Self-assessment audit of social pedagogic practice

Introduction

This audit tool is designed to support organisations and sole operators such as foster carers who are committed to a social pedagogic framework in their philosophy, policies and practices. You may have had social pedagogic training or be interested in aligning your practice to a social pedagogic approach.

The audit tool aims to allow individuals and organisation to identify their areas of best social pedagogic practice and where they might like to focus their attention in future training and development.

The domains and indicators used have been selected to reflect key principles of social pedagogic practice. They are all attributable to high-quality practice but they do not claim to be exhaustive. These indicators have been agreed in the first instance by a range of social pedagogy practitioners and will be reviewed by SPPA at regular intervals.

The tool is designed to apply to a wide range of services from those provided by individuals, to teams within organisations and whole organisations such as residential care providers. Sources of evidence include the Crossfields Level 3 Diploma Social Pedagogy, which is itself based on research and literature from a wide range of sources.

Using the tool

The tool is divided into 6 domains:

1.   Overall approach to social pedagogy in the setting

This domain assesses the place of a social pedagogic approach for individual workers/teams/organisations, and the key theories and principles of their practice.

2.   Communication and understanding lifeworlds

This domain assesses an individual/team/organisation's use of verbal and non-verbal communication, key listening skills, self-awareness and awareness of various social contexts.

3.   Building meaningful relationships

This domain assesses an individual/team/organisation's ability to establish, maintain and promote positive relationships with people they encounter in their practice.

4.   Creativity in practice

This domain assesses an individual/team/organisation's application of creativity in their direct work with individuals, groups and communities.

5   Safer social pedagogic practice

This domain assesses an individual/team/organisation's ability to balance safe practice whilst supporting the development of risk competence.

6.   Observation and reflection

This domain assesses an individual/team/organisation's use of reflection, to support future learning and development.

In the chart, below, each domain is presented as a heading.   In the first column, indicators as to whether it is met are presented in the form of questions. The second column provides, as applicable, additional contextual information, drawn from research and practice guidance. These are intended to help the user assess individual, team or organisational progress against each indicator. Finally, there are three spaces to enter evidence of the extent to which an indicator does or does not form part of your social pedagogic practice.

1. **Overall approach to social pedagogy in the setting**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Does a social pedagogic approach form part of your mission statement or define your outlook on practice?				
Is the SPPA Charter on display in your organisation?				
Have you/your team/your organisation committed to the Standards of Occupational Proficiency for social pedagogy practitioners?	The Social Pedagogy Standards represent the threshold level for a social pedagogy practitioner's philosophy, *Haltung* and practices. They can be viewed on the SPPA website here. Working towards their implementation with all staff involved can be a powerful means by which organisations provide the working culture and support processes that allow practitioners to apply the standards within their practice.			
Have you/your team/your organisation undertaken any training or education in social pedagogy?	A number of social pedagogy training opportunities are available externally. These are			

	advertised on the SPPA website here. Social pedagogy training allows staff to draw on theory and inherited experience in their day-to-day practice.			
What plans are in place for you/your team/your organisation to support continued training or education in social pedagogy?				
Are you/your team/your organisation members of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA), and/or attendees at Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) events? Do you engage in CPD or networking through these two bodies?	The attendance at events, and establishment of professional connections with other social pedagogy practitioners creates a means of CPD: a space for sharing best practice, mentoring and mutual support, especially in the face of challenging situations and adversity.			
Are you/your team/your organisation members and/or attendees at events of other professional bodies? Do you/your team/your organisation access CPD by attending the events of professional bodies not mentioned above?				

Do you/your team/your organisation employ social pedagogues and encourage them to model social pedagogy in the workplace?				
Do you/your team/your organisation train staff and/or others in social pedagogy?				
Does the professional language employed in the setting habitually use social pedagogy terms e.g., *Haltung*, zones of proximal development, reflective practice.				

2. **Communication and understanding lifeworlds**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Do you/your team/your organisation endeavour to understand and respect the life-world of service-users?	Thiersch theorised that in order to work alongside people effectively, it is necessary to understand their life-world. A life-world includes: • Individual characteristics and experiences in interaction with the social, cultural and political factors that inform their 'lifeworld'.			

Do you/your team/your organisation have practical ways of supporting individuals using life-world orientation in practice?	Utilising a life-world orientation in practice enables social pedagogy practitioners to understand the other person's perspective. In doing so it allows clearer communication and an understanding of how participants might interpret communication.			
Do you/your team/your organisation utilise active listening as a key part of communication?	Active listening in a conversation conveys to others that they are being heard, respected and taken seriously.			
Do you/your team/your organisation understand the relevant communication principles and rules utilised in social pedagogy? • 4 aspects of a message • It's impossible not to communicate • Power balance of participants. • Non-verbal and verbal aspects of communication. • The concept of 'feedback'.	Developed communication and active listening skills directly contribute to the quality of the relationships we form, and the effectiveness of our professional work.			

3. **Building meaningful relationships**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Do you/your team/your organisation focus special attention on welcoming newcomers? Staff and others, to the setting and helping them feel they belong?	Belonging is a fundamental human need associated with wellbeing. Managing transitions is a key aspect of integration into a new setting.			
Can you/your team/your organisation show a demonstrable ability to build meaningful relationships?	Social pedagogy is a relational approach that holds at its core the importance of forming, maintaining and promoting strong and reliable relationships based on inclusion, mutual trust and respect. There are a variety of tools and techniques to support practitioners in developing meaningful relationships with those they work with. They should demonstrate authenticity, trust, empathy, reciprocity and a value for diversity and equality.			
Do you/your team/your organisation understand the concept of the 3Ps and its role in initially establishing relationships?	The 3Ps is a way of distinguishing between the personal, private and professional self. Social pedagogy encourages relationship building in a			

	holistic way. Utilising the personal can support rapport-building.			
Do you/your team/your organisation employ the concept of the Common Third in working with the skills, abilities and talents of service-users?	The Common Third is a way of conceptualising joint activities as an important means for practitioners and others to get to know each other in a non-threatening situation. Recognising the skills, abilities and talents of service-users and allowing them to build on them – whether in everyday or in more creative activity – can contribute to self-esteem and a sense of social agency.			
Do you/your team/your organisation foreground the importance of building relationships within a team of professionals and a wider community?	Social pedagogy practitioners also need to develop appropriate relationships with - other professionals, within and outside their immediate setting - the wider social network of the people they work alongside.			
Do you/your team/your organisation consult service-users and empower them to	Exercising social agency is core to participation and inclusion. It increases the sense of self-determination			

contribute to the decision-making process?	a person has through increased confidence, self-belief and new skills gained.			

4. **Creativity in working**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Do you/your team/your organisation recognise the importance of creativity in supporting individual growth?	Social pedagogical practice relies on creative ways of engaging with individuals, groups and communities through a variety of shared activities, such as arts, sports, outdoor activities and music. These offer chance to develop authentic relationships, improve well-being and introduce participants to new life skills.			
Do you/your team/your organisation recognise the importance of creativity in working with groups – including their own teams?	Social pedagogical practice relies also on creative engagement with groups. Tuckman's group phases are a useful tool for establish group rapport.			
Do you work with an understanding that leadership can be exercised by different members of a group (professional and	Fruitful group activity has an understanding that all group member have a contribution to make, they are all part of the 'living space' and have			

service users) in different circumstances and that it is not necessarily hierarchical?	distinctive understandings and talents. Contributions may need to be invited and group members should be encouraged to listen to the contributions of others as well as those of the established leader.			
Do you/your team/your organisation regularly engage in shared activities with service-users?	Lihme (1988), Petrie and Chambers, (2008) highlighted the benefits of using a shared activity or 'common third' to strengthen relationships, gain mutual learning and to develop new skills.			

5. **Safer social pedagogic practice**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Can you/your team/your organisation explain their role and responsibilities in ensuring health and safety standards are met?	Social pedagogy practitioners must be competent in ensuring a safe environment for themselves and the participants they work with. Safe-practice in social pedagogical practice is focussed on well-being, learning and risk competence.			

Do you/your team/your organisation understand and apply the principles of confidentiality?	All social pedagogy practitioners must use situated professional judgement and maintain appropriate confidentiality at all times.			
Do you/your team/your organisation understand the importance of human rights when framing safer practice?	All children and adults have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them, and have a right to not be oppressed or discriminated against. Social pedagogical practitioners need to take these rights into consideration when ensuring safe practice and risk competency.			
Do you/your team/your organisation understand the concept of risk competence?	Risk competence is an individual's ability to understand, assess and manage risks in the light of their own abilities and taking into account the specific circumstances. Social pedagogical practice places a great importance on risk competence and resulting social agency.			
Do you/your team/your organisation understand the implications of supporting risk competence in safe practice?	A social pedagogical perspective on safe practice aims to ensure that individuals are not imprisoned by an			

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	exaggeration of risk and can take sensible risks that give them greater control over their lives, potentially increasing their quality of life.			
Do you/your team/your organisation have safeguarding training?	Having a recent qualification in safeguarding is essential for working with some vulnerable groups of people. It can also be a mandatory gateway to some social pedagogy qualifications.			

6. **Observation and reflection**

Indicator	Contextual information from practice and research	Not currently part of our work	Developing part of our work	A strong area of our work
Do you/your team/your organisation use observations in social pedagogical practice?	Making observations is a central tenet of social pedagogic practice. These observations must avoid interpretations and judgements and can benefit future learning and development.			
Can you/your team/your organisation use reflective methods to analyse situations experienced in practice?	Reflection allows social pedagogy practitioners to see how emotions, values, expectations and experience can colour practical situations. Using reflection, practitioners can take a			

	solution-orientated approach to developing their practice for the future.			
Do you/your team/your organisation share reflective techniques?	Social pedagogy practitioners should play a change management role, encouraging their colleagues and organisations to recognise the importance of reflective practice.			
Do you/your team/ your organisation promote reflection as a learning tool?	Self-reflection can be a time consuming process but is central to social pedagogic practice. Organisational support through mentoring, group reflection and by allocated time allows staff to commit to reflection. Staff meetings should offer space for joint professional reflection as well as for organisational matters.			