

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER

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People come face to face with various situations in the course of their life cycle that may render their lives problematic.

It is well known that people seeking medical help from their own General Practitioners or otherwise may feel free to talk about situations other than medical, but which make their lives miserable. Most of these situations may have social implications of a severe nature, such as harrasment by others or family neglect or support, or even of a financial nature or about inadequate accommodation.

General practitioners who are able to identify problems of a social nature which could in themselves be major contributors towards the person's own ailment, need to refer them for social work intervention. Community social workers are mainly based within agencies under the jurisdiction of the Directorate of Family Welfare at the Centru Hidma Socjali, St Venera (Tel: 441311).

Of course social workers may specialize in certain fields, such as: care for the elderly, psychiatric problems and child care.

The Psychiatric Social Worker has got the right given by the Mental Health Act, 1976 to effect admissions to Mount Carmel Hospital of people who may be mentally ill and are a danger to selves or others.

These Social Workers are also involved in the rehabilitation of the mentally ill, in working towards their support and in working with their families in order to help them recover and find themselves back in the community. Such work may involve other larger systems other than family, so that it would then become necessary to enter into negotiation with other authorities in order to formulate social policies towards the care and support of the mentally ill.

Psychiatric Social Workers may also develop their own sub-speciality, such as working with persons who abuse alcohol or drugs, or working with children and their families.

Presently, there are four Psychiatric Social Workers based at Mount Carmel Hospital, and these could be reached on the hospital lines or directly (Tel: 434567 or 411993)