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Assessment in social work



References

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- Garcia, Tomás Fernández e Peláez, António Lopez (2008) Trabajo social comunitario, Madrid, Alianza ed.
- Lishman, Joyce et al (2018) Social Work, London, Sage Publ.
- Parker, Jonathan & Greta Bradley (2014) Social Work Practice. Sage Publ.
- Wilson, Kate et al (2008) Social Work, Edinburgh, Pearson Education

- The process of assessment is core to social work practice
- Take place in a number of contexts and are prepared for a variety of purposes
- Holistic / Focused
- On going / single event
- Individual / family/ Groups / Local.....

The definition:

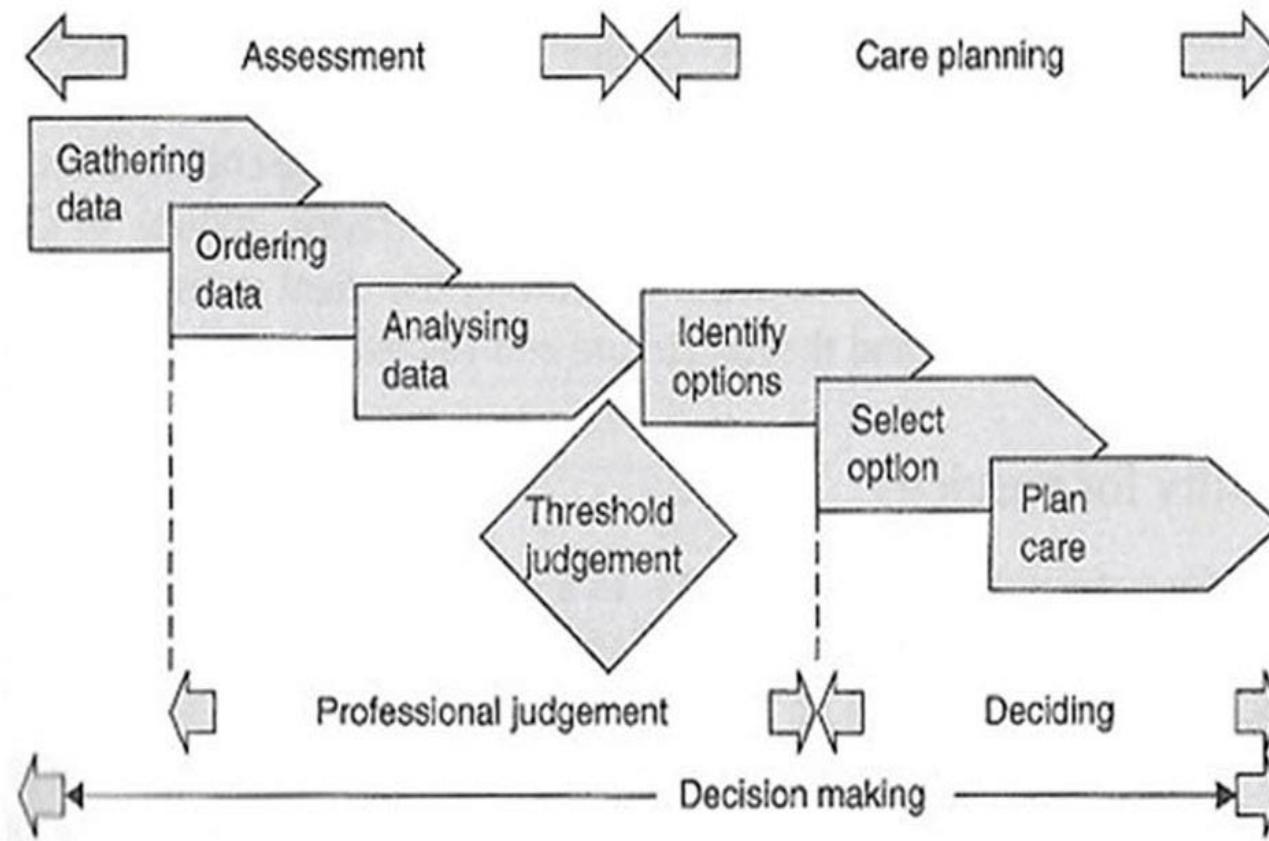
- Assessment as an ongoing process, which is participatory, seeks to understand the service user and his/her situation and sets a basis for planning how change or improvement can be achieved. (Coulshed and Orme 2012)
- is based on the exploration of data, which after being correlated allows to arrive at a synthesis and an interpretation
- Person-centred, taking a strengths-based approach

Assessment as evaluation?

- “There may be an evaluative component to an assessment (...) but in general assessment are more akin to an exploratory study, that forms the basis for decision-making and action.

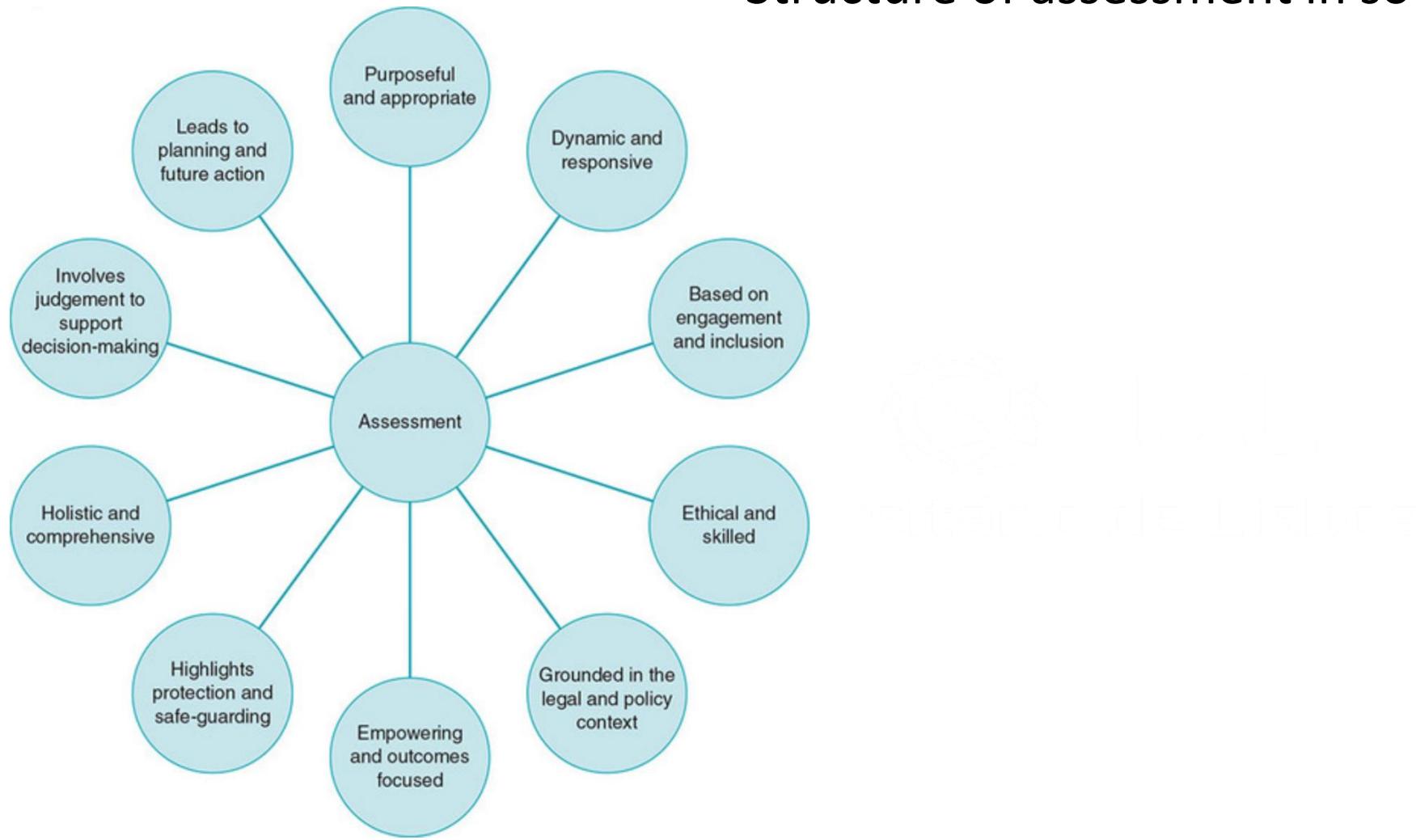


The assessment Process



Source:

Structure of assessment in social work



Source: Bolger and Walker (2018)

Principles of assessment

- Understanding need
- Working with systems and ecology
- Building on strengths
- Being person centred
- Taking an interprofessional approach

Assessment skills

- Involve the development of some skills:

observation, reflection, communication, evaluation,

“the ability to work in partnership, self-awareness, the ability to challenge discrimination, advocacy skills and the ability to analyse. ” (Bolger and Walker, 2018:179)

But also “negotiation and decision-making” (Watson and Best, 2006)

Organise, systematize and rationalize knowledge gathered (Parker and Bradley, 2014)

*Assessment types
and levels*

Broad based, non specific

Specific report

**Fixed point
time limited**

Looked-after
children report

Community
needs analysis

Ongoing assessment

Continuous process

Approved social
work
assessment
report on young
offender

Community
development
project

Problem or issue focused

Source: based on Parker and Bradley, 2014

- Depending on the kind of information we need to gather, Smale et al. (1993) offer us three models – the Procedural, the Questioning and the Exchange – to guide us in carrying out assessments. (Bolger and Walker, 2018)

Procedural model

- The procedural model, often associated with guidance related to legislation, involves using systems that are devised to ensure consistency and thoroughness in data collection. Consequently, eligibility for and allocation of services is often decided upon based on such data.
- This model can provide only a snapshot assessment, paying little attention to the individual's strengths and abilities, their individual rights and concerns about quality of life (Milner et al., 2015).

Questioning model

- The questioning model of assessment focuses on the nature of the questions and how the information is used. Using this approach problems and solutions reside with the individual, and the social worker's task is to identify the problem and highlight the most appropriate approach to resolve the issue

Exchange model

- When adopting the exchange model the service user becomes the expert about their own needs, and by being involved in their own assessment becomes empowered. It acknowledges that the worker's expertise lies in their problem-solving abilities.
- The aim, by developing trust and involving all parties, is to seek a compromise. The worker takes on responsibility for managing the process of assessment. The focus is on a holistic assessment of the context in relation to the individual over time (Coulshed and Orme, 2012).