

Social Workers' Attitudes Towards the Law

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In recent years there has been a general shift towards integration and cooperation between lawyers and social workers, both professionally and ideologically. This new trend is relatively new and runs counter to the historical position that distanced the two professions one from the other. While law is a very old discipline rooted in representing the individual in his or her quest for justice, social work is a much younger profession, which at least in its early days, focused on the poor and the excluded within broader social contexts.

The goal of this study was to explore the attitudes of social workers towards the law. The hypothesis was that, due to the recent legal and professional changes in Israel, social workers will express positive attitudes toward the law. For the purposes of this study, a closed questionnaire, containing 25 statements regarding the law and its relationship to social work was employed. The convenience sample consisted of 202 social workers from Haifa and the Northern region of Israel.

The findings of this study supported the hypothesis that there is indeed a tendency for closer ideological and professional proximity between social work and law in Israel. Social workers express, in general, positive attitudes towards the law, while the majority seeks to know more and broaden their study of law. However, especially in the case of statements regarding attitudes towards the courts and the litigation process, the attitudes were relatively less favorable. This last finding indicates that there are still some distancing forces that need to be addressed.

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