adults is having a grandmother experience dementia. I was able to see the gaps in resources and barriers to services that can prevent aging with grace. I witnessed the difficulties of the condition. I found myself applying my course content to be able to help my grandparents and found that I wanted to continue this with others. I was also able to witness caregiver burnout with my grandfather who was the primary caregiver for my grandmother. As a social worker, I want to be able to provide resources for similar situations.

I completed my junior internship at a hospice agency gave me the opportunity to experience providing end-of-life care. I worked difficult topics like death, dying and grief. This experience allowed me to have valuable interactions with older adults to further learn the importance of helping the older generations. When I was first placed at a hospice agency I did not see myself in working in this area. I initially thought that it would be too challenging for me. My expectations of the internship were misguided because I found the experience rewarding. I enjoyed spending time with the clients and learning from them. I felt that I was able to help clients enjoy life even at the end. I now see this subfield as an option for my future social work career. My senior internship was completed at Circle Center Adult Day Services. I worked directly with participants providing enrichment and companionship. I also had to opportunity to work with caregivers to provide resources and support. Part of my responsibilities at this center included helping families navigate the processes of getting enrolled at the center. At this placement I learned how valuable a resource adult programs can be. I was able to be a part of helping older adults age with grace and live at home longer.

Social Work Value Personal Statement

A social work value that has influenced my desire to pursue a master’s in social work is the value of dignity and worth of the person. This value represents the innate worth that everyone has a humans. The value also represents respecting the uniqueness of individuals. The value of dignity and worth of the person is an essential value at the core of social work. Other social work values stem from this value including social justice and self-determination. As social workers, it is necessary to treat our clients with respect and a caring nature. Respecting the dignity and worth of the clients can include active listening, empathy, and including clients in interventions. Social workers come into a client's life when they are likely going through a difficult part in their life, so it is important to treat them with a caring and compassionate nature can help them through their life experiences. Treating clients with dignity and worth within social work practice it can help build rapport with the clients. This can be important for the long-term success of interventions and influence the client's interpretation of the agency.

 As I have gone through my undergraduate education, I have found a calling to work with older adults. I have found that this value is especially important when working with the aging population. Aging comes with unique challenges. As people age they can lose the autonomy and freedom they have had throughout their life. Depression and death by suicide rates are highest among older adults compared to other populations, often due to feeling a loss of dignity and purpose in their lives. Factors that contribute to this are the many losses that come with aging and limited accessible resources to help cope with them. The older adult population is often overlooked as a population in need of services. Older adults may also have more barriers preventing them from benefiting from services including a lack of information, medical coverage, and lack of physical access. Older adults have failed by the human services system. In my experience with working with older adults in both a professional and personal setting has been that ensuring their dignity and worth is often to simply spending time with them and show them that they are still valued in their life. As a social worker, I want to work toward preserving the dignity and feeling of worth for my clients throughout the aging process and through the end of life.