Cassandra West

October 1, 2013

Professor Hall

HUS 1207

 Professional Essay Assignment

My name is Cassandra west and I was born and raised in Brooklyn New York, in the Bushwick area. I currently live in a different part of Brooklyn called Williamsburg, which has less violence and crime. In Bushwick most of the people were Hispanic and African American like my family and I. Now there is more diversity and change in that community. I am the youngest child of nine siblings and the third one to go to college. I attend New York City College of Technology and I’m pursuing an Associates Degree in Human Services. This is my second semester and it feels great to learn about the Human Service Profession and take the first step into my career path.

 I’ve decided to become a Human Service worker because one of my older sisters is a Licensed Social Worker; she always spoke about how she loves changing peoples perspective on life and seeing progress in their daily living. I understood what she meant and I always wanted to go see her work because she was so passionate about her profession. However, it was unethical to bring me to her place of work, which made me more intrigued and I wanted to be more knowledgeable. I started learning about the profession by going searching online and asking questions, I realized that it is something I would love to have a career in.

 I have personal and professional strengths that will enhance my effectiveness for professional practice. A personal strength I have is good verbal communication and active listening skills. I obtained these skills from working in a Barbershop as a Barber and communicating with my clients to find out exactly what they want and how they want to receive service. Another personal strength is being punctual; I gained this strength from my father who always said, “The early bird gets the worm”. He taught me and influenced me by actions to always be punctual and “Have respect for time”.

 My professional strengths are having empathy, good critical thinking and observation skills. Having empathy is real effective in the Human Service profession because I must understand and share the emotions and experiences of my clients to better help their situation. Good critical thinking skills are effective because I’m able to look at situations from an objective point of view; I learned this skill from being a peer mediator in high school and having to be a neutral factor in many disputes. Lastly, my observation skills are effective because paying attention to details, body language, and carefully monitoring things to gain information can enhance my further in my professional practice.

 I would like to work with the homeless population because I know that, that population has a variety of needs and millions of people experience homelessness within a year. I want to help this population because people become homeless for many different reasons that are developmental and situational; Homelessness affects people of all ages, genders, cultures, and backgrounds. One challenge of helping the homeless is that some individuals prefer to live on the streets; it would be challenging to convince them to stay in a shelter or program and comply with the facilities rules. Another challenge would be that most homeless individuals suffer from mental illness. The strength of helping homeless individuals is that they’re recognizable and it’s simpler to distribute outreach.

 Skills I need to learn to professionally service the homeless population are outreach skills, intervention strategy skills and cultural competence. Outreach skills can help overcome some barriers like lack of transportation, telephone, mail, health insurance, and knowledge of existing services for homeless individuals. Intervention strategies skills are needed because goals need to be set and then determined how they will be reached. Cultural competence is needed to have an awareness of one’s own cultural identity and views about differences, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms. The Human Service skills I began to develop is the basic knowledge of homelessness in America, mental illness, physical health and substance use. This would assist the homeless population because I can distribute better service to that population. Human Service needs of the homeless population is to create more shelters with free medical screenings and medical care.

 Ten years following my graduation, I envision me having a successful career in the Human Service profession, working at an Organization that strives to assist homeless individuals into shelter, clinics, treatment centers and programs assisting in self-sufficiency. I also envision me starting a foundation; the mission would be to feed, cloth and shelter homeless individuals in different communities. I will hone my skills by researching community resources and actually participating in the program to gain knowledge and understanding. Also I would practice note taking to help hone my skills in assessment. Lastly, I would practice asking open and closed questions because that is an important method to retrieve information out of clients.