

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIAL WORK ETHICS

BY

SMITH, M. E., PETERSEN, U., DAVIDS, M. AND PETERSEN, A.

ABSTRACT

Citizens across the globe are living in an increasingly challenging world. At the heart of this challenge is a global neoliberal reform which has become the dominant international framework for globalisation and economic development (Ornellas, Engelbrecht and Atamtürk, 2020). Neoliberal policies have been linked to growing inequality, and that the consolidation of wealth and power is in the hands of an elite few. A neoliberal discourse has a growing emphasis on the prioritisation of economics and financial gain over matters of social justice, and the individual over the collective.

All of the above became more visible in the global economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the spread of the virus around the planet left government authorities no other option as to sent billions of people into lockdown as health services struggled to cope. These lockdown regulations are viewed by the International Monetary Fund as the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020). Millions of people have lost their means of earning an income, increasing existing inequalities (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020). As a result of this, poverty and food insecurity became the order of the day.

It is with no doubt that Covid-19 has caused many people to experience of stressful life events, some already mentioned. Many people, during this challenging time struggled to satisfy their basic human needs as explained by Max-Neef (1991). It is the ethical responsibility of the Social Work Profession to respond to the vulnerability caused by this pandemic. Farkas and Romaniuk (2020) perfectly notes that the social work profession is dedicated to enhance the social functioning and protection of vulnerable and marginalised individuals, groups and communities.

Covid-19 showed that here are many challenges for social workers to adhere to social work's core values and ethics, as well as to maintain their own health and welfare in a time of uncertain and rapidly changing situations.

This is a paper on the impact of Covid-19 on social work ethics. It is presented through the personalised experiences and reflexive-narrative style (i.e. story-within-the-story) of the authors' own viewpoint, which makes it an auto- (personal experience), ethno- (rich cultural and historical context) -graphic (descriptive and visual) piece. Using the autoethnographic method of narrating observations in the field during the Covid-19 period.

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DETAILS OF THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Una Petersen

Email: Una.Petersen@westerncape.gov.za

Cell no.: 076 451 6067