

# **System-Relevancy on an abandoned post - Frontline Social Work and the Coronavirus Pandemic**

by: Rune Staudacher

## **Abstract**

The Coronavirus-pandemic has impacted society in consequential ways, affecting the most marginalised disproportionately. By virtue of social workers proximity to communities in vulnerable situations, their experiences offer a distinct perspective on the social consequences of COVID-19 as well as the changed realities of frontline practice. Therefore, the present research project sought to explore the lived experiences of social workers engaged with people at risk of homelessness in Berlin, Germany during the Coronavirus-Pandemic. This was done by conducting six semi-structured interviews with a total of 13 research participants from July to November 2020. Subsequently, according to Interpretative- phenomenological analysis (IPA), the data was transcribed, anonymised, and thematically coded. The interviewed social workers identified a range of issues, dilemmas, and ambiguities relating to social work during a global pandemic. Overall, their practice was characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity, unavailability of support services as well as a lack of support by supervisors. However, through solidarity with both colleagues as well as service users, new ways forward could be envisioned, and necessary social critique formulated.

Keywords: Coronavirus, Homelessness, Pandemic, Social Work, Frontline Practice