



Welfare Allies: Experiences of Cabuyao's Registered Social Workers Handling Community Welfare Cases

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Abstract

This descriptive phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of registered social workers in Cabuyao City, Laguna, focusing on their challenges and coping strategies in handling community welfare cases. Through thematic analysis using semi-structured interviews, the research identifies important themes that reveal their professional and personal journeys. Key findings reveal eight themes that highlight the core values and principles of registered social workers, the support they receive, their coping mechanisms, and their role in supporting clients. The findings also answer the question of how the registered social workers describe their experiences in handling community welfare cases as professionals in specific cases, their collaboration with clients, their strategies to overcome the challenges that they encounter, and their reflections as registered social workers. The study recommends creating policy and program development, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced structural support to sustain the well-being and efficacy of social workers. Beyond their professional duties, the study reveals that these registered social workers' profession transcends mere employment; it represents a vocation motivated by a deep commitment to serving and advocating for the community.

Keywords: Registered Social Workers, Community Welfare, Phenomenological Study, Cabuyao City, Case Management, Resource Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Social Work Principles

Introduction

As of 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) reported over 708,000 social workers in a rapidly expanding profession vital to societal well-being. Operating in diverse settings like schools, hospitals, and private practices, social workers support vulnerable populations while facing significant challenges. The International Federation of Social Workers (2024) notes that social workers endure some of the poorest working conditions and lowest well-being levels compared to 75% of similar professions. The demand for social services has outpaced available social work positions globally, creating a critical gap.

In the Philippines, social workers play a key role in addressing social issues such as poverty, discrimination, and community development by providing essential support, advocacy, and interventions. However, as of July 2022, there were only 6,796 registered social workers for 9,541 available government positions, leaving 2,010 roles unfilled (Loyola, 2023). The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) oversees national programs, while local City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) offices implement localized services. It is important to distinguish between social workers and registered social workers. Under Republic Act No. 4373 (1965), registered social workers are licensed professionals who meet specific educational and legal standards, ensuring high-quality, regulated care for clients.

Laguna province currently has only 117 registered social workers, with a ratio of 1:28,907 residents (Hernandez, 2023). In Cabuyao, only ten registered social workers serve the community, where new cases arise daily, resulting in delays in providing necessary assistance. This shortage poses challenges in addressing the growing needs of vulnerable populations. However, the nature of their work, involving frequent interaction with traumatized individuals, makes them prone to burnout, secondary

trauma, and vicarious trauma, which negatively affect their productivity.

According to Ruby Mel Rebaya (2024), Officer in Charge of CSWD Cabuyao, local social workers manage intensive cases, including Child Abuse (CA), Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL), Children at Risk (CAR), Adoption, and Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC). With only ten social workers across CSWD and the hospital, their growing workload affects their well-being. This study explores their lived experiences, identifying case management themes, coping strategies, and the personal-professional impact of their work. Using a phenomenological approach, it aims to provide insights for strengthening government support and improving social workers' roles.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach to deeply explore the lived experiences of Cabuyao's registered social workers handling community welfare cases. According to Creswell (2016), this methodology focuses on describing the understanding of a phenomenon experienced by a small group of participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather rich data, allowing participants to freely describe their lived experiences regarding their daily encounters with community welfare cases.

The data gathered through face-to-face interviews revealed profound insights into the registered social worker's daily interactions and challenges in various cases. Transcriptions of the interviews were thematically analyzed, identifying recurring themes and patterns in the participants' lived experiences. This in-depth analysis highlighted their work's complexities and emotional and professional challenges.

B. Research Locale

This study was conducted at the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) of Cabuyao City, Laguna, a Local Government Unit (LGU), where the participants were employed at the time of the study. Individual face-to-face interviews were scheduled at mutually convenient times to avoid disrupting participant's working hours. This location was specifically selected to ensure privacy during the interviews and provide a comfortable, safe, and secure environment to encourage participants to respond freely. Private areas within the office were designated and arranged according to the participants' preferences to ensure their comfort and privacy. The researchers ensure data confidentiality and security throughout the research process.

C. Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of ten registered social workers currently employed at the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) of Cabuyao City, all of whom met the study's criteria.

The study initially targeted ten registered social workers from CSWDO Cabuyao City, identified with the Officer in Charge's assistance. However, one participant withdrew voluntarily, and to uphold ethical standards, the researchers,

in consultation with their adviser, respected this decision. Ultimately, insights from nine social workers provided a deeper understanding of managing community welfare cases in Cabuyao City, Laguna.

The study employed purposeful sampling to select participants with lived experiences relevant to the phenomenon. Then, the study participants had experiences with the phenomenon, and criterion sampling was used (Creswell, 2016). This approach aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the ten registered social workers.

D. Research Participants

In collaboration with Ms. Ruby Mel Rebaya, RSW, the Officer in Charge of the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) of Cabuyao City, Laguna, this study conducted interviews with registered social workers available at the time. The researchers purposefully selected participants who met the following criteria: (1) they had to be registered social workers currently employed at the City Social Welfare and Development Office and (2) have at least six months of experience handling community welfare cases. These criteria were carefully selected to ensure the participants had sufficient experience and expertise to provide valuable insights.

E. Research Instrumentation

The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews as the instrument to gather the lived experiences of participants in this study. As Ruslin et al. (2022) stated, a semi-structured interview is a powerful tool in qualitative research as it allows the researchers to gather in-depth information about research participants. Compared with unstructured and structured interviews, the flexibility and adaptability of semi-structured interviews make it a better instrument in this qualitative research. It provided the researchers with directions about the topic and allowed them to adjust their questions depending on the answers from the participants.

The semi-structured interview directed the topic that should be focused on and asked the registered social workers. Follow-up questions emerged for clarification or to keep focus on the participants' experiences. The interviews consisted of ten open-ended questions that allowed the participants to elaborate on their answers and provide detailed discussion.

1. What is your background and daily experiences in handling community welfare cases?
2. What principle of being a registered social worker do you usually adhere to, and can you give me an example of how you apply that in a case?
3. In what ways do your roles and responsibilities as a registered social worker influence resolving your clients' problems?
4. What are the most significant challenges you encounter when addressing issues with clients and organizations?
5. What types of support systems (e.g., supervision, peer support, administrative support) do you receive in your role and how does it affect your well-being?

6. How can you balance the emotional demands of the job, professional responsibilities, and your personal life?
7. How do you cope with the challenging aspects such as managing the stress and emotional demands of being a social worker?
8. How might the social work principles guide you in approaching or resolving a problem or conflict within your organization and clients?
9. How can you ensure that the services you provide adequate support and meet your client's needs effectively and efficiently?
10. How do you reflect on your experiences to identify areas for personal and professional development?

The ten questions have gathered the lived experiences of registered social workers in handling community welfare cases and their challenges. It achieved its aim of delving into the experiences of registered social workers in terms of how they are resolving the challenges they encounter, the methods they use to cope with the demanding nature social work, and their learning while handling community.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers presented an inquiry letter approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Department dean and research adviser to conduct an initial inquiry with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) to determine how many registered social workers in Cabuyao City, Laguna. This study employed purposive sampling as the researchers set specific criteria for their qualified participants. They gathered information from the internet, websites, and journals to determine the related literature for their study. The researchers emailed the Officer in Charge of the CSWDO about a possible interview with their organization.

Before data collection, an informed consent form was provided to registered social workers to ensure voluntary participation and to make them aware of the potential risks and benefits of being involved in this research. The researchers prepared a semi-structured interview questionnaire to gather data about the lived experiences of the registered social workers. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the CSWDO and Bagong Cabuyao Hospital (BCH), both of which are under the Local Government Unit (LGU). During the interviews, the researchers used audio recordings, field notes, and guided questions to better understand the studied phenomena.

G. Ethical Consideration

The study considered the rights and welfare of the participants involved. The researchers adhered to the Psychological Association of the Philippines Code of Ethics, Article X. Respecting the rights and safeguarding the welfare of its participants. The researchers thoroughly explained and presented an informed consent form to each registered social worker. It includes information about the purpose of the

study, potential risks, benefits, duration of conduct, confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the participants, and contacts of the lead researcher for prompt response in case of sudden concerns about the research.

In line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, researchers upheld privacy and confidentiality by using data solely for research, maintaining anonymity via participant codes, and securing information in a restricted-access Google Drive. Data will be deleted two months post-study.

Participants

1. Different Types of support to Career Development as
 2. Registered Social Workers
 3. Rising Above Emotional Challenges while Balancing Professional and Personal Life
 4. Work-life Balance
 5. Through Effective Coping Mechanism
 6. Social Worker-Client and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide
 7. The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients
 8. Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers
- Managing Collaborative Relationships and Expectations with Partner Agencies and Stakeholders
 - Receiving Motivations through External Support
 - Intrapersonal Support as the Source of Resilience
 - Organizational Support Serves as the Key to Effective Social Work Practice
 - Separating Professional Commitment with Personal Life
 - Maintaining Professionalism Despite Emotional Strain
 - The Act of Retail Therapy to Relieve Stress
 - Spreading Good Vibes to Uplift their Mood
 - Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities
 - Recharging by Spending Their Personal Time at Home
 - Cultivating Growth Through Counseling and emotional Care
 - Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions
 - Collaborating with Organizations for Essential Client Support
 - Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication
 - Every Experience as an Opportunity of Growth
 - Profession Becomes Vocations
 - Undervalue yet Vital Profession were informed of their right to withdraw and any discomfort was addressed. Accuracy was ensured by presenting transcriptions for validation, adhering to ethical guidelines to prevent data misinterpretation.

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in the study. This phenomenological study intends to delve into the lived experience of registered social workers currently employed in the City Social Welfare Office in Cabuyao City at the time of the study. The 10 participants were composed of 8 females and 2 males.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1. The Professional Experience of Each Registered Social Worker in Managing Specific Cases in Community Welfare	- Providing Targeted Programs and Services to Support Vulnerable Population- Legal and Institutional Support to Protect Rights and Ensure Justice
2. The Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social Workers in Their Practice	- Confidentiality- Individualization- Controlled Emotional Involvement- Non-judgmental Acceptance
3. Registered Social Workers Fully Support Clients from Initial Assessment to Final Resolution	- Fostering Safety and Protection for Children at Risk- Transforming Trials into Growth for Children in Conflict with the Law- Protecting the Future of Children in Need for Special Protection- Breaking the Cycle of Violence Against Women and Their Children- Adoption Support as the Foundation of New Beginning- Compassion and Support in Medical Social Work Services- Transforming Pain into Hope for the Victims of Abuse
4. Behind Closed Doors: Struggles Faced by Registered Social Workers	- Limited Resources Amidst Growing Demands for Services- High-Risk Cases That Can Threaten Personal Safety- Professional Dilemmas Between Ethical and Practical Realities- Registered Social Workers Protect Victims, Even from Their Own Families- Managing Collaborative Relationships and Expectations with Partner Agencies and Stakeholders
5. Different Types of Support to Career Development as Registered Social Workers	- Receiving Motivations Through External Support- Intrapersonal Support as the Source of Resilience- Organizational Support Serves as the Key to Effective Social Work Practice
6. Rising Above Emotional Challenges While Balancing Professional and Personal Life	- Separating Professional Commitment with Personal Life- Maintaining Professionalism Despite Emotional Strain
7. Work-life Balance Through Effective Coping Mechanism	- The Act of Retail Therapy to Relieve Stress- Spreading Good Vibes to Uplift Their Mood- Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities- Recharging by Spending Their Personal Time at Home
8. Social Worker-Client and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide	- Cultivating Growth Through Counseling and Emotional Care- Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions- Collaborating with Organizations for Essential Client Support
9. The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients	- Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication
10. Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers	- Every Experience as an Opportunity of Growth- Profession Becomes Vocation- Undervalued Yet Vital Profession

On the phenomenological study on the lived experiences of the registered social workers in handling community welfare cases, ten (10) themes emerged. These were (1). The Professional Experiences of Each Registered Social Workers in Managing Specific Cases in Community Welfare; (2) The Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social Workers in their Practice; (3) Registered Social Workers Fully Support Clients from Initial Assessment to Final Resolution; (4) Behind Closed Doors Struggles Faced by Registered Social Workers; (5) Different Types of Support to Career Development as Registered Social Workers; (6) Rising Above Emotional Challenges while Balancing Professional and Personal Life; (7) Worker-Life Balance through Effective Coping Mechanisms; (8) Social Worker-Client and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide; (9)

1. The Professional Experience of Each Registered Social Workers in Managing Specific Cases in Community Welfare
 2. The Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social
 - Providing Targeted Programs and Services to Support Vulnerable Population
 - Legal and Institutional Support to Protect Rights and Ensure Justice
 - Confidentiality
 - Individualization
 - Controlled Emotional Involvement
- Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients; and (10) Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers.

Table 2: Professional Experiences of Each Registered Social Workers

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 1	“Bali diyan minomonitor ko, una sa lahat, gumagamit pa sila, so nagkakaroon kami ng random drug testing. Pangalawa, monthly counselling. And then, pangatlo syempre ‘yung pangkabuhayan din nila. So nag-conduct kami ng livelihood, seminars, and programs para sa kanila. Bali, ‘yun ‘yung mga hawak ko at sa mga programs.”	Providing Targeted Programs and Services to Support Vulnerable Population
RSW 3	“Ako ay, ang hinahandle ko kasi is sa case ay sa VAWC, and sa elderly so nagkakaroon din naman ako ng field, field work, like ‘yung home visitation, mga validations sa aking mga clients.”	Providing Targeted Programs and Services to Support Vulnerable Population
RSW 2	“So ako kasi, social worker ako na naghahandle ng abuse case. So, I usually attend court hearings, and then nagkakaroon ako ng conduction of initial interview, assisting clients regarding filing of case nila, and inaassist ko din sila in terms of court proceedings.”	Legal and Institutional Support to Protect Rights and Ensure Justice
RSW 6	“Syempre sinusunod naming ‘yung procedures naming, kapag hospital bills hinihingan naming ng voter’s certification, barangay indigency tapos certificate of unemployment. Barangay Indigency katumayan na...”	Legal and Institutional Support to Protect Rights and Ensure Justice

The Professional Experiences of Each Registered Social Workers in Managing Specific Cases in Community Welfare, registered social workers has different responses describing their work as a registered social worker managing specific cases in the CSWD office of Cabuyao City. They expounded their duties into sub themes Providing Targeted Programs and Services to Support Vulnerable Population and Legal and Institutional Support to Protect Rights and Ensure Justice which emphasizes the different experiences of registered

social workers in Cabuyao as they manage specific community welfare cases. Drawing from the Social Constructivism Theory, illustrates how social workers tailor their approach to case management by engaging deeply with clients and communities, drawing on shared experiences, cultural contexts, and interactions that influence their yung Violence against Women and their Cycle of Violence problem-solving strategies.

Table 3: Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social Workers in Their Practice

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 1	“Principle of confidentiality talaga number one. Kase tawag dito katulad ng hawak ko, ‘yung mga PWUDs, so kailangan discrete kung sino sila kase alam n’yo ba ‘yung na didiscriminate sila.”	Confidentiality
RSW 2	“Confidentiality, lahat kami dito once na nagdi-discussion about client, hindi kami nagbabanggit ng name ng client.”	Confidentiality
RSW 5	“Isang principle na sinusunod ng social worker ‘yung sinasabing confidentiality.”	Confidentiality
RSW 3	“Kaya lang kasi iba-iba ‘yung case, iba-iba ‘yung mga tao, iba-iba ‘yung approach mo, so du’n papasok ‘yung principle naming na individuality, individualization.”	Individualization
RSW 3	“Maski naman kami although may attachment hindi talga mawawala ‘yan pero hindi mo pwedeng ipakita ‘yan sa mga tao na emotionally affected ka du’n sa nangyari.”	Controlled Emotional Involvement
RSW 6	“Trained talaga kami bilang ‘yung emotion natin sa trabaho at tsaka sa personal life ay talaga bukod.”	Controlled Emotional Involvement
RSW 8	“Yung controlled emotional involvement, kung wala kami nu’n baka umiyak na din kami sa harap ng mga kliyente naming, mas umiyak pa kami sa harap ng kliyente naming.”	Controlled Emotional Involvement
RSW 2	“And then acceptance of clients as they are, kasi lahat naman sila, though may mga bad person, may tinatawag kasi kami na CAR, ‘yung mga Child at Risk na before na-abuse sila tapos naging CAR sila or ‘yung Child at Risk, na ‘yun ‘yung result ng trauma nila.”	Non-judgmental Acceptance

The Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social Workers in Their Practice, registered social workers uphold a set of core principles and ethical standards that guide their practice, ensuring they deliver services with integrity, empathy, and professionalism while prioritizing the well-

being and rights of their clients. They enumerated their core values and principles which include, Confidentiality, Individualization, Controlled Emotional Involvement and Non-judgmental Acceptance.

Table 4: Registered Social Workers Fully Support Clients from Initial Assessment to Final Resolution

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 5	“So ‘yun ‘yung mga CAR, Child at Risk. So, ganun pa lang, may mga sign pa lang o nagpapakita na sila ng mga ganoong problema, dapat may intervention na gagawin. So, halimbawa nireport sa amin, from barangay o di kaya from school, ‘sir may mga CAR,’ so nag-aaction na kami ng intervention noon, undergo na sila ng counselling, observation, monitoring, para hindi na sila mapariwara.”	Fostering Safety and Protection for Children at Risk
RSW 5	“Kahit ma-file-an man ‘yung bata, ‘yung CICAL, tutulongan pa rin ng social worker. Kahit sa pagharap n’ya ng korte, ginagabayan pa rin. Ano ‘yung mga possible na makatulong sa kanya at sa family n’ya habang hinaharap n’ya yung kaso.”	Transforming Trial into Growth for Children in Conflict with the Law
RSW 5	“Ang role ng social worker ay ma-assure natin na ‘yung bata ay safe. Ang social workers ang nagsisigurado na ‘yung mga rights nung bata kahit nasa ganoong situation ay hindi nalalagay sa alanganin. Halimbawa, ‘yung mga pangangailangan niya ay nabibigay pa rin—guidance, monitoring, kung walang nagbabantay, kailangan mailagay sa shelter.”	Protecting the Future of Children in Need of Special Protection
RSW 2	“Andyan ‘yung initial interview with the client. It’s part of case management, ‘yung pag-handle mo doon sa mga hindi nag-file ng case o sa bawat yugto ng buhay niya—home visitation is part of that. So doon naa-assess ang pagiging case manager namin.”	Protecting the Future of Children in Need of Special Protection
RSW 3	“Ang major na hawak ko ay ang VAWC—Violence Against Women and their Children. Magsisimula sa interview, iniintindi ko yung pangyayari. Mabilis ang phasing kasi kung magharap sila para sa dialogue at magkasundo, tapos na agad. Kaya mabilis ang turnover sa cases.”	Breaking the Cycle of Violence Against Women and Their Children
RSW 9	“Sa rights-based approach, kailangan ma-highlight, maibigay, maipaanawa sa client ang kanyang karapatan para sa protection. Ginagarantya na ang karapatan ng bata ay nirespeto sa bawat yugto ng kanyang buhay. Ito ang approach sa abused children.”	Adoption Support as the Foundation of New Beginning
RSW 8	“Lahat ng adoption process, dahil di na siya court-based, dito na sa administrative. Dadaan muna sa amin sa LGU. Kami ‘yung first step, sa akin lahat dumadaan ‘yung nag-aapply ng adoption.”	Adoption Support as the Foundation of New Beginning
RSW 6	“Syempre nasa hospital tayo. Mostly talaga hospital bills, discounts ng pasyente, laboratories, x-ray. Sinusunod namin ‘yung procedures—hinihingan namin ng voter’s certification, barangay indigency, at certificate of unemployment.”	Compassion and Support in Medical Social Work Services
RSW 6	(continued from above)	Transforming Pain into Hope for the Victims of Abuse

Registered Social Workers Fully Support Clients from Initial Assessment to Final Resolution it highlights how registered social workers manage cases, from initial assessments to final resolution. They shared their experiences which includes Fostering Safety and Protection for Children at Risk, Transforming Trials into Growth for Children in Conflict with the Law, Protecting the Future of Children in Need of Special Protection, Breaking the Cycle of Violence Against

Women and their Children, Adoption Support as the Foundation of NewBeginning, Compassion and Support in Medical Social Work Services, and Transforming Pain into Hope for the Victims of Abuse. Okafor et al. (2021) stated that social workers play a vital role in mobilizing communities and facilitating connections between government-established care systems and community-based services.

Table 5: Behind Closed Doors Struggles Faced by Registered Social Workers

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 5	“Kahit nga nagkulang-kulang sa mga ganito or kailangan pa rin magampanan ‘yung mga trabaho mo para makatulong ka.”	Limited Resources Amidst Growing Demands for Services
RSW 9	“That time and until now wala pa naman children shelter kami eh.”	Limited Resources Amidst Growing Demands for Services
RSW 4	“One time, nakaranas kami na parang nagkaroon ng tension.”	High-Risk Cases That Can Threaten Personal Safety
RSW 9	“Paghabol ko sa stepfather, nahawakan ko siya sa kwelyo ng damit niya and then pagharap niya saakin, inunday niya sa akin ‘yung kutsilyo at nagkatitigan kami.”	High-Risk Cases That Can Threaten Personal Safety
RSW 4	“Kasi ‘yun ‘yung parang nagiging challenge—paano mo iko-convince ‘yung boss mo na ito ‘yung the best na treatment plan sa kaniya na ipapaliwanag mo in a certain way sa kaniya bakit ito ‘yung kailangan natin gawin.”	Professional Dilemmas Between Ethical and Practical Realities
RSW 4	“I think ‘yung time na ‘yun, ‘yung reaksiyon ng mother ay hindi siya malala kasi parang ine-expect niya na ‘yun pero hindi niya ine-expect na hindi namin siya ipapavisit sa shelter.”	Registered Social Workers Protect Victims, Even from Their Own Families
RSW 5	“Tapos yung bata kinuha nung lalaki, nung family ‘no? Hindi ngayon pinapakita du’n sa nanay. Yung tinulungan namin ‘yung nanay na magkaroon ng settlement, ibig sabihin magkaayos ‘no?”	Registered Social Workers Protect Victims, Even from Their Own Families
RSW 4	“Paano mo pag-iisahin o i-cocombine lahat kasi magkakaiba kayo ng interpretation, magkakaiba din ng profession. So doon, ‘yun ‘yung pinaka-challenge doon.”	Managing Collaborative Relationships and Expectations with Partner Agencies and Stakeholders
RSW 5	“Ang challenges lang naman sa organization, kasi yun nga, di ba? Minsan sila, tatanong si patient, hindi sasagutin—bagsak parang sisi lahat sa amin, sa amin ang punta.”	Managing Collaborative Relationships and Expectations with Partner Agencies and Stakeholders

Behind Closed Doors Struggles Faced by Registered Social Workers focus on the unseen struggles social workers face both personally and within their work environment. The challenges include Limited Resources Amidst Growing Demands for Services, High-Risk Cases That Can Threaten

Personal Safety, Professional Dilemmas between Ethical and Practical Realities, Registered Social Workers Protect Victims, Even from Their Own Families and Managing Collaborative Relationships and Expectations with Partner Agencies and Stakeholders.

Table 6: Different Types of Support to Career Development as Registered Social Workers

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 1	“Na-attend ka pa rin ng mga seminars, training ‘no? para lalo mo ma-improve ‘yung delivery of social service. Sa dami no’n, pagtulong mo sa mga kliyente.”	Receiving Motivation through External Support
RSW 8	“Sa mga pa-trainings, kung kailangan namin um-attend, hindi kami binabawalan kahit pa ‘yan sa Cebu, kahit pa ‘yan out of town.”	Receiving Motivation through External Support
RSW 7	“Ngayon, pag nasa bahay tayo, siyempre, as department head, call pa rin sila sa’yo. Pero ano naman, naiintindihan na mga anak ko, and malalaki na naman ‘yung mga anak mo. So, okay lang.”	Intrapersonal Support as the Source of Resilience
RSW 1	“Nakakatanggap naman kami ng ganitong support, lalo na itong peer support, kasi ito talaga ‘yung importante dito sa’min.”	Organizational Support Serves as the Key to Effective Social Work Practice
RSW 2	“Nand’yan ‘yung administrative assistance. So andyan ‘yung mga ka-work ko na siyempre kapag ka ‘yung on-time cases, kapag hindi na namin kaya, may tinatawag kami na word na <i>zaido</i> (terms of social workers to refer their clients to another social worker in the office).”	Organizational Support Serves as the Key to Effective Social Work Practice

Different Types of Support to Career Development as Registered Social Workers focuses on different support systems that help social workers manage their challenging roles. Each form of support is essential in helping them stay resilient, improve their practice, and continue serving clients

effectively. They elaborated it into Receiving Motivation through External Support, Intrapersonal Support as the Source of Resilience and Organizational Support Serves as the Key to Effective Social Work Practice.

Table 7: Rising Above Emotional Challenges while Balancing Professional and Personal Life

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 2	“Wala talaga anything related sa work pag-uwi ko sa bahay. Nandu’n lang, nakikipag-chikahan lang ako sa mga katrabaho ko through phone or kung hindi man, nakikipag-call ako doon sa mga other friends ko, ‘yun.”	Separating Professional Commitment with Personal Life
RSW 4	“Ako talaga, para ma-manage ko, mai-balance ko personal and professional life, talagang ‘pag nasa bahay ako, nagshu-shutdown talaga ako. At sa phone ko, may pili lang na tao na pwedeng makatawag sa akin anytime.”	Separating Professional Commitment with Personal Life
RSW 8	“Kapag mga text, tawag, ina-accommodate ko pero kapag gabi nagsa-silent ako ng cellphone. Tapos paminsan makikita ko may mga tawag kinaumagahan pero at least naka-rest na ako.”	Separating Professional Commitment with Personal Life
RSW 1	“Minsan may case na maaawa ka sa client, kasi may pumupunta dito batang may black eye, batang kinalbo ng magulang, ‘yung gano’n. Nagagampanan ko naman kasi syempre nasa trabaho kayo, edi kailangan gawin mo talaga kung ano ba dapat ‘yung protocol.”	Maintaining Professionalism Despite Emotional Strain

Rising Above Emotional Challenges while Balancing Professional and Personal Life explores how social workers rise above emotional challenges while balancing the demands of their professional and personal lives. Highlighting the emotional strain that comes with the job, particularly when dealing with complex, distressing cases, and how social workers manage to maintain their commitment to their

clients. It Also, it reflects the importance of setting boundaries and prioritizing personal well-being. It emphasizes the delicate balance between responding to the needs of clients and nurturing personal relationships and self-care, ensuring that social workers can sustain both their emotional resilience and professional effectiveness.

Table 8: Work-Life Balance through Effective Coping Mechanisms

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 4	“It’s either pupunta kaming SM or SNR, mamimili—parang retail therapy ‘yun ‘yung gagawin namin. Kaya mga magagastos mga tao dito.”	The Act of Retail Therapy to Relieve Stress
RSW 8	“After work, halimbawa ‘punta tayo SNR,’ ‘punta tayong Landers.”	The Act of Retail Therapy to Relieve Stress
RSW 4	“As per feedback naman ng aming mga kliyente, gusto daw nilang pumunta dito lagi sa office namin, kasi aside daw sa matulungin ng office namin, ay lagi daw kaming mga naka-smiles.”	Spreading Good Vibes to Uplift Their Mood
RSW 5	“Kumbaga ‘yung parang pinapatawa ko din para minsan kahit papaano mapagaan ko. Kasi ‘yan papasok sila doon, ang bigat ng problema nila, mapangiti mo lang sila, aba malaking bagay na ‘yun.”	Spreading Good Vibes to Uplift Their Mood
RSW 2	“Regarding sa work, time management actually per client naman kami dito. So, regarding sa time management, nagkakaroon kami ng scheduling.”	Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities
RSW 7	“Basta time management, tsaka huwag kang magpapadala sa emotion o ano ng clients mo. Dapat lagi kang presence of mind, focus ka kung ano ba talaga ‘yung goal mo.”	Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities
RSW 4	“Never akong nag-uwi ng paperwork, unless emergency na emergency talaga siya. Ako ‘pag umuwi ako sa bahay, talagang totally shut down ako. Kasi para sa akin, free time ko na siya.”	Recharging by Spending Their Personal Time at Home

Work-Life Balance through Effective Coping Mechanisms focuses on different coping mechanisms social workers use to separate their work from their personal lives. By setting boundaries and not bringing work stress home, they protect their mental health, prevent burnout, and have time to recharge. This balance helps them stay present and effective

in their personal lives and careers, leading to better well-being and job satisfaction. They elaborated it into several key strategies, The Act of Retail Therapy to Relieve Stress, Spreading Good Vibes to Uplift Their Mood, Balancing Professional and Personal Responsibilities and Recharging by Spending Their Personal Time at Home.

Table 9: Social Worker-Client and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 1	“Bali yung aftercare nila, before kasi si korte ay inoorderan si PWUDs na mag undergo ng aftercare program monthly counseling. So, nag-coconduct kami ng livelihood, seminars, and programs para sa kanila.”	Cultivating Growth Through Counseling and Emotional Care
RSW 2	“So, number one doon is ‘yung counselor, kasi since abuse social worker kina-counsel namin ‘yung mga bata na nakaka-experience ng abuse, na may trauma, na may anxiety.”	Cultivating Growth Through Counseling and Emotional Care
RSW 1	“Bilang social worker, ikaw lang ang magbibigay ng option sa kanila, sila pa rin ‘yung magdedecide sa buhay nila.”	Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions
RSW 2	“Hinahayaan namin sila na magkaroon ng sarili nilang determination, lalo na sa abused kasi kailangan nila ‘yun, ‘yung support system nila. Since kailangan nila ng support system du’n pumapasok ‘yung client self-determination na kailangan mo na tibayan ‘yung loob mo.”	Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions
RSW 3	“We encourage din talaga na ‘yung clients namin na sila ang mag-resolve ng problem nila hindi ‘yung kami, ang sa amin lang nagbibigay kami ng mga ganitong options, mga ganitong advise.”	Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions
RSW 5	“Hindi namin kakayanin na mag-isa, so ang sinasabi namin sa pagharap mo doon sa problemang yun, yung katuwang mo dapat dyan yung barangay, katuwang mo dapat dyan yung community ‘no? Tapos yung organization okay? Atsaka yung gobyerno, so ibig sabihin lahat po kailangan magtulong-tulong lang.”	Collaborating with Organizations for Essential Client Support

Social Worker-Client, and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide is the partnership of the social worker and client in understanding the challenges, exploring various options, and developing practical, personalized solutions that align with the client's unique needs, goals, and values. The social worker emphasizes that the client retains the right to make their own decisions with the social worker's role to present a range of available options and provide

guidance. They enumerated their experiences from Cultivating Growth Through Counseling and Emotional Care, Partnering with Clients to Forge Meaningful Solutions, and Collaborating with Organizations for Essential Client Support. Fracisco et al. (2023) stated that the social work profession helped people to help themselves by applying knowledge, skills, and competencies rooted in social work principles and philosophies.

Table 10: The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 3	"Umm siguro 'pag nasasabi nila 'yung 'thank you' ganon tapos minsan may mga bumabalik dito, may mga nagte-thanks, 'ma'am, thank you' ganiyan-ganiyan 'ma'am, thank you nagkabati na kami ng asawa ko, ng partner ko."	Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication
RSW 4	"Bumabalik sila at nagpapasalamat din. So, nakikita mo tsaka 'yung nai-influence namin mag-social work, not sure kung may nakapagkwento na sa inyo dito. Minsan kasi inaano namin na 'may nakapag-appreciate din pala ng..."	Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication
RSW 7	"May client na bumabalik sa amin. Nagpapasalamat siya, kahit na in simple na natulungan mo lang siya or nagtanong mo lang siya, nasagot mo, babalik si client, magte-thank you or sa hospital bill, discharge si patient, yun, di ba? Ang gaan, sarap sa pakiramdam na naappreciate niya yung naibigay mo sa kanyang assistance, maliit man yan o malaki. Ayun, parang fulfilled ka as a social worker na gawa ko yung trabaho ko."	Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication

The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients emerges how registered social workers ensure the services they provide are adequate and meet the client's needs effectively and efficiently. It highlights the profound emotional and professional impact that gratitude has on social workers. They shared their experiences through Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication. When client's express appreciation for the support they receive, it not only affirms the social worker's efforts but also serves as a powerful

motivator. This acknowledgment strengthens the social worker's sense of purpose, reinforcing their dedication to providing high-quality services. According to Mitchell (2024), feedback played a crucial role in shaping the client-social worker relationship, which was essential for effective practice. Whether through verbal thank-you or formal recognition, this feedback reassures social workers that their work is meaningful and effective.

Table 11: Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers

Participants	Responses	Subthemes
RSW 2	"Actually, para sa akin, every day is a new learning. Kasi hindi naman palagi na same 'yung mae-encounter mo in terms of abuse."	Every Experience as an Opportunity of Growth
RSW 3	"Everyday is a learning opportunity para sa akin kasi nga araw-araw. Although 'yung trabaho mo parang sabihin mo parang routinary ano? Pero hindi nga eh kasi nga although pare pareho ng case pero iba-iba mga tao, iba-iba 'yung personality, iba-iba behavior so ayun 'yun para sa'kin may growth du'n kasi habang tumatagal iba-ibang klase ng problem or taong nakakaharap ko, nag go-grow ako sa pamamagitan nila, ayoko naman maging masaya kasi may problemang dumarating."	Every Experience as an Opportunity of Growth
RSW 4	"Tumanda na nang single kasi yung iba naging vocation na nila, nu'ng una naging profession."	Profession Becomes Vocation
RSW 9	"So 'yun nga sinabi ko, siguro yung love for the job, yung passion mo 'no? yung commitment mo tsaka yung nakalalahan mo."	Profession Becomes Vocation
RSW 1	"Maganda nga 'to at least makikilala kami sa totoo lang, dati wala talaga akong idea about social work- sa course na social work, wala talaga akong idea nito."	Undervalued yet Vital Profession
RSW 2	"Kita n'yo kung gaano kahaba 'yung proseso namin tapos solo lang ako o dalawa lang kami na nag momonitor doon. Kaya ang hirap nang experience namin as social worker."	Undervalued yet Vital Profession
RSW 6	"Siguro underrated s'ya, kasi hindi s'ya masyadong alam ng tao."	Undervalued yet Vital Profession

Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers is a reflection of the essence of social work, enabling practitioners to grow through daily challenges and interactions. By reflecting on their experiences, registered social workers are driven by their sense of purpose and commitment to reinforce the importance of their role in promoting social justice and supporting clients. They explained their reflections from Every Experience as an Opportunity of Growth, Profession Becomes Vocation, and Undervalued Yet Vital Profession. Petersén (2022) found that the motivations for choosing social work as a career emphasized the image of social workers as professionals

driven by a deep commitment. Cabuyao's Registered Social Workers often find that their profession evolves into a vocation due to the deep sense of purpose and dedication they bring to their work. It is not simply about fulfilling job duties; it's about making a lasting impact on individuals and communities.

4. Discussion

On the phenomenological study on the lived experiences of the registered social workers in handling community welfare cases, ten (10) themes emerged. These were The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients emerges how

registered social workers ensure the services they provide are adequate and meet the client's needs effectively and efficiently. It highlights the profound emotional and professional impact that gratitude has on social workers. They shared their experiences through Client Appreciation Empowers Dedication. When client's

1. The Professional Experiences of Each Registered Social Workers in Managing Specific Cases in Community Welfare;
2. The Core Values and Principles that Guide Registered Social Workers in their Practice;
3. Registered Social Workers Fully Support Clients from Initial Assessment to Final Resolution;
4. Behind Closed Doors Struggles Faced by Registered Social Workers;
5. Different Types of Support to Career Development as Registered Social Workers;

6. Rising Above Emotional Challenges while Balancing Professional and Personal Life;
7. Worker-Life Balance through Effectiv Coping Mechanisms;
8. Social Worker-Client and Organization Collaboration to Find Solutions and Decide;
9. The Power of Gratitude and Feedback from the Clients; and
10. Life Seen Through the Eyes of Registered Social Workers.

Registered social workers in Cabuyao City are significant in helping and assisting the community by providing social services, including case management, community programs, and medical social services. As an output of this study, the social work program had been developed to serve as a guide for registered social workers to promote a work- life balance in their work stress-related.

Comprehensive Social Work Enhancement Program

Key Result Area	Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Source of Fund	Success Indicators
Personal Safety and Risk Assessment	Equip social workers with skills to recognize potential harm and ensure safety.	- Personal Safety Seminar- Crisis Management Training	Bi-annual	Registered Social Workers, LGU/Partner Organizations	LGU	Enhanced ability to manage risks and increased sense of security at work.
Enhancing Stress Management and Coping Program	Develop healthy coping strategies to reduce stress and prevent burnout.	- Fitness Activities- Stress Reduction Seminar- Free Psychological Consultation	Quarterly	Registered Social Workers, Fitness Instructor, Health Trainers, Psychologist	LGU	Improved stress management skills and reduced stress-related absenteeism.
Social Worker Holistic Approach Workshop	Train social workers in a holistic approach for client-centered support.	- Workshop on holistic care principles- Interdisciplinary collaboration training	Bi-annual	Social Workers, Resource Speakers	LGU/NGOs	Improved client outcomes and comprehensive care plans.
Social Work Course Awareness Campaign	Raise community awareness about the role of social work.	- Awareness seminars- Collaboration with LGUs and academic institutions	Annually	Social Workers, LGU Representatives, Educators	LGU	Increased public understanding and reduced stereotypes about social work.
Competitive Salary and Benefits	Ensure social workers feel valued and improve retention.	- Performance Appraisal- Competitive salary structure- Additional benefits and bonuses	Annual	Supervisor/Officer in charge	Government Budget Allocations	Increased job satisfaction and lower turnover rate.
Development of CSWDO	Provide a comfortable working environment to improve focus and professionalism.	- Private, organized workspaces- Breakrooms with relaxing amenities	One-time project and renovations	LGU, CSWDO Staff	LGU Budget and Grants	Enhanced workplace satisfaction and confidentiality for client interactions.

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