

PARA SOCIAL WORKERS; THE 'BACK BONE' OF THE BETTER OUTCOMES PROJECT



FRED'S MOTIVATION

“I pick my motivation from the word ‘help’; I love helping my community and I love seeing other people becoming better and living better lives.”

POSITIVES

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Introduction

Fredrick Oyapel is a para social worker in Osukuru sub county, Aputiri central village in Tororo district. Before becoming a para social worker, he had worked as a Village Health Team member and this helped him to understand what was expected of him as a para social worker. He is married and a father of seven children and he holds his family so dear to him.

Typical Day at work

As a para social worker, Fred's typical day consists of visiting enrolled house holds to establish if they are facing any challenges. “the immediate support I always give in situations of problems is psychosocial support, I try to counsel to people to make sure that they are in the right shape to receive further help. I always use the seven steps case management model to handle almost every case that comes up. If a case is beyond me, then I refer it to the relevant authorities.” He points out that most of the cases he handles are to do with gender based violence or domestic violence. He also prepares reports and helps in the data collection whenever needs be.

Motivation



“I pick my motivation from the word ‘help’; I love helping my community and I love seeing other people becoming better and living better lives.” Fredrick also points out the numerous trainings given to them by the better outcomes project as being part of the motivation factors in his work as a para social worker.

Most Challenging case handled so far and how it was handled.

“I once had a domestic violence case where the husband was a drunkard and always demanded that the wife gives him all the money she would earn so he could buy alcohol. The lady had become the care taker of the home and the husband resorted to battering her whenever he failed to give her money to buy alcohol. I made use of the local authorities after identifying the case and we sat the husband down and explained to him the dangers that he faced with his behavior. We explained to him that if he doesn’t refrain from battering the wife he was going to end up in prison. We also showed him the dangers of alcoholism and how hard his life would be without his loving wife (if she choose to leave him). This was an eye opener for the man and he promised to refrain from drinking alcohol and also battering the wife. He put this in writing and it was put on our file. The family has since lived in harmony.”

Message to people who wish to become PSW

“The para social work is totally voluntary. You have to love your community and the kind of work we do. If anyone wishes to join our kind of work, they should not hope to use this as a job to get riches because our payment is in heaven.”

Positives from the job.

Fred explains that he has gained a lot of experience on how to handle so many cases and how to carry himself in the community. The community respects him and whenever he stands up to talk they listen to him because they know he is knowledgeable. He attributes this to the trainings he received. “Because I am always helping my community members, it is easy for me to get help whenever I ask for it. For me that is satisfying enough. I get all the help I give back in different forms of kindness. Even the smile I see on a previously sad person is payment enough for me.”