
From The Editors

It is with great pleasure that we bring to our readers the Fall 2008 issue of *Perspectives on Social Work*. These are stimulating times for doctoral students, and particularly for doctoral students in the field of social work. This election has the potential for bringing important social and economic change, and we watch with great anticipation. Regardless of what happens, some barriers will have been broken. It is indeed exciting for us in this field, and it is exciting to be able to contribute through research and scholarship. We are very proud of being able to offer this forum to our fellow doctoral students in social work throughout the United States.

This is also a particularly exhilarating time for *Perspectives on Social Work*. Not only have we extended our call for papers to the entire nation, but our peer review process now includes invited reviewers from other universities in the United States. We are very pleased with the way *Perspectives* has matured over the years.

We would like to welcome Felina Franklin to the Editorial Board. We are thrilled about Felina's participation with *Perspectives on Social Work*. We would also like to extend our warmest thanks to our invited reviewers who make this journal possible through their selfless dedication to service: Sheree Ahart, Darla Beaty, William Cabin, Ada Cheung, Jennifer Herring, Larry Hill, Peter Kindle, Grace Loudd, Thang Luu, Byron Parker, Eusebius Small, Josephine Tittsworth, Venus Tsui, and Yolanda Villareal.

We are looking forward to an exciting electoral season, but in the meantime, we trust that our readers will find this issue useful and informative.

Best regards,
Editorial Board

The 4th Annual University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work Doctoral Student Symposium March 27, 2008

The editors are pleased to present the abstracts of the presentations given at the 4th annual Doctoral Student Symposium at the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work. The purpose of the annual symposium is to give the doctoral students an opportunity to present their research interests to their peers, professors, and the community. This was the first year that the Doctoral Student Symposium was opened to doctoral students from other universities.

Disseminating Doctoral Research: The Evolution of a Doctoral Student-Run Journal

Saralyn McIver, LMSW, and Kara Lopez, LMSW
University of Houston

Doctoral students have innovative ideas but due to inexperience with the publishing process and the lack of a platform, many great papers are banished to the dark and lonely file drawer. *Perspectives on Social Work*, a doctoral student-run journal, provides a unique opportunity for doctoral students to showcase their work. However, after the journal expanded its call nationwide, it became evident that change in the editorial process was needed to keep pace with rapid growth in submissions. Additionally, change in the review process was necessary to improve and protect diversity and fairness. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss procedural and structural modifications that moved the journal forward in its ability to optimally

disseminate diverse doctoral work. The implications for social work doctoral research and dissemination are far reaching and will be the cornerstone of this presentation.

Responding to Bio-Psychosocial Consequences of Natural Disasters on Child and Adolescent Survivors: School-Based Interventions with the Silent Victims of Hurricane Katrina

Byron Parker, LMSW
University of Houston

This abridged paper presentation provides an overview of the impact of trauma on children and adolescents; statistical analysis of children and adolescents who evacuated to, and enrolled in schools in Houston and surrounding areas; problems associated with the integration of Hurricane Katrina Impacted (HKI) and Internally Displaced Students (IDS) in Houston and surrounding area school districts; an Innovative Intervention Strategies Model (IISM); and a proposal for a multi-dimensional re-adjustment curriculum for public and private schools.

A Randomized Control Experiment of an Early Mental Health Intervention Program

Larry E. Hill, LMSW
University of Houston

A randomized controlled pilot experiment was conducted to determine the efficacy of a preventative mental health program for maltreated children entering the foster care system for the first time. Foster care youth (n = 46) were randomly assigned to a treatment (n=23) or control (n = 23) group. They were assessed using four standardized instruments that measured anxiety, depressive symptomology, negative externalized behaviors, and self-esteem immediately after entry into the foster care system and after six months. The results indicated that after six months, there were no statistically significant differences between the treatment and control group on the standardized measures. The results suggest that mental health professionals should use randomized controlled experiments to determine the efficacy of their programs.

Outcome Based Evaluation for a School-Based Parenting Program with Implications for Social Policy

Menyuan L. Smith, MSW
Clark Atlanta University

Parents are influential change agents for their elementary school-aged children. Often, however, parent service providers fail to use a culturally-centered lens in recognizing the importance of parents' needs, strengths, and perceptions. Parenting programs that advertise as "evidence based" are frequently grounded in Eurocentrism that fails to reflect diverse populations. This study was designed to examine the effectiveness of a school-based parenting program that services Hispanic and African American populations through culturally sensitive applications. This intervention was designed to help improved participants' parenting knowledge and skills to promote school success for children in grades K-3rd. A mixed-methods design was utilized to measure the program's effectiveness; specific measures include a curriculum pretest-posttest, client satisfaction survey, and focus group. This study utilizes an Afrocentric Research Agenda that rejects hegemonic conceptualization and disseminates findings from a worldview which includes parents as decision-makers and partners in policy development for parenting service programs and curriculum development.

Social, Economic, and Political Inequality among Foreign Workers

Ada Cheung, LMSW
University of Houston

Foreign workers are defined as people who hold an H-1B visa. This H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa category in the United States under the immigration & Nationality Act. It allows U.S. employers to seek help from skilled and talented foreigners. However, the gaps in this policy are cause for concern about inequality. Foreign workers are often exploited in social, economic, and political arenas, causing inequality. These exploitations include working in abusive environments, lower wages, the prolonged process of green card (permanent residency) application, tax deductions discrimination, and lack of political representation. This presentation will cover the historical background of the H-1B policy, discuss how H1-B implementation causes social, economic, and political inequality, and will provide tentative suggestions for promoting change.

The Impact of Cultural-Competency Training on Caseworker Perception

Shaun W. Johnson, MSW
Clark Atlanta University

The purpose of this explanatory study is to examine the impact of Cultural-Competency Training on caseworker perception of family need in the placement of African American children. Cultural-Competency Training is a teaching model designed to train child welfare workers in a culturally-based practice. Family need is defined as social supports, economics, and housing/living arrangements. This study is based upon the assumption that cultural competence among case workers plays a significant role in their placement of African American youth.

This study uses an explanatory mixed methods design to measure cultural competency training on caseworkers' child placement behaviors. The researcher uses a pre-test/post test and focus groups for data collection. The researcher assumes that Cultural-Competency training will have a positive impact on the placement of African American children. The implications for social work practice are a reframing of policy research and training guidelines for child welfare workers to work effectively with African American children.

Addressing Urban and Rural Cost-of-Living Differentials Through at Minimum-Wage Policy Initiative

Elena Delavega, MSW
University of Houston

The minimum wage has been derided both as an interference with free markets that has the potential to harm the economy, and as insufficient and falling short of a living wage. In addition, differentials in urban and rural cost of living render the minimum wage too high for certain areas, maximizing the potential for economic disruption, and too low in others, which results in even greater hardship for the families of the working poor. A random sample of Texas counties shows a significant correlation between population size and average weekly wages, which results in the current minimum wage being a much lower proportion of the average weekly wage in an urban area compared to rural areas. Moreover, cost of living varies widely between urban and rural areas as evidenced by housing costs, and this further affects the effect of wages on wellbeing. This paper proposes implementing a policy of a tiered minimum-wage structure according to population size.

Dímelo (Tell Me About it): What Influence Do Culture and Religion Have on HIV/AIDS Beliefs?

Moctezuma Garcia, MSW

City University of New York- Hunter College

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to grow and disproportionately affect Latinos. The following proposal explores the implication of culture and religion on beliefs related to HIV/AIDS and homosexuality in the general Latino community in New York City. The research methodology for the study is quantitative and non-experimental. The independent variables are acculturation and religion. The dependent variables are spiritual well-being, HIV/AIDS knowledge, empathy towards people with HIV/AIDS, and homophobia. A total sample of 300 adult Latino males and females will be recruited from religious and non religious settings in New York City to complete a self-administered survey. Findings from this research proposal will contribute to the social work literature, increase understanding of how social structures influence HIV risk behavior, and provide social workers with information on how to strengthen HIV interventions addressing Latino populations.

Locating evidence-based practices: A hands-on demonstration for clinicians

Eili Kaganoff, LCSW

University of Houston

In light of the recent trend of evidence-based practice and research-supported treatments in mental health, there is a need to disseminate current research outcomes and implications to mental health practitioners in the public. Treatment outcomes are available in specific books as well as on electronic databases, some of which are free to the public. Clinicians involved in the practice of psychotherapy must have the knowledge and training to navigate through such resource and identify current best practice treatments. The following presentation will provide social workers in the community with a “hands-on” demonstration on the Cochrane Library, PsycInfo, and Medline databases in order to identify evidence-based and research-based treatments in order for clinicians to be able to provide the highest quality of care and services the their clients. Additional resources (books and articles) regarding the identification of evidence-based practices will also be covered.

Labels and Diversity: What’s in a Name

Panel Presentation

Darla Beaty, LCSW, Ada Cheung, LMSW, Venus Tsui, MSW, Gabriel Fosu, LMSW, Elena Delavega, MSW, Joy Malbrough, LMSW, and Josephine Tittsworth, LMSW

University of Houston

Social workers engage people from varied backgrounds: representing diversity in ethnicities, religions, sexual orientation, cultures, gender, and age, to name a few. How people of different populations are referred to in print and in person can make a difference in that person/group experiencing alienation or inclusion. This panel discussion will highlight the history of and current politically correct use of terminology to refer to aspects of a person’s identity, whether it is race, gender variance, age, or cultural origins. Each panelist will discuss a particular population and the words used to identify, label, or describe members of that group. This is relevant for social workers modeling sensitive techniques for others in practice, research, and educational settings.

The relevance of the community food security movement for social work

Kara Lopez, LMSW
University of Houston

Hunger and food insecurity issues have traditionally been examined from an individual and household level perspective. A recent line of research examines food security from a broader perspective that combines social, environment, policy, and economic concerns. The concept of community food security has arisen out of the need to address broader issues of food security at the community level, and has been defined as “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). This presentation will offer a conceptualization of how individual, household, and community food security are inextricably tied to social justice and the environment. Community food security will be explored through a conceptual framework that integrates social work ethical concerns for social justice with ecological-systems theory. Implications for food policy, community practice, and research will be explored.

The Personal is Social: What Children Adopted by Gay Men Can Teach Us About Families and the Politics of Difference

Mohan Vinjamuri Krishna, LMSW, MA
City University of New York- Hunter College

Families headed by openly gay and lesbian parents are increasing in the U.S. Gay men and lesbians choosing to adopt children are part of an ongoing evolution and expansion of family forms. Research on gay and lesbian families has focused on determining if children raised by non-heterosexual parents are different from those raised by heterosexual parents. Consequently, little is known about the unique strengths, needs and subjective experiences of these children. Through analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with young adults adopted by gay male parents, this study describes the experiences of these children. The focus is participants' experiences during pre-adolescence and adolescence. Using Queer Theory as a framework, this study aims to depict the influences of heteronormativity on the daily lives of youth raised by homosexual parents. The findings of this study have potential implications for social work practice with gay and lesbian families and theories of adolescent development.

A Need for Change: Policy and Services for Male Victims of Domestic Violence

Venus Tsui, MSW
University of Houston

Attacks on men have long viewed as a lesser concern in society. Although the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2000 and 2005 do not deny services or assistance to male victims of domestic violence, government and state-level discrimination, and bias against men prevail across the country. Despite the pressing needs of male victims, very few services are being provided to them. In this presentation, the gaps in current policy and services for male victims of domestic violence will be explored. Bias and discrimination against male victims as well as the consequences of domestic violence on men and everyone in the family will also be examined. Finally, an advocacy piece for change in policy and services to address the unique needs of abused men and implication for education and further research will be highlighted.