

## Advanced training of specialists in social work with the elderly and disabled people

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### Повышение квалификации специалистов в области социальной работы с пожилыми людьми и инвалидами

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**Аннотация:** в статье показаны результаты социологического опроса специалистов по социальной работе, проходивших курсы повышения квалификации по программе «Социальная работа с пожилыми людьми и инвалидами: инновационные технологии и практики». Выявлены основные мотивы повышения квалификации, предпочитаемые содержание и формы учебного процесса, отношение слушателей к курсам, их мнения о том, что они дают для практики профессиональной деятельности, и т.д.

**Abstract:** the article presents the results of the opinion poll of social work specialists who have taken the refresher course on the program «Social work with elderly and disabled people: innovative technologies and practices». The author considers the main motives of advanced training, preferred content and forms of learning, attitude of students to courses, their opinions about what the courses give for professional activity, etc.

**Ключевые слова:** специалист по социальной работе, социальное обслуживание, курсы повышения квалификации.

**Keywords:** social work specialist, social services, advanced training courses.

Specialists in social work are quite diverse as socio-professional group, which changes dynamically and is not studied enough.

According to the Professional standard of social work specialist [1], professional activity of a specialist dedicated to the planning, organization, monitoring and implementation of social services and measures of social support of the population in modern Russia.

Currently many social work specialists work in the field of social service of the population. The system of social protection is being modernize, updated legislation in the field of social services, etc. The steps of the action Plan («Roadmap») «Improving the efficiency and quality of services in the field of social services (2013-2018 years)» [2] referred to the professional development of workers of social service organizations in order to increase the quality of social services in the conditions of optimization of the system of social services.

According to the Federal Law of the Russian Federation of 29.12.2012 № 273-FZ «On Education in the Russian Federation» [3], the training program aimed at improving and (or) the acquisition of new competences necessary for professional activity and (or) improvement of professional level within existing qualification (article 76, paragraph 4). The program is one of the means of implementation of additional professional education aimed at meeting the educational and professional needs, professional development of an individual, ensure that its qualifications changing conditions of professional activity and social environment (article 76, paragraphs 1, 2). The content of additional professional educational program is determined by the program developed and approved organization, engaged in educational activities, tailored to the needs of individuals, organizations, upon the initiative which is additional vocational training (article 76, paragraph 6). In addition, the content of additional professional programs should take account of professional standards (article 76, paragraph 9).

In the article, we consider the professional development of specialists in social work, who perform social services for older and disabled people, for example, courses in the Institute of additional professional education of workers of social sphere of Moscow for the period September-December 2015. This period was characterized by a significant updating of the regulatory framework and changes in the work of social service organizations that have sent their specialists for training courses. A questionnaire survey among the specialists was carried out on the solid sample; the total number of respondents 96 people.

From a socio-demographic point of view, the vast majority of social workers are women (among the participants of the courses were about 94 %). Age characteristic of audience training courses is presented in table 1.

Table 1. The age of the participants of training courses

Age	The share of trainees that age (in %)
up to 20 years	0,0

from 21 to 30 years	18,5
from 31 to 40 years old	25,7
from 41 to 55 years old	28,2
55 years and older	21,3

As can be seen from table 1, almost all age groups after 20 years, including retirement age, are represented among the trainees, with a slight predominance of persons at the age from 41 to 55 years. Specialists in social work, came to a refresher course, have a different experience in the system of social protection of the population (table 2).

*Table 2. The work experience of trainees in the system of social protection of the population*

Work experience	The share of trainees with such experience (in %)
up to 1 year	16,1
from 1 to 5 years	22,6
from 6 to 10 years	33,2
from 11 to 20 years	14,7
from 21 to 30 years	3,8
from 31 to 40 years	3,8
for more than 40 years	4,5

Every third of the interviewed social work specialists has, according to table 2, have the experience in the system of social protection of the population from 6 to 10 years. Over 60 % of respondents have higher education, others - vocational. This education is mostly not relevant. We guess that is why many specialists have decided to undergo refresher courses (table 3).

*Table 3. The distribution of answers to the question of what prompted the social work specialists to undergo refresher courses (they can choose several options, so the sum of responses exceeds 100 %)*

Answers	Distribution of respondents (%)
a lack of special knowledge	58,6
the requirement of their superiors	43,5
upcoming certification	33,9
a lack of practical skills	17,9
the expected promotion	4,0

Despite the fact that almost half of the trainees indicated that impelled them to study the requirement of their superiors, about 70 % of the trainees stressed that they are interested in the subject of the course «Social work with elderly and disabled people: innovative technologies and practices».

The course program is tailored to the requirements of Professional standards and other regulatory and methodical documents, and also taking into account the trends and needs of practice of social service. Department of theory and technology of social work is graduating. Teachers of the Department of social administration and economy, of the Department of psychology and pedagogy also attracted on an interdisciplinary basis. Courses have a volume of 72 hours and are practice-oriented.

The main focus for training is given to relevant, meets the expectations of the majority of the participants the topics: main directions of development of social organizations in accordance with the Federal Law of 28.12.2013 No. 442-FZ «About bases of social servicing of citizens in the Russian Federation» [4] and the Law of Moscow dated 9.07.2008 No. 34 «On social services and social assistance in Moscow» (in edition of Law of Moscow from 24.12.2015, No. 66) [5]; professional standards in the social service system, their goals, objectives, content and ways of implementation; social policy for older and disabled people in modern Russia: prospects, priorities, and social risks; state legal framework for social protection and social services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities in Moscow; the state program of the Russian Federation «Accessible environment» and methods of its implementation. Also topics are covered: social work in social service organizations: nature and content; fundamentals of gerontological psychology and andragogy; innovative methods, forms and means of social therapy in social care for older persons and persons with disabilities; financial and economic bases of activities of social service organizations; innovation in the adaptation of elderly and disabled people in social service organizations; innovative rehabilitation services social service organizations. Considerable attention is given to themes: supervision and evaluation of the quality of social services; information systems in the sphere of social services, the suppliers register and the register of recipients of services; labour protection and security of the

service process in the organizations of social service of the population; innovations of record management in social service organizations, etc.

Seminars include themes «Communication technologies in the activities of the specialists»; «Ethical foundations of social services»; «The procedure and conditions for granting social services in Moscow». Also examines methods of evaluation and prevention needs of older persons and persons with disabilities in services of organizations social service; innovations in the provision of socio-psychological and socio-pedagogical services; methods of activation of personal resources and social environment of a recipient of services in social service organizations. Serious attention is paid to the innovative practices of social support for the elderly and persons with disabilities on the basis of interdepartmental cooperation; innovative technologies and practices of social services; the prevention of conflict and the basics of mediation in the provision of social services; culture and business communication. Trainees learn the order of development of the individual program of social services; the basic methods of prevention of occupational strain and burnout in the work of a specialist; technology promote additional social services among the elderly and disabled in social service organizations, etc.

The content of the lessons, as shown by the survey, meets professional needs and expectations of trainees, enables them to improve their competence necessary for professional activities, increasing the professional level in changing conditions of professional activities and social environment.

Attractive for trainees is that the theoretical materials presented by the teachers, definitely are illustrated by examples from practice of work of social service organizations. Very welcome visiting classes in social service centres. Heads of organizations, their deputies, and heads of departments and leading specialists of the centers also educate attendees, and this causes the approval of their audience. On the basis of the field lesson trainees will analyze the information received in the form of an essay about what they learned from the experience of the centre, what innovations useful to them in professional activities, etc.

Teaching materials (lecture notes, presentations, training manuals, reading lists, teaching materials and practical exercises) trainees receive through specially organized e-mail Inbox, and, according to the survey, it is their quite satisfied [6, p. 69].

To achieve the educational goals of the participants found the most suitable forms of activities, such as lectures (68,5 %), practical exercises (67,0 %), trainings (64,6 %), round tables (53,1 %), business games (29,9 %), etc.

The competition is held on the final day of training in the form of a round table on the theme «Social work in social service organizations in the context of implementation of Federal law No. 442-FZ». «About bases of social servicing of citizens in the Russian Federation». Questions for its preparation are offered to trainees at the beginning of the training. The round table usually takes place in the form of reports, communications and presentations and the subsequent discussions. Most performances are accompanied by presentations, examples of practice of social service, role-playing performances with the decision of situational tasks, etc. Trainees say that this activates and develops.

Directors of social service organizations and their deputies, heads of departments and specialists of socially oriented non-profit organizations participate in the round table as experts. Representatives of advanced social service organizations, which are experimental sites of the Institute (the local social services centres «Yuzhnoportovy», «Meshchansky», etc.), as well as Institute alumni, who are leading industry experts, are invited first of all.

Trainees also participate in charity events. They make their contribution to the Charity Fund «Illustrated books for little blind children». Foundation representatives speak at the round-table, describes the activities of the Fund, specific assistance to children, show books, which are prepared according to unique technologies, manually from expensive materials, but significantly contribute to the socialization of blind children.

Overall, the participants of course in their questionnaires noted that the educational material they learned, and they see its application in the practice of their work. The knowledge for many specialists serve, in their opinion, the impetus for new ideas and projects. The course has helped many trainees, in their view, to structure the knowledge acquired in practice and to gain additional knowledge in their field. Also they emphasize the relevance and appropriateness of courses, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to improve skills and high level of organization of the educational process.

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