

Social Work Program Outline for Biographical Essay

Directions:

Read this outline over. Think about it and then select what you think is important for the Admission Review Committee to know about you as you enter the major. Write a three to five page double spaced and typewritten (word-processed) essay. Turn it in to the Program Coordinator two days before your scheduled interview.

YOUR BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

If you continue with your present plan to become a social worker, you will be striving to improve the social functioning of people. A part of your work, you will have the opportunity to take social histories. Social history taking is a dynamic process for “getting to know the person” and assessing ability to cope. To help you gain experience in taking such histories – and to develop better understanding of yourself – you are requested to write a social history about yourself in narrative form. This will give you the freedom to arrange the material in any manner you wish.

Please include a description and evaluation of your present situation in historical perspective, addressing yourself to both your present situation and your life story. The following topics are offered as suggested area for integration into your narrative, rather than as questions to be answered separately. **Remember, that you do not have to disclose extremely personal information unless you feel absolutely comfortable doing so. Neither does this have to be of epic length.**

PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING

Evaluate your physical health and its impact on you as a person.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

What helps you learn best? How do you get along at the University? How do you deal with emotional experiences at present? As a child, how did you cope with emotional experiences, such as fear, anger, and sadness?

SOCIO-CULTURAL FUNCTIONING

Describe your family of origin including information on: a) composition (parents, siblings, birth order); b) ethnic identity; c) socio-cultural background; d) reaction to stress and communication styles. How has each family member interacted

with you? Describe your role in your family of origin. Have you com to assume the role of “helping person”? If so, how did this happen?

ENVIROMENTAL CONTEXT

Describe your growing-up process and significant events in your life. How have you interacted with kin, friends, neighbors, and work mates? Are there some organizations and institutions which have had a major impact on your life?

DISCUSS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR MAJORING IN SOCIAL WORK

Identify specific family expectations and values that you felt contributed to your career choice and/or interest in a “helping” profession. Who are the significant others that might have influenced your career choice?

WHAT THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF ARE ESPECIALLY RELEVANT TO YOUR CAREER CHOICE?

Summarize how your (family) life history impacts on your current functioning as a student planning to enter social work. How might these past experiences influence your philosophy of what constitutes “good” social work practice?

In reviewing your autobiographical essay, the social work faculty members are looking for clarity of thought and expression. They will assess your ability to communicate in writing and use proper rules of English. You should be specific and direct as you write your study.