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SOC 356, Introduction to Social Welfare
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GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELING INTERVIEW SCENARIOS

Your assignment requires that you conduct a counseling interview with another member of the class who will be role-playing a social work client, and who in turn will interview you.

Based on the problem or population that you focused on in your article analysis, you will prepare a scenario that defines the role to be played by your "client," and the context of the counseling interview. You will give the scenario to the person you're going to interview, which is how he or she will know what role to play.

So imagine yourself to be a social worker, and you've decided, on the basis of your article analysis, to interview the mother of a delinquent female teenager. Your scenario for your client might read like something along the following lines:

"You're a single parent in your late 30s with two teenage daughters. The girls' father abandoned the family several years ago. Your oldest daughter has recently begun neglecting her school work and getting bad grades. She was also involved in a minor incident of vandalism that came to the attention of the police. You're working long hours to support the family, and although in the recent past your oldest daughter was much more communicative, nowadays you can't seem to talk with her about what's going on in her life. You're not sure about her friends or what she's doing a lot of the time when she's not at home. You hope that meeting with a social worker might help you find some answers to the situation."

Here's another example: Let's say the problem you've chosen in your article analysis is gang crime. The person you've decided to interview in relation to the problem is an 11-year-old boy, referred to you because you're a school social worker. The boy was referred to you because he has been dressing like a "junior gangster" and affecting gang mannerisms and aggressive behavior with classmates. Your scenario might read like something along the following lines:

"You're an 11-year-old elementary school student. But unlike most of the students at your school, you know what's happening. You're in with some of the older brothers in the hood who like you because you know how to 'hold your mud' [i.e., keep your mouth shut] and don't let anyone get over on you, including your mother. The gangsters give you small jobs to do from time to time. You live at home with your mother, but you come and go as you please, since she's working two jobs and comes home late and leaves early. The best thing about being in with the 18th Street gangsters is that you don't have to worry about anyone messing with you, like they used to. You haven't seen your father for more than six years, which is just as well because he was a mean violent drunk."

You will give your counseling interview scenario *ahead of time* to the person you're going to interview. But do *not* include in the scenario questions you plan to ask in the interview, and do *not* include any proposed interview-dialog in the scenario. ***The person you interview will only know the role he or she is to play, not the questions that you will ask or the assumptions you are making about your approach to the treatment.***

And, of course, when the tables are turned and you're to be interviewed, you'll be given a scenario to help you play the character that you've been asked to play, but you won't know the questions you'll be asked or what the counselor is thinking about an approach to your treatment.