



Client Socialization: The Achilles' Heel of the Helping Professions

James A. Jones, Abraham Alcabes

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Client socialization--the process that enables strangers to trust each other--is the very foundation on which treatment rests, according to Jones and Alcabes. Without it, professional intervention should not begin and cannot be successfully completed. Yet it is a process that is often overlooked by many practitioners in social work, counseling, medicine, law, religion, and allied fields. The authors present a three-stage model of progression respectively termed applicant, novitiate, and client. The stages involve the perceptual and attitudinal changes that must take place if a help-seeker is to become a true client--a partner in problem-solving. The model enables those seeking help and those trained to provide assistance to overcome barriers and bring about desired improvements in the help-seeker's status.

Continued addiction, recurrent family violence, and ongoing emotional and other problems evidence a failure to effect a sufficient impact in the help-seeker's life. Jones and Alcabes insist that professionals must earn the potential client's confidence, trust, and willingness to be involved, through a non-coercive teaching-learning effort. The process for client development is set forth in a clear, substantive analysis, with very practical and ethical recommendations. Practitioners will find new and useful insights into the critical client-professional relationship.

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