Advances in Social Work

Indiana University
School of Social Work

Advances in Social Work is committed to enhancing the linkage among social work practice, research, and education. Accordingly, the journal addresses current issues, challenges, and responses facing social work practice and education. The journal invites discussion and development of innovations in social work practice and their implications for social work research and education. *Advances in Social Work* seeks to publish empirical, conceptual, and theoretical articles that make substantial contributions to the field in all areas of social work including clinical practice, community organization, social administration, social policy, planning, and program evaluation. The journal provides a forum for scholarly exchange of research findings and ideas that advance knowledge and inform social work practice. All relevant methods of inquiry are welcome.

Advances in Social Work is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes original work. Articles are accepted on the basis of appropriateness, clarity, sound methodology, and utility for social work practice, research, and education. Articles are indexed or abstracted in *Social Work Abstracts* and *Social Service Abstracts.*

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AISW Guest Editorial

Margaret E. Adamek

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as guest editor for the Spring 2001 issue of *Advances in Social Work: Linking Research, Education & Practice*—the refereed journal of The Indiana University School of Social Work. The task has been both a privilege and a challenge. I conclude the experience in awe of the profession and the wide range of human and societal issues social workers confront in their practice, research, and educational endeavors.

A new feature in this issue is the inclusion of e-mail addresses of each of our first authors to facilitate scholarly exchanges among our readers and the authors. This issue contains one invited piece and six peer-reviewed articles. Our Editor-in-Chief, Barry Cournoyer, invited Michael Spencer from the University of Michigan to submit a paper based on his presentation at the January 2001 conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. Dr. Spencer's paper, *Identity and Multicultural Social Work Research: A Reflection in Process*, calls on social work researchers to think critically about multiculturalism and its impact upon our personal and professional lives. In particular, he urges us to consider the implications of multiculturalism in all aspects of our research activities. He questions the assumption that qualitative methods automatically ensure the advancement of social justice and challenges quantitative researchers to incorporate reflective and transformative approaches. Dr. Spencer reminds us of the power of research to serve as "an agent for social change and social justice."

Carol Cohen and Michael Phillips of Fordham University partnered with Marianne Chierchio of Catholic Charities in Brooklyn to explore the topic of agency and university collaboration in efforts to assess client outcomes. In *How Are We Doing: Agency/University Collaboration for Assessment of Client Outcomes*, they discuss a cooperative effort that integrated the doer and thinker roles. They also provide recommendations for social service agencies and schools of social work interested in forging client outcome assessment collaborations.

In their article, *Social Work Programs' Use of the World Wide Web to Facilitate Field Instruction*, Jerry Finn and Steven Marson discuss how the Web may enhance field instruction at both the BSW and MSW levels. Their content analysis of the Websites of nearly 300 social work programs suggests that the World Wide Web is under-utilized by many schools of social work in support of field instruction. In addition to identifying several model Websites, the authors present practical strategies for using the Web to improve field education.

Using a case study of the Indiana Youth Service Bureau, Karl Besel explores the dependency of nonprofit social service organizations on governmental and local revenue sources. His study, entitled *The Role of Local Governmental Funding in Nonprofit Survival*, highlights key factors that influence the viability and sustainability of nonprofit agencies. Dr. Besel alerts social work administrators to recognize the importance of fostering long-term relationships with local funders as a means to enhance organizational stability.

A group of social work researchers at the University of Tennessee, Rodney Ellis, Anne Pruett and Karen Sowers, explore the topic of seclusion and restraint of juveniles in the U.S. In their article, *Issues in the Seclusion and Restraint of Juveniles: Policy, Practice and Possibilities*, they review several pieces of recent legislative, professional, and popular literature regarding the use of seclusion and restraint practices, and identify the major issues currently under discussion. Despite some areas of consensus, professionals have yet to reach a definitive agreement as to what constitutes appropriate procedures for the seclusion and restraint of juveniles.

In *Healing Rituals for Survivors of Rape*, Colleen Galambos explores the use of therapeutic rituals at individual and collective levels to help rape survivors. Dr.Galambos describes the key components of rituals and shares the reactions of participants in one such ritual—an annual candle-lighting ceremony for rape victims and their friends and families. She concludes that therapeutic rituals can provide clinical healing within different contexts and client populations.

A collaborative team from the University of Alabama, Lucinda Lee Roff, David Klemmack, Debra McCallum, and Michael Conaway, conducted a follow-up to an earlier investigation of Alabama residents' opinions about the degree to which welfare recipients and welfare employees defraud the government. As was the case in the earlier study, the majority of respondents see welfare recipients as dishonest. The percentage of respondents that believed welfare employees to be dishonest doubled from 1981 to 2000. Consistent with the previous study, beliefs that welfare employees are dishonest predicted higher, not lower, support for government programs and services.

As the oldest school of social work continuously affiliated with a university in the nation, we at the Indiana University School of Social Work welcome you to share with us in celebrating our 90TH anniversary this year. While we look back in commemoration, we also look forward to using *Advances in Social Work* in new and creative ways to highlight developments in the field of social work. Watch for new presentation formats and special topic issues to be announced in the near future. In an upcoming issue we plan to present a series of articles addressing the newly approved CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards as they relate to advances and innovations in social work research, education, and practice.

A hearty *THANKS* to all of the authors who contributed to this issue and to the many reviewers who provided thoughtful comments about manuscripts. Special thanks to Traci Holt at Indiana University for facilitating communication with authors and reviewers and keeping the journal processes organized and on track. I am also grateful for the vote of confidence from my IU faculty colleagues who believed I could shepherd this issue to fruition. While it takes "a village to raise a child," in academia it takes a community of scholars and support staff to produce a quality scholarly journal. I am proud to be a part of such a community.

Margaret E. Adamek, Ph.D.
Spring 2001

Message from the Dean

At the Indiana University School of Social Work we are delighted to present another issue of *Advances in Social Work*. As the title connotes, *Advances in Social Work* serves to contribute to the knowledge base of the social work profession by providing a publication that advances knowledge and demonstrates effectiveness and quality improvements for social work through research, education, and practice. In publishing *Advances in Social Work*, we envisioned a journal that would provide an opportunity for faculty, practitioners, students, and other professionals to have a forum whereby scholarly work related to social work research, education, and practice could be published. Now in its second year of publication, *Advances in Social Work* has established itself as a highly respected journal with excellent articles from leading scholars. It has been well received by social work educators and practitioners alike. This current issue, too, makes important contributions to the knowledge base of the profession.

I am grateful to a number of persons who have contributed extensively to make *Advances in Social Work* possible. Gratitude goes to Dr. Barry R. Cournoyer, who now serves as the Editor. His leadership, attention to details, and quest for quality are clearly evident. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Margaret Adamek, who served as Guest Editor for this issue. She graciously stepped in while Dr. Cournoyer was on sabbatical and has done an outstanding job. We certainly appreciate all of her many efforts and her strong commitment to excellence. Members of the Editorial Board, whose names appear on the inside front cover, deserve special credit for their direction, support, and diligent work. The Consulting Editors, whose names also can be found inside the front cover, have served as reviewers for the manuscripts submitted. Their able assistance is greatly appreciated.

The Indiana University School of Social Work has a distinguished history. Founded in 1911, it is the oldest social work program in the nation continuously affiliated with a university. The School of Social Work has a rich history of providing quality social work education, producing excellent research and scholarship, and having a strong commitment to serving the profession and the people of Indiana. This coming academic year we will celebrate our 90th anniversary, commemorating the many milestones attained at the School of Social Work. The School has approximately 900 students and offers the BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. degrees. Degree programs are offered on five Indiana University campuses, located in Bloomington, Gary, Indianapolis, South Bend, and Richmond. Headquartered in the state capital, Indianapolis, the School has strong ties to state and local agencies and engages in a variety of collaborative projects with them. The University and the School of Social Work serve as models for utilizing advanced technology in the management of its programs and for scholarly work assessing educational outcomes. Our School is perhaps the most advanced in measuring, assessing, and evaluating the educational outcomes of its programs. With such a distinguished history, quality faculty, and strong supports, the School of Social Work provides a supportive environment for faculty teaching, research and scholarship, and service, and for student learning.

Advances in Social Work marks another milestone in the rich history of the School of Social Work. It advances our mission by disseminating new knowledge for the advancement of the profession. The recent adoption of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) by the Council on Social Work Education will have significant implications for the education of social work students. BSW and MSW programs will soon need to meet the EPAS requirements to be reaccredited and for new programs to receive initial accreditation. In keeping with our commitment to provide timely knowledge to advance social work education and practice, a future issue of *Advances in Social Work* will be devoted exclusively to addressing the implications that EPAS has for social work education. I certainly hope that you—as many others already have found—*Advances in Social Work* to be a valuable asset to your work and to the social work profession.

Michael A. Patchner, Ph.D.
Dean
Spring, 2001

Identity and Multicultural Social Work Research: A Reflection in Process

Michael S. Spencer

Abstract: *Personal identity and multicultural issues have relevance for social work researchers as well as practitioners. Written specifically for* Advances in Social Work, *this self-revelatory and inspirational article by Dr. Michael Spencer is based, in part, on an address he delivered at the January 2001* Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. *Michael Spencer encourages social work educators, researchers, and practitioners to join with him in the conversations needed to address identity and multicultural issues as they pertain to service-related research. In particular, he challenges social workers to recognize and manage their identity-based personal biases and preferences, and use both quantitative and qualitative research perspectives in ways that acknowledge the uniqueness of diverse peoples. He recommends that the processes of collaboration and self-reflection characterize the conduct of multicultural social work research, and urges researchers to translate their findings into practitioner-friendly forms to facilitate application in service delivery.*

Keywords: Identity, multicultural, social work, research

As an academic researcher dedicated to cultural diversity and social justice issues, I have often found myself struggling with competing theories, methodologies, and ethical considerations. Striking a balance within these areas has been a struggle, but it has also led me to think critically of the role of multiculturalism in social work research.

I entered academia at a time when social work was establishing its credibility in the world of federally-funded research and was fortunate to see an evolution in the way in which the profession has advanced in research. The establishment of NIMH-funded centers in the mid-1990s to develop the infrastructure for sustained programs of research was most beneficial to the field. At about the same time, the Society for Social Work and Research and the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research were chartered for membership, and these organizations highlighted the work of social work researchers and set a standard for scholarship. While multiculturalism has long informed social work and its values, the absence of critical theory and social justice in social work researchers' empirical work has troubled me. Certainly, cultural variables were included in studies, and there are numerous examples of research in social work that have invested in proving neg-

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ative stereotypes and biases of cultural groups as myths, but I continued to feel that something was missing.

As a social justice educator, I have been honored to read the works of individuals such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Ronald Takaki, Howard Zinn, Paulo Freire, Peggy McIntosh, Beverly Tatum, and others who have influenced my thinking around multiculturalism and social justice (e.g., Freire, 1970, 1973; hooks, 1981, 1984, 1994, 1995; Lorde, 1984; Takaki, 1993, 1994; Tatum, 1997; Zinn 1980, 1997). These works embody the notions of social transformation, social action, critical consciousness, self-reflection, and the inter-sectionality of multiple identities, whether they encompass race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, or spiritual orientation. I wondered why these works are absent from the social work literature. Were our advancements in research and methodologies incongruent with this literature base? How could research be conducted as I had been trained to do and was expected to do as part of my tenure and promotion and be true to my deep values in diversity and social justice?

I have been trained in quantitative research and have found these methods useful, particularly in my study of racism, poverty, and mental health. This research allows me to examine the association between inequality and well-being in a credible and authoritative manner. These methods use probability to establish the statistical significance of the relationship between such variables in an objective and unbiased manner. However, as I study the epistemology of knowledge development, I note the increasing skepticism of this notion of objectivity (e.g., Grinnell, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Is our research not influenced by the questions we choose to study? And, are these questions not influenced by our personal life experiences and the passion that drives us to study these relationships?

Qualitative research holds some promise in addressing these epistemological issues with its emphasis on context and meaning. However, not all qualitative research is necessarily transformative, nor does doing qualitative research ensure advances in social justice. There are paradigms in qualitative methodologies, such as post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism that recognize the subjectivity of the researcher and ask the researcher to examine this subjectivity as part of the process (e.g., Bryman & Burgess, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). These paradigms acknowledge that what we know as "truth" is influenced by social, political, economic, cultural, ethnic, and gender factors that crystallize over time. Our research findings are not developed in a vacuum of objectivity, but rather are mediated by values. Thus, multiple realities are possible; they are realities that are socially constructed and influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Two methods that parallel these paradigmatic positions include community-based research (CBR) (e.g., Israel, Schultz, Parker, & Becker, 1998) and participatory action research (PAR) (e.g., Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stringer, 1999). These methods deserve our consideration because they recognize context and because they appear to be well-grounded in values that are congruent with social work ethics. CBR and PAR focus on community needs and resources, collaboration, and social transformation. These methods acknowledge that the researcher and participant are interactively linked and that research find-

ings are inseparable from this relationship. CBR and PAR emphasize a continual dialectic of iteration, analysis, assessment, reiteration, and reanalysis (Israel et al., 1998). CBR and PAR are also appealing because we are able to use both quantitative and qualitative methods. House (1994) notes that "choice does not have to be between a mechanistic science and an intentionalist humanism, but rather one of conceiving science as the social activity that it is, an activity that involves considerable judgment, regardless of methods employed" (p. 19, cited in Israel et al., 1998). While these methods are only beginning to gain recognition and legitimacy, I am hopeful that they will become a standard in social work research.

CBR and PAR also have advantages related to multiculturalism and social justice. For example, the principles of CBR strive for equitable participation and collaboration, building on the strengths of the community, a co-learning and empowerment process that attends to social inequalities, and critical subjectivity, which encourages a self-reflective, engaged, and self-critical role of the researcher. Despite these advantages, less has been written on how this is done and how it is integrated into the research process. For example, how do our multiple identities and social positionality fit into CBR and PAR? Do we adequately consider our personal and professional identities in our research? Can we incorporate self-reflection and critical consciousness around both our privileged and oppressed statuses? And, can we tolerate epistemological differences and incorporate this self-reflective process in both quantitative and qualitative methods?

In the midst of contemplating these issues, I received an invitation to present my current thoughts on the practice of multicultural social work research as part of a plenary panel at the 2001 Society for Social Work and Research Conference. Upon completing my draft of the presentation, I had mixed emotions. First, I felt a great deal of satisfaction. I felt the presentation could play an influential role in how social work researchers view the role of personal and professional identity in research. It also had the potential to promote CBR and PAR as potential vehicles for transformative research. By delivering this message to a large group of my colleagues, I could be a part of the legitimization of this kind of work and perhaps reduce the struggles of future social work researchers around the practice of multicultural social work research. On the other hand, I felt considerable apprehension around whether social work researchers would "get it" and whether they would dismiss my presentation in favor of mainstream methodologies that emphasize objectivity. I was pleasantly surprised with the reception I received following the presentation and was further honored by an invitation to publish my presentation in this journal. So, now I take a second risk and present my thoughts to a broader audience of social work educators, researchers, and practitioners. I suffer from the same sense of apprehension, but this time with greater hope that we do "get it," or at least that we can further the discourse in this area through dialogue. I look forward to your reactions and comments so that we can further define best practices for multicultural social work research. The following sections of this paper are derived from my Presidential Plenary Panel presentation at the Society for Social Work and Research Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 22, 2001. The paper concludes with further reflection and recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

I would like to begin by presenting an introduction that I gave in 1998 for a commencement keynote, slightly modified. Let it serve as background for this paper as well as a further elaboration of who I am.

> "I took my place on this faculty four years ago. As stated in my introduction, my research interests are in the area of race/ethnicity, poverty, and mental health. I do research on the mental health of children and also study the inter-sectionality between issues of race, class, and mental health among vulnerable populations.
>
> But the question remains, who am I? To begin with, I am part Native Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, English, and Irish. I am a man, heterosexual, a partner, the father of three children, a coach, a son, and a brother. I am an assistant professor, a researcher, a teacher, an advisor, a mentor, a friend, an ally, an advocate, and an activist.
>
> I am a member of an oppressed group and have experienced overt, institutional, and everyday racism, but I have also walked this earth with many privileges. As a person of color, I understand what it is like for people to assume that I got my job at Michigan because of my race, to be described by people who don't know me by my race, and to be told that I am obsessed with racism and that I should get over it.
>
> As a person born into a lower socioeconomic background, I know what it is like to use food stamps. To bear the cold because I couldn't afford to purchase a good coat. To hear your child tell you that he'd like a new pair of shoes only if there is extra money this month, when the soles of his shoes have torn off.
>
> As a man, I understand what it is like for people to assume you are the breadwinner, that you make the decisions, and that you are the head of household. I understand what it is like not to fear that I will be sexually assaulted or harassed in my own home, my place of employment, or on the streets. I know what it is like to be privy to conversations that are sexually degrading to women, not to have to put my career on hold to bear children, and not be labeled pushy or having my time of the month when I am assertive, when I need to make a point and be heard.
>
> As a straight person, I know what it is like to receive benefits through the institution of marriage, to have my love and affection for my partner recognized and cherished by our families, to have peace of mind that if I were to die, my life insurance would offer some security. No one bats an eye if I take my partner's hand or give her a loving kiss on the cheek. I have the privilege of flaunting my heterosexuality.
>
> As an able-bodied person, I eat where I want to eat, work where I want to work, go where I want to go. I never have to worry if I'll be able to enter the building, or whether there will be a translator so I can understand the speaker at a plenary address. Each year we put up our Christmas tree, exchange gifts with family, and send greeting cards, and rarely stop to think about the

religious persecution and anti-Semitism to which I am blind. I can be sure that there won't be meetings or classes scheduled on my religious holidays.

As a citizen of America, I am able to enjoy the riches of the wealthiest country in the history of civilization, to watch on television the bombing of another country from afar, to hear the cries of people dying of hunger and disease, to impose embargoes of basic necessities against a country of people, while I sip my café latte and indulge in a cream cheese everything bagel on South University.

As a social worker, I work with the oppressed, the stressed, the mentally and physically challenged, the runaway youth, the battered woman, the gay adolescent, the child at school, the family in crisis, the community in need, the city in turmoil, the policies that are unjust, and the coalitions that are in conflict. I strive for critical consciousness and self-awareness. I fight for equality, for social justice, for diversity, for affirmative action, for social change, for freedom, and the hope that one day we can look each other in the eye and honestly say there is one race, the human race.

I am all of these things and more. I am all these things at once, in complex interaction with society. Sometimes, one of these identities will have greater significance, some of these things I cannot forget. Some of these things society does not let me forget. And some of these things I rarely ever think about at all. This is the dynamic of oppression and privilege. I am sure you could come up with your own list, for each of us live extraordinary lives, and I invite you to go through this process sometime in your life."

This introduction is used to illustrate several points. First, it emphasizes the need for recognition of my personal identity, not only for the ways in which I have experienced oppression, but more importantly, for how I experience unearned privilege in my everyday life. Second, recognizing my identity allows me to be critically conscious of the biases I bring to inter-group relationships, my worldview, and how I define social justice. Third, this introduction informs my views of social work research. It expands my view of multiculturalism beyond race and ethnicity, examines my multiple identities, and asks us to further investigate the complexity of our own identities as social workers, researchers, teachers, sons, and daughters.

IDENTITY AND MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

Identity is defined primarily by social psychologists as a process and a product. Erikson (1980) states that exploring identity allows us to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" Identity exploration is also a dynamic, lifelong process that is situational and informed by our social interactions. Additionally, our multiple social group memberships provide us with an understanding of social issues and social problems that may be defined very differently by members of another identity group, culture, or community. The ways in which we, as researchers, understand these problems influence the questions we ask and the hypotheses we posit. Further insight into our prejudices and how our unearned privilege affects our cross-cultural work gives us a clearer sense of how oppressive practices are precursors to social problems. In traditional models of research, we strive for objectivity. However, objectivity is often a luxury in multi-

cultural research efforts. Rather than striving for objectivity, greater productivity may be obtained by acknowledging the multiple realities of the human experience so that we might not let our biases get in the way of our research. I believe that this exercise in claiming our identities has the potential to produce research that is more sensitive to the values and practices of diverse communities.

An important point made by symbolic interaction theorists is that identity affects not only how we view ourselves, but also how others perceive us (Denzin, 1992; Prus, 1996). Not only do we prescribe our own identity, identity is also ascribed to us. When we enter a community to do research, they will have opinions of us, our motives and trustworthiness, and work with us accordingly. Even when we are members of that particular community, our motives may be challenged on the basis of one of our other identities, such as being a researcher. Community views of us as researchers are rooted in historical conflict and mistrust. Research represents knowledge, power, and resources. While we may believe that our research will have some benefit to their community, many communities are also well aware of the injustices that have been committed through research, and many have participated in previous research efforts only to see little change. Recognition of this potential barrier to research is the first step toward building rapport and trust with communities and increases the chance that they will participate in the research. Thus, taking a collaborative approach to understanding the needs and strengths of the community, their definition of the problem, and the questions that they would like answered has the potential to further enhance the validity and cultural relevance of the research findings.

OPERATIONALIZING CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Researchers can also increase the validity of results by better operationalizing the constructs used to measure socio-cultural differences. For example, why do we include measures of race in our studies? Typically, we include race as a basic demographic control variable that we want to explain away. At other times, we are trying to control for the complexities of cultural experiences, differential exposure to risk and protective factors attributed to race, or injustices in our societal structure. However, often we do not explicitly measure these things, and, therefore, are left to speculate about the source of racial differences. Multi-cultural studies that incorporate measures of identity (how closely individuals affiliate and draw strength from a specific racial or ethnic group) or measures of racism and discrimination excite me most. Recent research by individuals such as David Williams, Nancy Krieger, and some of my social work colleagues have shown that racism and discrimination have a significant effect on health and mental health status (e.g., Krieger, 1990; Krieger, Rowley, Herman, Avery, & Phillips, 1993; Williams, 1999, 2000; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997), that identity can have a moderating effect on this relationship (e.g., Spencer, Icard, Harachi, Catalano, & Oxford, 2000; Walters, 1999; Walters & Simoni, 1993; Williams, Spencer & Jackson, 1999), and that the meaning attributed to whether individuals seek help for health and mental health problems is informed by cultural values and attitudes towards the mainstream culture (e.g., Snowden, 1999a, 1999b).

We may also better understand the socio-cultural meaning that communities attribute to constructs by explicitly probing for such responses through the use of

methodological techniques such as cognitive interviewing. I participated in a study where we probed for the socio-cultural meaning of mental health outcomes in the administration of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview, a commonly used measure of psychiatric disorders in survey research. After each question, we followed up with a probe to illicit further understanding of socio-cultural meaning. For example, after asking whether individuals have experienced an unreasonably strong fear of an object or situation to assess anxiety, we asked respondents what makes an object or situation fearful and to define "unreasonably strong." Through these probes, we were better able to determine whether socio-cultural perceptions may affect differential rates of diagnoses for anxiety. By understanding how identity affects these perceptions and how our own identities affect how we interpret these perceptions, we could test whether the operationalization of these constructs according to DSM-IV criteria are similar to the perceptions of members of communities of interest. We also increased the probability of explaining why differences occur when they do.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, our personal identity has implications for our professional identity as researchers. When we layer our professional identity onto our other social identities, including our racial, ethnic, gender, or class identities, we increase the complexity of how we will understand and how we will be understood. We might avoid some of the pitfalls associated with cross-cultural research through careful consideration of our identities, as well as a review of the tenets of multi-cultural social work research as reported in Uehara and the Multicultural Research Group at the University of Washington (1996) and through the recommendations of community-based researchers in other disciplines.

Collaboration is critical. Collaboration assists in trust building, rapport, and needs assessment. One of the best ways to incorporate community needs is to include the community in the entire research process (Barton, 1998). In one of my collaborative research projects, we conducted universal mental health screenings with preschoolers in the Detroit Head Start program. Upon introducing the project to Head Start staff, we were confronted with concerns about whether the Head Start staff would see the benefits of the research to the program. The staff explained the frustration they experienced with previous research conducted by university researchers with Detroit Head Start. Results were never shared with the program, whether by a simple presentation or report. In order for us to begin the project, we met regularly with parents, teachers, mental health coordinators, and administrators at the site, agency, and city level. We made use of MSW community organization students who were recruited to meet individually with each of these groups and record the process. MSW students also supervised undergraduate students who, in addition to participating in data collection and data entry, also attended a weekly seminar on self-awareness around issues of race/ethnicity, poverty, mental health, and child development, as well as research methods. The students also volunteered weekly in the Head Start classroom as part of an academic service learning initiative. The collaborative experience produced both a valuable learning experience for the students as well as a research project that is valued by the community and provides a tangible service.

Self-reflection. I have talked about this at length and want to quote a mental health coordinator at a recent meeting who stated, "I wanted to tell you that I am so glad you all are here. To tell you honestly, I am so afraid that people will discriminate against the children when they do research. I really know you all aren't that way, that you wouldn't discriminate, and that is why I am so excited about this project."

Although the coordinator's comments might not have a strong impact upon others, they profoundly affected me. I found them to be among the most meaningful words I have heard in my relatively short research career.

Translating research into practice. How do we disseminate research to the field? If community members are involved in the process, translating research into practice happens as part of the process. As part of our pilot interviews with Head Start parents, we conducted focus groups to discuss our preliminary findings. We wanted to confirm and validate whether our results accurately represented their perspectives on children's mental health problems. Based on our findings from these focus groups, we clarified and revised our interpretation of the data. Our findings were also fed back through meetings with mental health coordinators and administrators to assist in the agency's mental health service coordination. For example, we used the prevalence data we obtain for mental health problems to assist Head Start develop preventive interventions for children and parents in the program. By incorporating feedback as part of the process, we demonstrated that we are not in the business of conducting "hit and run" research, as others have done in the past. In essence, we attempted to undo past injustices through culturally-sensitive research practices. To this end, our research has been transformative and acts as an agent for social change and social justice.

Finally, there are certainly challenges to multi-cultural social work research—it takes time, it takes intensive resources, and it might mean that we must suspend our immediate questions in order to collect more pilot data. Most of all, it takes a willingness and motivation to constantly self-reflect on our identities and how they impact the community. It is my hope that we can embrace the challenges associated with multi-cultural social work research, value it, and promote this kind of understanding around the importance of identity among our colleagues. My experience has definitely shown that limitations can be overcome, not only by the benefits of such research, but also by the personal and professional satisfaction that communities will continue to allow me to study with them the social problems that ill our nation.

A REFLECTION IN PROCESS

Just as critical consciousness is an ongoing, life-long process, so is this work. We must be willing to revise our approaches to reflect the needs and resources of those we serve. Like our identities, communities are dynamic, and careful monitoring and reflection are necessary. Our methodologies should be responsive to changes in the environmental context, including policy and demographic changes, as well as intervention modalities.

This paper speaks less to the content of interventions and focuses more on the role of the researcher and suggests a value base for conducting community-based

research. Continued work by social work researchers is necessary to develop models of practice and intervention that are responsive to communities. Similarly, I do not directly address research that does not require contact with the community, such as secondary analyses of existing data sets. I argue that self-reflection and critical consciousness each have a role in this type of research. That role is reflected in the questions we ask, the slant we take, and the outcome we hope to achieve. While we may counter the risk of biasing our results, I contend that as social workers, we have an agenda, a code of ethics, a slant. It is inherent in what we choose to study, which in turn, is often based on our personal experiences or some social issue about which we are passionate. Social workers often enter the field because of a desire to advocate for certain issues or policies. We are biased. We need to reflect on why we hold such biases and whether they are congruent with or in the best interests of the community. We should not assume that our definitions of social change and social justice are the same as those with whom we work. In an exercise that I conducted in one of my classes, I asked the students to form several groups based on identity group membership, then come up with a definition for social justice. Both within and between these self-selected groups, there was little agreement on a common definition. In fact, I was so struck by the wide range of definitions for social justice that I questioned my own definition of social justice and any hope that there might be a common definition. I feel confident in saying that the variations in a definition of social justice would be far greater between social work researchers and diverse communities.

Finally, I have not adequately addressed the questions of epistemology and whether we can combine the elements of subjectivity with quantitative work. As suggested, I feel it is necessary. Purists of traditional research methodologies would argue differently, as might purists of qualitative methods. Others may argue that methods should be driven by the questions we ask. I argue that this only accounts for methodological issues, not epistemology. I welcome these dialogues in the hope that such an effort will advance the discourse to a higher level. I encourage social work researchers to critically think about these issues and develop methods of research that promote advocacy and social transformation.

By focusing on community needs and resources, we are able to make stronger statements about the implications of our research. I have become increasingly disheartened by the rhetoric found in the policy and practice implications of our research. The implications are narrow and suggest policy and program changes that are not comprehensive, and in many cases, are unattainable by the community. For example, I have read countless articles that recommend national health care policies or other national level changes in our social structure. Yes, these policies are needed, but such recommendations do little to empower the community or promote tangible benefits from our research. Do we really need another study that burdens our communities with such a statement? In some cases, yes. We must also continue to advocate for macro-level changes, with those in power to make such changes, but we must also describe how communities might advocate for these policies within their local context.

Another example of an overused recommendation is the need for cultural sensitivity training. Not long ago, such a recommendation would have been important

and innovative. In a number of contexts, this is still an innovative recommendation. However, we need to go beyond such recommendations in favor of those that promote concrete and specific action. My intent, here, is not to cast stones; I, too, am guilty of obvious and overused recommendations. Rather, I envision reading research articles that translate findings into clear, meaningful guidelines for action. This paper is a testimony to the effort I hope to undertake in my research efforts. It is an exercise in self-reflection for what I see as my vision of multicultural social work research. I invite you, the reader, to go through this process for yourself sometime in your career.

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How Are We Doing? Agency/University Collaboration for Assessment of Client Outcomes

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Abstract: *Assessment of client outcomes in social work practice has new urgency in today's service environment. However, traditional visions of agency staff as* doers *and social work educators as* thinkers *limit opportunities for collaboration. The Agency/University Collaboration model integrates* doer *and* thinker *roles, providing opportunities to both enhance assessment of client outcomes in practice and bring current practice knowledge into the social work classroom. An example of a multi-site-parenting program illustrates how agency administrators and educators may forge collaborations. The authors discuss relevant issues, such as ownership of collaboration, appraisal of risks, and pacing the work.*

Keywords: Collaboration, assessment, outcomes, agency, university

While the need for expanded outcome assessment in social work practice is longstanding, it has new urgency in today's social service environment. Federal auditing requirements, managed care procedures, and grant regulations place increased demands on agencies to assess the effectiveness of their social work services (Chernesky, 1997; OAPP, 2001). Ensuring that vulnerable members of our society receive quality services is a high priority of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Indeed, in the *Code of Ethics* (1996, 1998), NASW directs social workers to evaluate their practice. The standards and policies of the Council on Social Work Education (COA, 1994) also require accredited programs of social work to teach students to become sophisticated consumers of research and to learn how to systematically evaluate their own services.

Austin's (1992) report of the NIMH Task Force on Social Work Research, and his subsequent review of research resources in social work (Austin, 1999), document the progress made by social work professional organizations and schools of social work in supporting the development of social workers skilled in research methods. However, Austin (1999) also notes that, "It is not clear that systematic dissemination of research-based information to the practice community is actually happening" (p. 693). The problems associated with incorporating research-based information and adopting research methods in agency-based practice may result from differ-

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ences in the perspectives of academics and community practitioners. Witkin (1995) notes that although many faculty members value research, most social work students do not view research as relevant to the realities of practice and the values of the profession. Blythe (1992) observes that an agency's orientation to practice research is primarily determined by the individual perspectives of the professional staff. When social workers who hold a scientific practitioner perspective join an agency, the organization is more likely to become interested in research, assessment, and evaluation. Staff perspectives appear to be critical to the implementation of successful outcome assessment in agency cultures.

Social work agencies are traditionally viewed as developing innovative programs, generating funding, reaching clients, and delivering services. Agency-based social workers are considered doers who put plans into action. Lindsey and Kirk (1992) expand on these perceptions. They observe that the profession de-emphasizes research through an ideological bias that "favors action over theory, practice insight over scientific research, and good intentions over effective outcomes" (p. 378). The systematic assessment of client outcomes, seen as reflective rather than active, is often given low priority. This marginalization of assessment is exacerbated when agencies face multiple demands and possess limited resources.

While agency-based social workers may be viewed as *doers*, university-based researchers and educators tend to be *thinkers* who inhabit the world of ideas and use agencies as testing sites for favorite theories. This notion of the academic as primarily thinking, may be associated with the *ivory tower* metaphor and practitioners' sense of the *real world*, as opposed to the unreal world of the classroom. Ironically, the *doer* and *thinker* frames of reference may also exist in the academic world. Much of the research activity within social work faculties can be traced to a relatively small cohort of "highly productive social work researchers, while many social work educators and practitioners rarely conduct research" (Fraser, Jenson & Lewis, 1993, p. 47).

Clearly, the *doer* and *thinker* dichotomy serves neither group well. Indeed, social workers in agency practice continually use their *thinking* skills, and university-based educators cannot become proficient researchers in a vacuum. The *thinker/doer* myth widens the gap between social work practitioners and educators and limits clients' access to empirically-supported services. The agency/university collaboration for client outcome assessment as described in this paper capitalizes on the special competencies of agency-based workers and university-based educators. We advocate for integration of the *doer* and *thinker* roles within the person of each collaborator. This integrative approach helps agency and university participants respect the diverse and complex issues routinely encountered by social work professionals and maximizes opportunities to combine experiential, theoretical, and empirical learning (Sachdev, 2000).

OUTCOME ASSESSMENT: COLLABORATION OPTIONS

Agency administrators and university educators may choose from a variety of options as they consider implementing outcome-assessment focused evaluation projects. The collaborators may, for example:

(a) employ a research specialist as an agency staff member to fulfill various program and practice evaluation functions;

(b) contract with a for-profit research firm to conduct outcome assessment evaluations;

(c) contract with a university program to conduct outcome assessment research; or

(d) collaborate with a university program regarding outcome assessment evaluation and capacity-building.

As the title suggests, this paper addresses the last option, that of agency/university collaboration. In this approach, each collaborator brings special expertise to the enterprise and all may expect to benefit from the interaction. In the agency/university model, collaboration can be defined as: "The process of shared creation, (with) two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding where none had previously existed or could have come to on their own" (Schrage, 1995, p. 33). With collaboration, all participants willingly sacrifice some autonomy and fully acknowledge the need for the special expertise of the other party in order to achieve each other's goals. In this instance, the agency develops a new capacity and the university increases its understanding of direct practice while discharging its community service obligation by looking at agency-based practice. In essence, the collaborative process involves a search for meaningful common ground by both the researchers and practitioners (Meyer, 1992).

The agency/university collaboration model draws on concepts of participatory action research. While approaches to participatory research usually engage community persons in the research process, they have not been fully applied in collaborative efforts by educators and practitioners to develop an outcome assessment climate in agencies (Altpeter, Schopler, Galinsky & Pennell, 1999). Participatory research may serve as a means to bring agency practitioners actively into the evaluation process rather than simply treating them and their organization as a place merely to conduct research, a source of data, or variables to be manipulated (Ansley & Gaventa, 1997). Herda (1999) identifies three potential benefits of participatory research: new knowledge, mutual education, and solutions for specific problems. "Even more important than new knowledge and solutions are the new understandings that can take place among people working together" (Herda, 1999, p. 6). Only by generating new ways to look at practice and outcome assessment can reframing the thinker and doer dichotomy become possible.

CASE STUDY: ASSESSING A PARENTING PROGRAM'S CLIENT OUTCOMES

First Phase of Collaboration: Preparing for Outcome Assessment Work

The director of a large program within a multi-service, sectarian agency initiated the agency/university collaboration to assess the outcomes of a parenting program. The director described the process by which she arrived at the need for evaluation skills as follows:

> *Three years ago, we obtained a small grant that allowed us to focus on designing services for pregnant women, parenting families, and adolescents at risk of becoming parents. The RFP asked us to specify our objectives and the activities that we felt would meet those objectives. We also had to submit a plan on how we would evaluate the services we were delivering. Since other programs within the agency already had received funding for this type of*

program, we struggled primarily over the activities and objectives and more or less copied the evaluation submitted by the other programs.

We wrote that we would conduct comprehensive intakes, and maintain case records and group service logs (including dates of service, nature of service, and need for additional services); these would be reviewed monthly; case records would document client goals, observations, progress, referrals, and outcomes; there would be weekly individual supervision to review individual's work and processes and we would write quarterly reports to address progress in meeting objectives. As you can see, the questions of who is going to analyze all this and how are we ever really going to look at whether any of this is really effective were not answered.

This broad evaluation statement was sufficient to obtain first-year funding for implementing the parenting program. However, by the second year, the agency experienced increased pressure from the funding source to develop a more specific evaluation plan. Since the agency director had previously hired a social work professor to work with the staff to enhance their group work skills, she consulted with the professor about how the university might help the agency conduct a program evaluation. The professor, in turn, consulted with a colleague to determine whether he would participate in the effort. The two faculty members (one a practice teacher with an interest in research and the other a researcher with an interest in practice), agreed to voluntarily work with the agency to develop methods for assessing the outcomes of parenting programs. At the time, the educators recall thinking that the collaboration was an opportunity to look at social group work with a specific population and learn more about that practice. They were unsure whether the agency would accept the concept that the evaluation might show the program in an unfavorable light, but felt that despite the results, the effort would help both sides learn more about practice and about how to integrate systematic assessment of outcomes into agency practice.

The agency director requested reallocation of some of the grant monies for research expenses. The foundation readily agreed, anticipating that the outcome assessment efforts might provide objective data that could help to publicize and expand the program. This experience helped all parties identify their self- and mutual interests. A contract that served the needs of all constituents was developed. All parties explicated their interests and goals. They discussed what realistically could be achieved and established reasonable timeframes. They also anticipated numerous practical, professional, and ethical challenges associated with the collaborative research endeavor.

Second Phase of Collaboration: Beginning Outcome Assessment Work

Following agreement concerning the contract, the university faculty, agency director, social work supervisor, and service coordinator responsible for working with the parent client groups met to develop a logic model. The collaborative group first identified the problems the program planned to ameliorate. The collaborators then explored what could be different if the problems were resolved, and, as a part of this solution-focused process, identified the program's proximal goals (i.e., more immediate outcomes that may be indicators of subsequent long-

term success). For example, in this program, an understanding of what might be expected of children at different ages could help parents set realistic expectations of their child and might lead to a better parent-child relationship in the long-term. Defining the program's intended goals was an important step in helping the agency move toward integrating a research perspective into practice.

As described by the agency director:

> *After we got the funds, we set up a meeting with the professors, supervisor, the staff member responsible for the program, and myself. What we wanted to do was just look at our objectives. I had a vague recollection of research from when I was in school but was not prepared for being forced to look at what we were trying to accomplish. At first, as a director, I felt defensive. I thought, "What do you mean how do we know it worked? Of course it worked! Let me tell you about Sally!" And on we went with these anecdotal stories. That was how we had always articulated to funding streams how we knew the program was working. We would give an example. We tell them about the history of Sally. Only we didn't have much information about Joe, Rose, and everybody else who was also in the program.*

As a collaborative effort, the university collaborators' function was not to define the program for the agency or to document its effectiveness. Rather, it was to help practitioners learn how to conduct the assessment process. The participants collectively discussed the relationships among the interventions, the goals of the program, and the techniques to assess client outcomes, all within the pressures of agency life. The staff worked toward specifying those interventions they would use and how each aspect of the program could be tied to a specific outcome. The specification process often led to reconsideration of the planned interventions or the anticipated goal. For instance, the collaborators quickly realized that the general statement, "Teenage parents would receive mutual aid group work services," was not sufficiently specific. They revised the description to incorporate the planned activities for each parenting group session and how those activities contributed to the overall goals.

After establishing a common understanding of program objectives, the collaborators worked to define desired outcomes and select measures. For psycho-educational components, such as the nutrition/cooking session, the collaborative team developed a knowledge scale that reflected what staff expected clients to know upon completion of the program. Items about client attitudes towards the group experience were also included. Once the goals of increasing parenting skills, empowerment, and social support were identified, standardized measurements were selected for pre- and post-testing. These included the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (Bavoleck, 1984), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988), the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, People & Catriona, 1980), and the Locus of Control Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). During this process, faculty members shared their knowledge of applicable instruments and their expertise in scale development. They helped agency staff to better understand measurement options and select the most appropriate assessment tools. The team also identified demographic information needed to better understand the client population

and incorporated means to collect the pertinent data. The agency director noted:

> *Having to articulate all this and giving the workers room to talk about how they felt and what they thought, we looked at the pre– post-test design, at the instrument, itself, and the content areas. We then talked about client reactions. The professors were willing to redesign content and forms. We looked at the funding of the study, the demographic characteristics of the clients, the effectiveness, and future directions. It was very much a process. What we had learned was that you really need to go through this process to bring people on board.*

At about this point, the nature of the challenge moved beyond gaining "buy in" to the plan. It now became an issue of how to bring the supervisor and line workers on board. As the agency director noted:

> *This was a journey in itself, as staff felt this was a lot of testing and struggled, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to incorporate the testing package into the intake process.*
>
> *Despite energetic efforts to engage staff in the assessment process, by the end of the first year, only a small sample of pre- and post-test instruments had been collected. The program coordinator—the key direct practitioner—viewed the task as burdensome. Apparently, the collaborators had focused too extensively on developing the evaluation and not enough time was spent addressing the coordinator's concerns. When confronted, the coordinator admitted that she had not used the instrument package because she "did not know enough about them to complete it." Once the coordinator resigned, the director reviewed case records and found a copy of the following note to a client: "Dear Mary, Please come back in so we can administer the post-test that my director wants us to administer." Clearly, there were varying levels of engagement among staff and clients.*

By the close of the first year of the agency/university collaboration, the participants were frustrated that more had not been accomplished. However, they had a better understanding of what outcome assessment entails. Unexpectedly, the collaborators found that the most valuable source of information was the *face sheet* that accompanied all pre- and post-tests. The face sheets captured demographic and service participation data for each client. When aggregated, they yielded a portrait of the client population that was, in some ways, unexpected. The findings resulted in reassessment of program outreach and service delivery strategies, and as the director states, an expansion of the collaboration:

> *More work needed to be done in looking at ways to measure outcome in our client service delivery model that people can buy into, that staff did not feel is just another burden, and that we could incorporate into our entire program. We went back to the funding source and said we have begun this process and want to continue it. They again gave permission. We were now at a different stage in our collaboration and set up meetings with staff in other parenting programs in the agency. We invited them to join us in the process. Four programs said they wanted to join the effort. At first, some of the directors were*

reluctant. It meant more work for them was how they saw it. So, we engaged in a series of meetings that the faculty collaborators attended. Our approach was broader and different from the way research had been discussed before. For example, one agenda started with "Purpose of the Program for Client, Funder, & Agency."

We again looked at the pre- post-test design. Through articulating all this, we gave the newer participants room to talk about how they felt and what they thought. It was very much a process. We are so consumed on a day-to-day basis with the work we have to do; it is difficult sometimes to stand back and ask what are we doing and how we can articulate it to others.

Third Phase of Collaboration: Engaging in Outcome Assessment Work

Through additional collaborative efforts, an expanded program base, and greater personal investment by staff, a general commitment to collect needed assessment required data was enhanced. During this phase, most problems with data collection involved difficulties clients had in their attempts to complete the instruments. Collaborating faculty members encouraged staff members' development and incorporation of an expanded conception of their role—one that included both the provision of service and the evaluation of service outcomes. There were extensive discussions about how assessment activities could enhance their work with clients. Of course, complex issues arose. For example, mandated clients were concerned about what would be done with the data. Children sometimes distracted parents while they completed the instruments. Clients occasionally challenged some questionnaire items as *too personal* and, after completing the instruments, some also wanted to know what were the *right* answers.

Collaborators were concerned that the instruments measured clients' knowledge but not necessarily their actions. Many of these issues highlight the practical and ethical complexities of practice research. Clearly, some workers were worried that they would not be able to demonstrate that they were doing a good job. They were reluctant to gather data. Others welcomed the opportunity to broaden their understanding of clients.

In a collaborative effort, it is not the faculty members' direct responsibility to ensure that the staff meet data collection requirements. However, many projects have been jeopardized through inadequate data collection, leading the educators to encourage staff participation. In this case study, faculty members were involved in staff discussions about the process as the project proceeded. Ultimately, design, implementation, and analysis became the shared responsibilities of all participants.

Throughout the second year of the collaboration, several meetings were held to discuss progress. Discussions centered around data collection issues, the relevance and utility of the instruments, translation (i.e., language) problems, and client concerns about their performance on the *test.* Halfway through the year, preliminary findings were shared with all participants and the possible significance of some of the results was discussed. University collaborators promised to provide the agency with data that could be used in preparing funding requests for the following year's programming.

These meetings and the educators' willingness to modify instruments as needed developed a climate of collaborative learning, rather than one of judgment. Discussions demonstrated the usefulness of data collection and strengthened commitment to the collaboration. Pre- and post-test data were obtained for many more clients. The funding source expressed an interest in obtaining additional assessment information to help them respond to questions about the effectiveness of the program. The director reported:

One of the reasons for the funding stream being on board was that they also had to articulate whether their money was doing any good.

At the close of the second year of collaboration, two of the three programs obtained most of the necessary pre- and post-test data. The worker in the remaining program still had difficulty administering the questionnaires. Findings from the two settings showed statistically significant improvement in the areas of parents' degree of role reversal with their child and excessive use of physical punishment, as measured through the AAPI. The respondents also showed a statistically significant improvement in their locus of control. In the areas of loneliness and perceived social support, improvements did not achieve the intended level of statistical significance. Workers discussed what specific activities might have accounted for the changes in some areas and not in others, thereby, maintaining a connection between findings and practice.

Certain aspects of research frighten many social workers. For example, computerized data analysis often provokes anxiety in even highly seasoned professionals (Epstein, 1987). During the early years of the project, faculty members undertook these tasks. As time passed, however, even these activities became more evenly distributed. Agency staff members, however, were extensively involved in defining the questions that they wanted answered. They were also active during *hands-on* discussions of the actual tables that reflected the findings. About half-way through the second year, faculty collaborators worked with staff in a quarterly meeting to define what questions they wanted answered at that time. Faculty members helped practitioners understand whether the questions posed could be answered by the data. One educator brought a portable computer, complete with the data set, to the team meeting so that agency staff members could observe how answers to questions could immediately be derived from the data set.

Participants from each program received information about their own as well as all programs, combined. This allowed for discussion about how factors such as community, context, and population may affect the results. Some staff and supervisors expressed an interest in learning how to conduct various analyses and requested copies of the data set so they might practice. In future years, the collaborators hope to help programs develop their own capacity for computerized data analysis.

As the collaborators plan for the next phase of the project, the agency director observed:

Staff are now excited about the work as we enter the third year of the process. The agency is excited about the work. The funders are hoping they can share the findings with other agencies and the findings from the second year are being written up for them.

Since beginning the collaboration, the agency has become intensively involved in an accreditation review. The outcome assessment process prepared them to articulate their goals and intervention approaches. The agency director indicated that:

> *The accrediting teams are looking at what kind of tools are in place and how they address your services. They don't want to hear about how Joe is doing! They want to know what makes the difference.*

The agency's participation in this collaborative effort served as a visible demonstration of their commitment to quality practice, to sharing their work with the field, and to outcome assessment. The agency's accreditation review contained specific reference to the collaboration as an extremely important and positive activity.

CONSIDERATIONS IN ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TO ASSESS CLIENT OUTCOMES

In looking at the obstacles to collaboration between practitioners and researchers, Galinsky, Turnbull, Meglin & Wilner (1993) suggested "a strategy that unifies practitioners and researchers that is relevant to practice has not been identified to date" (p. 440). As this case study indicates, the challenges are formidable. However, the agency/university experience yielded four guidelines for effective collaboration.

Recognition of Institutional Demands

In times of cutbacks and competition for resources, in particular, social agencies must explain what they are doing and *prove* the value of their service. However, most social service organizations have not historically evaluated their services on a systematic basis. In the contemporary context, it is in the agencies' self-interest to use research to inform action and enhance decision-making, and to assess outcomes (Patton, 1990). Proposals almost universally require statements of goals or objectives, and many expect a direct link between these goals and a proposed outcome assessment strategy. Federal agencies routinely require a rigorous evaluation component in any request for funds (OAPP, 2001; FIPSE, 2001).

The Council on Social Work Education's Curriculum Policy Statement (COA, 1994) articulates the imperative for social work education programs to be engaged in service to the practice community as follows:

> Programs of social work education maintain close, reciprocal, and ongoing relationships with social work practitioners and with groups and organizations that promote, provide, or seek to influence social policies and social work services.

Programs have a variety of choices regarding how to meet this challenge. While CSWE does not mandate specific ways in which to address community needs, they do identify program-initiated collaborative projects and agency consultation by faculty as key areas for consideration. Thus, community service by faculty, while ranking behind publications and teaching in making tenure decisions, is considered a component of responsible social work education (Euster & Weinbach, 1983).

Ownership of Collaborative Process

The first step in the collaboration process is the identification of self- and common interests of the involved parties. When these interests are not clear, the collaboration may dissolve with one party feeling used by another. This is particularly likely when the project is externally funded. Money often raises power and control issues that must be addressed and resolved before collaboration can proceed. In this case, the allocation of funds toward outcome assessment represented a form of direct investment by the agency involved in the collaboration. Although agency compensation to university participants was modest and primarily used for computer processing and duplication costs, it served to strengthen the contractual relationship among collaborators.

Focusing on common goals, rather than on methodological considerations, fosters the initial dialogue among participants (Proctor, 1990). By focusing on research questions and what answers will be sought, practitioners' concerns about the educator/researcher controlling the agenda and the process may be allayed. At the same time, the educator/researcher begins to better understand the frames of reference of agency staff. Understanding is furthered through discussion of resources, always an important part of the initial phase. Such discussions almost always surface concerns that involvement in research activities will divert scarce resources from client services. These concerns require full and open discussion.

Educators and practitioners need a basic understanding of what other collaborators are doing. Expertise does not imply superiority or domination. Rather, in this context, expertise refers to the special knowledge and skill needed to design and implement a relevant, purposeful, ethical, and high-quality evaluation or practice activity. Collaborators must share a common understanding of the assessment and treatment process and recognize the special kinds of expertise that others have that can be used during the enterprise.

One benefit of the collaborative effort is developing an increased comfort with social work intervention as a shared enterprise. Outcome assessment often leads to a reconceptualization of service to clients as the work of the agency, rather than the work of individual professionals. The process enlarges the perspective, often bringing agency administration and staff into a collective activity and ownership. Sometimes, researchers delude themselves by thinking that the commitment of the agency director represents the commitment of the staff as well. Direct service workers tend to be committed to service. They may see research activities as detracting from their primary mission. Collaborators build staff commitment by opening the research process to them and by addressing the questions for which they need answers.

From the onset of the collaboration, all members were asked to listen carefully to one another, adopt a non-judgmental attitude, interact respectfully, and share power in the best interest of the clients (Solomon & Mellor, 1992). In an effort to encourage a genuine collaboration, the educators resisted temptations to assume control of the agenda. Collaboration is a process through which all participants may benefit. Indeed, through the collaborative activities, faculty learned a great deal about the day-to-day realities of practice and, as a result, enabled them to

bring the changing and challenging nature of contemporary social work back to their students in the classroom.

Realistic Appraisal of Risks

Any project such as this involves very real risks for each participant and for the organizations involved. Unless these risks are openly explored, genuine collaboration is unlikely. Reluctance to participate fully is commonly associated with risks the project places on participants. Agencies risk learning that some or all of their services are ineffective or even harmful. Access to such knowledge would highlight a need for change and challenge the status quo of agency life (Hanson, 1998).

Social workers are also at risk. As the service providers, the nature and impact of their work becomes essentially public through outcome assessment activities. In most settings, they will be blamed for program failures.

Even with the approval of human subjects' review panels, clients may also be at some risk. Most of the time, of course, clients benefit from increased supervision and assessment; occasionally, this may lead to unwanted or unexpected consequences. These may be dramatic, such as in child welfare settings where documentary evidence of client progress gained through outcome assessment efforts affects decisions about family reunification. Unintended effects may also be less dramatic, although no less meaningful. For instance, clients may become embarrassed or self-conscious when due to certain questionnaire items, they reveal more intimate or personal information than they would actually prefer.

Although it might appear that the faculty members would be exposed to relatively few risks, there may be some. Studies that do not meet the gold standard of randomized controlled trial research may deplete time and energy that could otherwise be invested in other scholarly pursuits. Some argue that collaborative processes result in lower quality research, and may contribute to unfavorable decisions about tenure or promotion. For most faculty members, however, the potential gains far outweigh the risks. The focus of the collaborative outcome assessment approach is on developing a commitment to practice assessment in a climate of inquiry and capacity building. Such collaborative enterprises serve to build and advance the profession by encouraging outcome assessment as an ongoing part of agency practice and classroom learning.

Pacing of Work

Collaborative endeavors are rarely smooth processes. Regardless of the strength of an agency administrator's commitment to the assessment of program outcomes, there are palpable concerns for survival in the new accountability context. Administrators tend to be defensive when their traditional patterns of service delivery are challenged and the effectiveness of all forms of practice is open to question. University collaborators need to explore whether agency professionals genuinely endorse outcome assessment initiatives. They must anticipate the possibility that the findings may show the program to be ineffective. Similarly, agency administrators need to openly discuss the depth of their commitment to the agency with faculty collaborators. As shown in this case study, the process of helping the agency develop a climate supportive of outcome assessment tends to take a considerable amount of time and a great deal of patience.

In such collaborations, the pace of change and implementation should be established by the group as a whole. Early meetings need to be devoted to deciding what the parties can feasibly do together. As the participants work out the details of a shared program or activity, they become familiar with each other's special language and establish shared goals and objectives. The collaborative relationship is characterized by mutuality and reciprocity—a balance of giving and receiving (Skaff, 1988). Trust and commitment must be present in the relationship, informing a process in which participants expand their capacities as they gain new expertise from the interaction.

The process is hardly tension-free. The progress may be slow and the results modest. The nature and amount of data generated may not appear worth the investment. Clearly, the academic researchers could intercede to make things right, but that would defeat the very essence of the effort as a collaboration. A preemptive intervention would definitively set the educator apart from the agency participants, especially the direct service workers. As Cheetham (1992) points out, educators and practitioners must acknowledge that effectiveness research is a "long journey," one which involves "a treaty neither to be too greedy of research endeavors nor evasive about what has and has not been achieved" (p. 279). If the educator can accept the agency's pace of change, much can be gained. Together, the educator and the clinician can share different perspectives about the intervention process. A genuine climate of inquiry can emerge in which university collaborators may learn about the struggles of agency practice and participate in the development and validation of new approaches to service.

SUMMARY

The agency/university outcomes assessment collaboration model described in this article was drawn from many sources. It is, however, primarily a social work approach, bringing client, agency, and educational systems together. In practice, it must be ethically sound and implemented in a manner that enhances opportunities for participant empowerment. When successful, the agency/university collaboration model is "critical, integral, personal, and responsible" (Cohen, 1995). The collaboration becomes *critical* as agency personnel recognize that outcome assessment is tied to its survival. The educators' acceptance of the collaboration meets their need to stay abreast of the realities of current practice. The collaboration is *integral* to the agency to the extent that staff accept their participation in outcome assessment as central to the delivery of quality service to clients, rather than an extra bit of busywork. Similarly, educators' need to be in touch with new developments in the field by maintaining close ties to day-to-day practice and the university's goal to advance practice in the field and make the work *integral* to the university's mission.

Practitioners and educators also make a personal connection to the collaboration. Without an internalized belief that assessment is important to improving services and refining practice skills, practitioners and educators will not invest the energy needed for success. As noted earlier, when such ownership is not present, implementation is spotty, and possibly detrimental to clients. Finally, the collaboration model is *responsible*, in that mutual respect and openness to new opportunities for learning characterize the work.

The model represents a process through which social work faculty members can collaborate with agency staff to develop and implement a project of benefit to all constituents. The impact of collaboration multiplies geometrically as practitioners become more aware of their own practice and share experiences with others, as administrators better articulate their services to boards and external funders, and as faculty return to the social work classroom with reality-tested experience. This approach has the potential to increase the empirical base of social work practice by helping practitioners systematically generate useful data concerning the effects of their service activities. By working together throughout the entire process of formulating questions, identifying clear objectives, selecting or creating meaningful measurement tools, and performing evaluation research that validly captures the effects of service interventions, collaborative endeavors may help unite practitioners and educators in their common professional enterprise.

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Social Work Programs' Use of the World Wide Web to Facilitate Field Instruction

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Abstract: *Employing a systems model, this study presents a content analysis of the Websites of social work academic programs in the United States. A sample of 292 academic programs was extracted from the Baccalaureate Programs Directors' (BPD) online directory of CSWE-accredited social work programs. Of these, 119 were MSW or MSW/BSW programs; the remaining 173 were BSW programs. Although many aspects of Website content were examined, field curriculum was the central focus of this study. The results demonstrate the wide variety of information included on the Websites. MSW and MSW/BSW program Websites offer more information than BSW programs. However, most programs are not making use of the Internet to obtain feedback, create interaction, or provide support. A variety of model Websites are offered to assist social work academic programs develop and maintain their own Websites.*

Keywords: Internet, Web, social work education, field education, systems theory

The World Wide Web is emerging as a powerful and indispensable tool for accessing human service-related information. Human service agencies are increasingly using it as a means of providing agency information as well as data about community education, advocacy, fundraising, and volunteer recruitment (Finn, 1998; Geiss & Viswanathan, 1986; Marson, 1998; Schoech, 1999; Young, 1997). Social work education programs are integrating information technology into their curriculum and creating Web sites that provide information about their programs, link social workers to other information resources, and teach students information technology skills (Finn, 1988; Finn & Lavitt, 1995; Finn & Smith, 1997; Hooyman, Nurius & Nicoll, 1990; Hudson, 1993). While the majority of social work programs have their own Website, there is little research available that examines the goals, content, or student, agency, and faculty satisfaction of Website offerings.

This paper focuses on the use of the World Wide Web by social work programs as a means to provide information to students, human service agencies, and the larger community about the program's field education component. Using a general systems model (Carter & Anderson, 1990), the field curriculum can be viewed as a system involving the dynamic interaction of the social work program, agency place-

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ment sites, and students (Bogo & Vayda, 1998; Collins, Thomlinson & Grinnel 1992; Kerson, 1998; Royse, Dhooper & Rompf, 1998). It is a system where open communication and feedback are essential to maintaining a quality field component (Webb, 1988). Although Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation requires that certain information, such as program mission and goals, becomes readily available to all members of the system, programs vary in the quantity and quality of field-related information that is made available and to whom this information is accessible.

The information needs of participants in the system can be conceptualized in relation to three primary subsystems: Academic Program, Agency, and Student. The following represents the types of information needed by each subsystem. The list is not comprehensive, though, since programs and agencies may have esoteric information needs to facilitate their mission.

All members of the system need academic program information that include the program's overall mission and goals and, specifically, information on the field component. In addition, system members must understand the relationship of the mission and goals to specific policies and procedures related to field internships. To achieve a successful field program, mechanisms for ensuring the distribution of program information to all system participants, updating changes in such information, and receiving feedback about the academic program must be in place.

Agency-related information about placement sites includes agency mission, client population served, intervention theories and methods, field instructor experience and training, available learning opportunities, expectations for travel, liability insurance needs, expected work schedules, and other agency-specific expectations. The field staff needs this information in order to evaluate potential field placements and to appropriately match students with field placements. Agency information may or may not be available to students. There are a number of advantages to making such information available to students. This information promotes exploration of placement choices, provides education about the variety of agencies and services available in the program's locale, and gives students a greater sense of participation and empowerment. Agencies, *per se*, should have access to agency information to ensure that it is up-to-date and accurate. In addition, access to all agency information may be useful for networking or information and serve as a referral guide to local agencies.

Student information includes demographic characteristics, the student's interests and abilities, and on-going feedback about the student's performance at the agency. All constituents also need information about academic support opportunities for students experiencing difficulties. The field staff need information to appropriately place students in settings that best meet their needs. Agencies and other students are generally not given access to student information in order to protect student privacy. Basic information, such as a student's interests and placement sites, however, may serve a networking purpose for both the student and agencies.

Systems require effective communication, mutuality, and feedback in order to function optimally. The program's field component must have a mechanism that

can assess both the process and outcomes of field activities from all constituents. Traditionally, information and feedback has been provided to agency personnel and students through orientation sessions, a field manual, and meetings between the student, advisors, field liaisons, field supervisors, and other faculty.

Use of the Internet, especially the Web and electronic mail, can greatly facilitate and supplement the information and feedback process. Information about the academic program, placement sites, and students can be made available on the Web. In addition, the Web can be used to facilitate communication between faculty, field instructors, and students through e-mail, online discussion groups, and online feedback forms. Theoretically, use of the Web can create an open system with easy access to information for all parties and facilitate a well-designed feedback loop to improve the functioning of all participant subsystems. However, it can also disrupt traditional hierarchical organizational practices. For example, increased information about potential field placement sites may increase students' efforts to lobby field staff for their preferred placement sites. Research that focuses on the extent to which social work programs are making field-related information available on the Website or evaluates the consequences of doing so has not yet been conducted.

This paper describes a content analysis of the field component of social work program Websites. The study examines:

- the number of programs with Web-related field information;
- the types of information available (e.g., program mission, description of placement sites, etc.);
- the extent to which Websites are interactive (use feedback forms, e-mail, or online discussion groups);
- comparisons between online information provided by MSW or combined MSW/BSW programs and BSW-only programs; and
- student ratings related to the usefulness of the Web-based field information.

In addition, recommendations for enhancing the use of the World Wide Web to support field education and model field-related Websites are presented.

METHOD

This study included all social work programs in the United States with links to a Website (n=292) as listed in the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) Website (http://www.bpdonline.org) during February, 1999. (At that time, CSWE had not yet developed its online directory of programs.) The BPD directory listed 353 social work programs that represent all accredited and in-candidacy social work programs at the time. Of these, 292 (82.7%) had links to the program's own Website or to social work information on the Website of the educational institution in which the program resides. The remaining programs (17.3%) either did not have a Website or did not offer a Website that contained social work information. For comparison, programs were divided into those offering an MSW or Combined MSW/BSW programs (n=119) and those with BSW only programs (n=173).

A checklist of informational items was developed based on the types of information found in a review of several field placement policy and procedures manuals. A preliminary review of 10 social work program Websites led to the inclusion of additional informational items in the checklist. Table 1 describes the information items in the checklist. Specific information items were later categorized as falling within two of the three subsystem components: program information and agency information. (The third subsystem, student information, was not found on any of the program Websites). For purposes of clarity and discussion, program information was further divided into "general information" and "policies." In addition, Website components that promote information sharing and feedback were listed under "communication."

Each Website was reviewed by one author and an MSW student research assistant. All information and field-related links on a program's Website were examined. Information items were rated as "present" or "absent." Initial inter-rater reliability was 89%. Items in which there was disagreement were discussed until agreement was reached.

RESULTS

Table 1 describes the information items and the percent of programs offering each item on their Website. It can be seen that programs varied widely in terms of the types of field information included on their Website. Overall, MSW-only or combined MSW/BSW (MSW) programs offer more information than BSW (BSW) standalone programs. A χ^2 analysis was used to test differences in the number of MSW/BSW programs offering more specific information items. Overall, MSW programs were more likely to offer information on 28 (68.3%) of the 41 items. It should be noted that 59.7% of MSW programs provided separate links or pages with field-related information, while only 17.9% of BSW programs did so (χ^2= 54.05, df=1, p<.001). Nevertheless, fewer than 20% of programs provided more than half the information items on their Website.

Within the subsystem program information, general information includes course syllabi, a calendar of events, field-related forms, an online field manual, and an overview/history of the field program. Approximately half of the programs provide the course syllabi for field and seminar courses, but very little other information is provided. Field policies include information related to the student requirements (e.g., number of courses and hours of field placement); criteria for selecting placements and field instructors; grievance procedures; a description of the roles of the field coordinator, faculty liaison, field instructor, and field advisory committee; and agency issues, such as liability insurance and placement at on-going employment sites. More than three-fourths of the programs provide field requirements on their Website, and about half of the MSW programs describe the criteria for selecting placement sites. The vast majority of programs, however, have no other specific field-related policies on their Website. For example, only 9.2% of MSW and 2.3% of BSW programs provide their field policies related to grievance procedures on their Website.

The agency subsystem includes descriptions of placements (e.g., mission, location, size, social problems, etc.), as well as information about agency-related issues,

Table 1: *Information Items Available on Social Work Program Websites by Percentage of Programs*

	% Programs		
	BSW Only	MSW or MSW/BSW	χ^2 (*N*=292,df=1)
PROGRAM INFORMATION			
General Information			
Seminar Course Outline	55.4	58.8	
Field Course Outline	55.5	59.7	
Field Calendar	0.6	14.3	22.90***
Separate Field Section/Pages	17.9	59.7	54.05***
Field Manual Online	2.9	11.8	9.13**
Online Forms	1.2	5.9	5.72*
Program History	2.3	8.4	5.73*
Learning Contracts	0.0	6.7	11.96**
Policies			
Field Requirements	76.3	90.8	10.07**
Information for Field Instructors	1.7	17.6	23.66***
Field Coordinator's Duties	3.5	12.6	8.18**
Field Liaison's Duties	0.0	7.6	13.50***
Field Instructor's (Agency) Duties	0.6	10.1	14.98***
Criteria for Selecting Placements	15.0	50.4	42.50***
Grievance Procedure	2.3	9.2	6.95*
Description of Supervision	0.6	10.1	18.86***
Liability Issues	1.2	14.3	19.98***
Criteria for Selecting Placements	5.8	27.7	27.05***
Information Re: Placements at Work	0.0	11.6	22.99***
Field Advisory Committee	1.2	2.5	
AGENCY INFORMATION			
Description of Individual Placements	4.0	10.9	5.23*
Searchable Database of Agencies	0.0	4.2	7.40**
Listing by Social Problem	1.7	5.9	
Placements by Geographical Location	2.9	4.2	
Placements by Alphabetical	7.5	21.0	11.34***
Directions to Agency	0.6	0.0	
Transportation Issues	1.7	5.9	7.62*
Disability Issues	0.6	3.4	
Provides a Stipend	0.0	3.4	5.90*
Direct Link to Placement URL	2.3	4.2	
Number of Students Accepted at Agency	0.6	1.7	
COMMUNICATION			
E-mail Link to Field Director	9.2	26.9	15.98***
E-mail Link to Field Liaison/Advisor	1.7	12.6	14.40***
Feedback Form	2.3	5.0	
Faculty Names	62.4	88.2	23.79***
Faculty Phone Number	23.7	34.5	4.03*
Faculty E-mail Link	34.1	59.7	18.65***
Liaison E-mail Link	1.7	12.6	14.40***
Faculty Office Address	18.5	25.2	
Online Field Discussion	1.2	4.2	
Newsletter, Articles, Publications	1.7	2.5	
USEFULNESS RATING (4 OR 5)			
Score of 4 or 5 = Highly Useful	4.1	18.9	16.40***

such as the need for transportation and whether the agency pays a stipend. Most programs do not provide agency-related information on their Website. Only 20% of MSW programs and fewer than 10% of BSW programs provide a listing of field placement sites. Very few programs, generally fewer than 10%, provide agency descriptions or other agency-related information. Finally, only 4.2% of the programs offer a searchable online database of field placement sites.

The Internet can be more than a static provider of information. It can be used to promote communication, interaction, and community among participants of a system. As noted in the communication section of Table 1, this trend is starting to occur in a small number of programs. Approximately 25% of MSW programs and 10% of BSW programs provide an e-mail link to the field coordinator within a separate field-related page. E-mail links to all faculty are provided by approximately two-thirds of MSW programs and only one-third of BSW programs. It should be noted that less than half of the programs identify and provide e-mail links to faculty liaisons. Generally, programs do not actively solicit feedback from students or agencies through their Website. Only 5% of MSW programs and 2.3% of BSW programs provide an online form that asks for feedback, comments, or questions. Similarly, only a few programs provide an online discussion group where faculty, students, and agency personnel can discuss issues related to field placement. Finally, the Website is generally not used as an additional communication channel to publish program newsletters and bulletins related to field placement.

The usefulness rating came about as two MSW students rated the program Websites in terms of their overall usefulness of the information provided with respect to the program's field component. The students were quite computer literate and had high expectations of how Websites can be used by social work programs. They rated each site on a five-point scale from one (not at all useful) to five (highly useful). Raters were in agreement on 84% of ratings and within one point on 94%. In cases of disagreement (16% of ratings), raters' scores were averaged. Overall, student ratings reflect the lack of field information available on program Websites. The mean ratings were 2.52 for MSW or combined MSW/BSW programs (SD = 1.25) and 1.54 (SD =.94) for BSW programs. ANOVA found these differences significant (F=58.729, df=1, p<.000). Only 18.9% of MSW program and 4.1% of BSW program Websites were rated highly useful (four or five). More than half of all Websites (53.1%) were rated as "not at all useful" in terms of providing field information.

DISCUSSION

Social work programs have begun to use the Internet to supply information about their programs, and a majority of programs include some information about the field component. It appears, however, that as of April, 1999, most programs were not making optimal use of their Website. Schoech (1999) described three phases of technological change. In the first phase, new technology is used in ways similar to those of the old method. In the second phase, improvements are made so that new technology improves the way things have been done in the past. In the third phase, new technology results in the creation of new systems, products, and methods that were previously impossible. It appears that in using Websites, most programs fall somewhere between the first and second phase. The Web is used as a one-way

publication tool to provide information generally available in paper form. There are improvements in access to the information, but they may not impact system functioning because the information is often incomplete and no improvement in the feedback loop is achieved.

Social work field programs may not be making optimal use of program Websites for a number of reasons. Resource issues may play an important role in determining the content of social work Websites. In this study, resources for Websites were not directly measured. It can be noted, however, that programs that included an MSW degree were more likely to offer more content and more interactive options than BSW programs. Overall, MSW programs are larger, better funded, have more faculty, and are more likely to have university support for technology than BSW programs. On the other hand, with BSW-only programs, being smaller, they may have more direct face-to-face contact with students and may find less need to provide information on the Web. The reasons for the differences in Web-based content warrant further study. Although MSW program Websites offer relatively more information and were rated by students as more useful, most MSW programs still include only a small fraction of the content that might be found in a comprehensive system.

Recommendations

Social work programs interested in using the Web to its fullest extent must begin to strategically plan to obtain the personnel, software, and training resources necessary to create and maintain a Website. The cost of these resources has decreased dramatically during the past few years. Most programs already have a Website, Internet access, and server space available through their university or college. Software that allows Web pages to be created without the need for writing Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) code is now readily available and affordable. Many word processing programs convert documents to HTML-based Web pages, allowing for the easy creation of simple Web pages. Commercial software designed to convert large documents (such as a field manual) to HTML is also available and provides automatic indexing and linking of the contents. Other software allows programs to put large documents on the Web in .pdf format, making it easy to read online and easy to download or print in a usable format. Database software enables programs to maintain an electronic record-keeping system with student, agency, and field instructor information organized in ways that are convenient for the program. Many of these programs produce reports in HTML that can be used directly on the Web. Finally, given the ubiquity of Web development, there may be work-study students or even volunteers who are willing to work on social work program Websites. For those few programs that do not have campus-based Internet resources, a commercial Internet Service Provider is now within the budget of even the most severely limited programs. Several Internet sites now offer free Web space and e-mail accounts to subscribers. Resource issues alone do not explain the limited use of the Internet by social work field programs.

Matheson (1993) notes that among human service agencies, a "computer champion"—someone who enjoys working with technology and encourages the agency to use it—can be instrumental in advancing information technology development. Social work programs should be encouraged to find or support the devel-

opment of such a "computer champion." At the same time, field coordinators and other interested faculty must advocate for field-related information to be made available online. In this study, almost 40% of MSW programs and more than 80% of BSW programs did not have separate areas devoted to field information. Including field information on the Web, in part, is a matter of consciousness. Field staff must begin to include the program's Website in all aspects of their planning and communication activities.

Successful Websites offer content users need, are updated regularly, provide a degree of interactivity, and are designed to be easy to read and navigate (Wiggins, 1995). The majority of social work programs have not yet taken advantage of the Web's potential to promote communication and feedback. This can be achieved in a number of ways. Programs can link students and the community through e-mail to all personnel involved in the field program, including the field coordinator, faculty liaison, seminar instructor, students in placement, and, when possible, the agency field instructor. Students can be required to have e-mail addresses as a program requirement, and field instructors without e-mail addresses can be provided with Internet options for obtaining free e-mail. Field liaisons can require weekly or bimonthly progress reports by e-mail. In addition, programs can invite constituents to e-mail their questions and feedback. An online feedback form is a convenience to users, although not all servers allow use of online forms for security reasons. Programs can create specific online discussion groups to address field placement issues. This may serve as an additional source of information and feedback as well as a potential additional source of online support for students. A separate discussion group or electronic mailing list for field instructors would provide another avenue for communication. In many universities and colleges, such groups can often be set-up through a simple request to the Information Technology unit. Open and ongoing communication about field issues can create synergy for program development.

Model Websites

Field components of social work programs may not be making optimum use of their Websites due to lack of exposure to successful Website models. The Council on Social Work Education maintains an online list of social work programs with links to their Websites (http://www.cswe.org/directory). No organization, however, has yet been known to evaluate and rate the quality of social work Websites. In this study, a number of program sites were rated as "4 or 5" for overall usefulness by two students. While space prohibits a description of all such sites, the following list (in alphabetical order) offer models of field Website components that could serve as good examples of field education online.

Colorado State University (www.colostate.edu/depts/socwork) provides a directory of field agencies based on social problems and includes detailed agency information. The site also provides a field calendar, field forms, and links to field faculty.

Florida State University (http://ssw.fsu.edu/field/fieadm.html) provides course outlines for field courses, detailed information about clinical and administrative field tracks, online field policies featuring a separate area describing policies regarding termination, a field calendar of events, and links to field faculty.

New Mexico State University (http://www.nmsu.edu/~socwork/field.htm) provides an online field manual with an extensive appendix of forms the field program uses. It also includes an article on using PCs for advocacy, information and referral, and networking that was published in the MSW and BSW field manuals.

Salisbury State University (http://www.ssu.edu/Schools/Seidel/SocialWork/field.html) provides their field manual in PDF format, along with a link to obtaining the Acrobat Reader.

Syracuse University (http://www.social.syr.edu/fieldsearch/) provides a "field placement locator" that allows students to search for placements based on geographic location, social problem, and level of student (e.g., first year). The search results provide a brief agency description and information about transportation, availability of placements, special requirements, and other agency information. Graduate and undergraduate field manuals are also available online. The site also has a "Guest Book" that requests feedback about the Website or program.

University of Kansas (http://www.socwel.ukans.edu/email/directory.html) provides an online e-mail directory to all students, instructors, liaisons, and staff, although this is not directly associated with a field-related page.

University of Maryland (Baltimore County) (http://novell.umbc.edu/socialwork/field1.htm) also provides its field manual online. A table of contents includes links to many of the sections. In addition, a separate field instruction calendar is available.

University of Michigan (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/ofi/) provides extensive field information, including a password-protected listing of agency availability, an excellent FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section, and a comprehensive online field manual. They also provide online forms for students, agencies, and field instructors in PDF format.

University of Missouri (http://web.missouri.edu/~sswmain/field.html) provides an online database of field agencies that can be searched or browsed. The database includes a description of services, directions, number of placements available, and other agency-related information. The program also provides a number of password-protected forms that can be filled out online, including a field instructor feedback form.

University of North Carolina—Pembroke: (http://www.uncp.edu/sw/fieldexp.html) provides a field handbook that includes the history of the program, policies and procedures, and online forms. Field placement agencies available by geographic area, social problem, and alphabetical listing are featured, complete with descriptions. This is a good example of displaying agencies without using a search engine.

University of Texas—Arlington (BSW and MSW) (http://www2.uta.edu/ssw/field.htm) provides a separate field section that includes a link to the field director, links to affiliated agencies with Websites, and a summary of field-related academic information. There is an excellent search page that uses drop-down menus in which agencies can be searched by area of practice, geographical area, and level of student (e.g., undergraduate). In September, 1999, a counter noted that the page had been accessed 26,000 times since April, 1998.

University of Vermont—(http://www.uvm.edu/~socwork/field/Field_Instructor_Recruitme.htm) provides an online field manual for both MSW and BSW programs. In addition, the site lists the field agencies available, including the number of placements available and the type of students accepted.

Limitations of the Study and the Need for Further Research

The use of Web-based information may promote field education that enhances communication, feedback, and system change. This paper describes the extent to which programs utilize various information technology components in their Website, but does not address the outcomes of having such components.

Systems theory assists in conceptualizing the mutuality among cooperating social systems. The following are some key system outcomes that might emerge from a program's extensive use of the Web.

- After initial capital outlay, the academic program can provide all information required by the other social systems, with significantly less cost than any other form of information dissemination used in the past.
- Information is timely. When critical (and non-critical) information changes, databases, and Websites can be updated immediately at little financial cost. Academic programs and agencies no longer must wait an entire fiscal year to provide updated information—as has been done in the past. Thus, the system's information needs are met with a speed hitherto not witnessed in our academic/practice history.
- When a technological change takes place within one system, it enhances the probability of corresponding changes with other interdependent systems. For example, if students and the academic programs employ technology to complete tasks and disseminate information, agencies will eventually follow.
- New technology provides a basis for greater mutuality, communication, and cooperation. For example, e-mail makes communication easier. Thus, parties communicate with each other with greater frequency and problem solving is enhanced. Similarly, since feedback through e-mail and online forms is more frequent, program change and development is more ongoing and responsive.

There is yet no evidence, however, that programs with a comprehensive Website have better field-related outcomes or that student and agency satisfaction with the field is higher. Further research is needed to evaluate the impact of providing a comprehensive Website on the overall functioning of the program, including the types of organizational and programmatic improvements and/or disruptions that occur as we move toward ever more open systems through technology.

This study focused on the content of field Websites and has an underlying bias that "more information is better." Other factors, however, such as overall visual appeal, organization, ease of use, accuracy and timeliness of information, and ease of access may be equal or more important in determining the quality and usefulness of program Websites. Research is needed to assess the utility of various models for providing field information online.

In the past, the authors have hypothesized that a lack of resources may be related to the limited amount of information provided by some program Websites. This

study did not address the correlation between resources and the ability to utilize the Web to provide information. Lack of resources is not the only reason, however, that some programs make relatively little use of the Web. Information may create difficulties for the program. Students who can search agency placement information may be more likely to want to select their own placements. Field instructors with e-mail access to the field director may want to discuss a student's problematic behavior more frequently. Students who can readily search the policy manual and have easy access to communication with fellow students and field instructors may be more likely to electronically organize campaigns to change current program policy. While all these actions can be seen as "healthy" for a system, they can create disruption and stress resources. The extent to which online social work program information is problematic is unknown and further research in this area is warranted.

The satisfaction of students with program Websites is based on the ratings of two computer literate MSW students. While their ratings had high agreement, it is not known to what extent they reflect the satisfaction of most social work students with Websites in their own programs. Other students may have lower expectations of program Websites or may find the information currently provided more useful than did the raters in this study. Each social work program, including the program's field component, must begin to evaluate its Website as an integral part of program evaluation activities.

CONCLUSION

Social work programs have only begun to use their Websites to meet the information and communication needs of all members involved in the educational process. While field education is only one component of social work education, it is significant and must be included in developing new information technology resources. Professional organizations such as CSWE and BPD could facilitate the development of Web-based information by providing guidelines for what should be made available online and linking programs to model sites that have been peer-evaluated.

This study is a content analysis of field information provided by social work program Websites at a given point in time. Considering the rate of technological change, the information is likely to be quickly out-of-date. However, the issues it raises about what programs offer on the Web, how information is delivered, differences between larger and smaller programs in their ability to provide information resources, the need to plan information resources strategically, and the impact of information technology on program outcomes will increasingly become concerns of social work education. Social work is in an exciting time of development and there is much work to be done.

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The Role of Local Governmental Funding in Nonprofit Survival

Karl Besel

Abstract: *Nonprofit social service organizations in America originally relied on private donations and charitable events to sustain their operations. As the number of nonprofit organizations has proliferated over the last few decades, so has nonprofit dependency on governmental and other sources of revenue. A case study design was used to examine factors that have impacted the survival of the original Indiana Youth Service Bureaus. This study highlights salient factors that influence survival and explores the characteristics and circumstances of selected organizations that enhance their sustainability. The findings suggest that social work administrators need to foster long-term relationships with local funders as a means of enhancing organizational survival.*

Keywords: Governmental funds, nonprofit survival, youth services

As many as one in every four nonprofit organizations in the United States are forced into bankruptcy every decade (Indiana Donors Alliance, 1998). Considering the number of organizations that close operation, it is clear that systematic analysis of the factors that contribute to the survival of nonprofits is needed. The history of Indiana Youth Service Bureaus parallels this national trend as more than 10 bureaus in Indiana closed operation since 1972. Using a case study approach, this study examined the factors that have contributed to the survival or closure of the original 17 Indiana Youth Services Association (IYSA) bureaus.

Youth service bureaus formed a statewide network in Indiana in 1972. The IYSA network was formed to provide and advocate for statewide support for bureaus. IYSA's original mission included delinquency prevention, youth advocacy, community education, and information and referral. During the peak years, 45 bureaus operated throughout Indiana. When federal funding for the bureaus was depleted during the middle 1970s, many agencies were forced to close (*IYSA Red Book*, 1998). Ten of the original 17 youth service bureaus currently operate within Indiana.

In this study, the term *organizational survival* refers to more than the maintenance of agency identity and the provision of human services over a long period of time. Rather, survival also involves successful competition for a limited number of

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resources. The process of becoming more adept in acquiring life-sustaining resources catalyzes the physical and intellectual growth of life forms. In the same vein, organizational survival is synonymous with organizational growth, since stronger, more adaptable agencies will eventually engulf inferior agencies. The substantial numerical growth of the nonprofit sector, coupled with governmental cuts, or at best, incremental funding increases, has created an environment where only strong organizations survive (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, Abrahams, Crutchfield & Stevenson, 1996). These dynamics have created an economic arena for human services where nonprofit agencies increasingly have to compete with for-profit agencies for market share. While this author assumes that a relationship between organizational survival and effectiveness does exist, this study focuses on organizational sustainability rather than service quality.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH TO ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL

Systematic research about the survival of nonprofits is almost nonexistent. Moreover, professional disciplines outside of social work have also ignored the field of organizational survival. Most studies conducted in the organizational behavior field focus on productivity or profitability, rather than survival (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The limited number of studies on organizational survival typically use for-profit or public organizations for analysis (Sheppard, 1995).

One of the few studies of nonprofit survival was conducted by Baum and Oliver (1991). They examined 1,028 child care service organizations in Toronto, Canada, from 1971 to 1987. The authors devised a theoretical framework for the study by integrating the main points of institutional and population ecology theories. This study claims to be among the first to substantiate that institutional linkages with governmental entities enhance the likelihood of survival. The authors defined an institutional linkage as a direct and regularized relationship between an organization and an institution in the organization's environment. In fact, this research succeeds in providing a comprehensive and testable theory for analyzing nonprofit mortality. Unfortunately, the authors were unable to obtain detailed information about the income that child-care agencies derived from subsidized fees, and, therefore, were unable to determine the individual impact of institutional linkages.

Relationship Between Agency Survival and Recent Policy Initiatives

Organizational survival has become increasingly important for nonprofit agencies over the past decade (Bocage, Homonoff & Riley, 1995; Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar & Strom, 1997). Due to federal and state funding cuts that began during the Reagan Era, nonprofit organizations continue to explore ways to sustain their operations (Motenko et al., 1995). Many nonprofit organizations are turning to creative strategies to ensure survival. Typically, these strategies employ merging, decentralizing, or cost-cutting measures that parallel recent trends in the for-profit sector (Ortiz & Bassof, 1988; Strom-Gottfried, 1997).

In line with the cutbacks in fiscal support for human services that started in the mid-1980s, during the late 1990s government officials encouraged nonprofits to provide welfare-to-work programs. Federal granting institutions have earmarked

considerable funding for nonprofits to develop training, mentoring, and cultural sensitivity programs on behalf of welfare recipients. Nonprofit organizations are also being encouraged to expand their existing childcare, counseling, transportation, and housing programs so that welfare recipients will have the necessary resources to continue employment once they are adequately trained. A multitude of federal grant opportunities are currently available to nonprofit organizations that provide educational, job training, and other human services to low-income families (Family Services Report, 1999). At first glance, governmental strategies that provide significant monetary incentives for nonprofits to pursue and/or expand welfare-to-work related programs give the appearance of systematic planning. However, the plans do not adequately account for or address the previous difficulties in sustaining locally based nonprofits. For example, the Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963 resulted in the creation of community-based mental health organizations that could be accessed by every American citizen regardless of their income. Similar to welfare-to-work implementation strategies, federal funds were granted to community-based mental health organizations with the eventual goal of sustainability by local and/or state funding. Yet, many of these mental health agencies were forced to close operation. Ultimately, many of the surviving organizations had to develop private sector growth strategies that made their services less accessible to low-income clients (Greer & Greer, 1983). Continued research on the survival of social service agencies will guide our understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by struggling nonprofits, as well as the capacity of these organizations to undertake new service delivery strategies prompted by welfare-to-work legislation.

METHODS

Seventeen youth service bureaus were selected for analysis in this multiple case study. Multiple and varied data sources were used to examine the impact of the independent variables. This technique, known as triangulation, is useful in ruling out the possibility of other variables besides the selected independent variable influencing the dependent variable. The following data sources were used:

1. written historical information from the bureaus;
2. interviews with key actors; and
3. quantitative reports (i.e., annual audits, agency financial reports).

The data gathered through these sources were used explore the following questions::

1. How significant is the generation of local funding streams to the survival of nonprofit organizations?
2. Does an interrelationship exist between the generation of local funding streams and other factors, such as the size of individual bureaus?
3. How significant are regional differences, such as county population size, in the survival of organizations?

The key actors interviewed consisted of eight current directors of surviving bureaus that had served their agencies for at least five years, two former bureau directors, and four other individuals who played a significant role in establishing

the Indiana bureaus. These individuals were identified through the use of "snowball" sampling techniques. A semi-standardized interviewing method that incorporated the use of both closed and open-ended questions (Berg, 1995) was employed. The main questions included in the interviews were:

1. What is the main factor (or factors) that determines the survival of a youth service bureau?
2. What factors led to the closing of the original bureaus?
3. Do you think the generation of non-local funding (state or federal monies) contributes significantly to the survival of youth service bureaus?

While the interviewing tool included "probes" for each of the aforementioned questions, most of the interviewees expanded upon the issues without additional prompting. Telephone interviews were conducted between June 1999 and February 2000.

The 17 organizations chosen for the study were intentionally selected because all 17 of the bureaus:

1. were established between 1970 and 1974;
2. joined the IYSA network by 1975, and, therefore, participated in statewide lobbying campaigns with other bureaus; and
3. were still operational in 1975.

These selection criteria were established in order to identify reasonably similar bureaus that had begun operations at about the same period in time. As discussed previously, 45 Indiana bureaus were in operation at one point during the 1970s. While the closure and/or survival of bureaus established after 1974 may resemble the growth patterns of the 17 selected for this study, additional threats to validity may have resulted from the inclusion of less similar bureaus. Membership the IYSA network of bureaus was used as a selection criterion since bureaus that joined this statewide network agreed to establish similar mission statements and programming strategies as a part of their membership. Bureaus that were still operating in 1975 were included because budgetary and programming data were not available for those that closed before this time. The absence of information about bureaus that closed prior to 1975 made them inappropriate for the study.

Consequently, this study refers to these 17 youth service bureaus as the "original" bureaus. Ultimately, the rationale for selecting these bureaus for a study of organizational survival pivots around the opportunity to investigate the impact multiple factors among a group of nonprofit agencies that share common missions, funding bases, and membership within a statewide network. In addition, fairly detailed written budgetary and program information, as well as the availability of key players involved in the initiation and growth of the Indiana youth service bureaus, allowed for extensive comparisons between closed and surviving bureaus over the course of three decades.

Not all 17 bureaus were 501.c.3 organizations throughout their entire existence. Two bureaus changed their legal status during the period. One private nonprofit

organization voluntarily became a public agency of the county. The other bureau, a public county agency, involuntarily became a private nonprofit organization. A third bureau has operated as a city government agency throughout its history. Technically, these three bureaus have not always been private nonprofit. However, they were included in this study for the following reasons:

1. As a result of the "voluntary failure" of nonprofit organizations (Salamon, 1987), nonprofit agencies, especially those in the human services field, rely heavily on governmental grants for their operation. This growing reliance on governmental funds has caused nonprofits to resemble public organizations in their accounting and funding practices. This shift from acquiring funds from private to governmental sources has created a fading distinction between governmental and nonprofit agencies (Ferris & Graddy, 1989).

2. One of the advantages of case studies over experimental or quasi-experimental research methodologies is the opportunity to conduct in-depth investigations of a particular social phenomenon (Yin, 1984). Despite the constant pressures upon human service agencies by federal, state, and local officials to deliver a multitude of social services that are increasingly unavailable through governmental agencies, researchers have not thoroughly examined strategies adopted by organizations to address these operational strains. By including three youth service bureaus that do not, or formerly did not, conform to a narrow legal definition of a nonprofit organization, this researcher attempted to account for the occasionally divergent survival patterns of organizations. In addressing the complexities of organizational survival, this study also investigated some of the reasons that nonprofit and governmental organizations voluntarily or involuntarily change their legal status. Two complementary theoretical frameworks we re used to investigate nonprofit organizational survival.

Both institutional and ecological frameworks suggest that institutional relations increase an organization's survival prospects. However, few studies have examined the presumed effects of institutional relations on organizational mortality (Miner, Amburgery & Stearns, 1990; Zucker, 1987). Baum & Oliver's (1991) investigation of the impact of institutional linkages on the survival of child-care organizations may be the only organizational behavior study that investigated the role of institutional linkages in the survival of nonprofit agencies. Since developing funding strategies has become a primary issue for nonprofit organizations (Bocage, Homonoff & Riley, 1995; Jarman-Rohde, Kolar & Strom McFall, 1997; Mordock, 1989), theoretical frameworks must consider the impact of fiscal streams upon organizational survival. Previous organizational behavior studies have emphasized the importance of budget size (e.g., Downs, 1967; Starbuck, 1964), and service mix (Mordock, 1989). This study acknowledged that interrelationships may exist between the generation of local fiscal streams and these two variables, yet proposed that the ability of a nonprofit organization to consistently generate local revenue was the primary determinant of survival. The size of a bureau's operating budget was assumed to impact the ability of a bureau to generate local funding, since larger organizations are perceived as conforming more with the traditional norms and beliefs of the institutional environments.

Findings from Quantitative Reports

The analysis conducted through the examination of quantitative reports found that larger bureaus, and those that served more densely populated counties, were more likely to survive than smaller bureaus. However, the consistent generation of local fiscal streams was found to be the primary determinant of survival. Table 1 shows that a significant percentage of funding streams generated by surviving bureaus over a 21-year period were from local sources. In 1975, four of the 10 surviving bureaus acquired more than 50% of their funding from local sources. By 1976, the number of bureaus receiving more than half of their funding from local sources had increased from four to five. By 1996, seven of the 10 surviving bureaus received more than 50% of their funding from local sources. This overall percentage increase in the amount of funding secured from local sources by surviving bureaus depicts a pattern of organizational survival related to the consistent generation of local revenue. In contrast, only one of the seven closed bureaus in 1975 received more than half of its revenue from local sources. While some surviving bureaus, such as the Monroe Bureau, initially exhibited limited funding from local sources (5% in 1975), they were progressively able to generate an increased percentage of revenue from within their county/counties of service (54% by 1996). It is also significant to note that the one bureau that secured more than half of its funding from local sources in 1975 (Indianapolis) was forced to close its operation by 1976 as a result of a falling-out with its primary funding source, the local United Way.

The comparison of local funding streams between 1975 and 1976 also demonstrates that bureaus that were more reliant on local institutions for revenue were more equipped to handle the depletion of federal Criminal Justice Planning grants in the middle 1970s. Three of the seven bureaus that closed were forced to terminate their services between 1975 and 1976 (see Table 1). During this same time period, four of the 10 surviving bureaus successfully managed the depletion of federal funds to Indiana bureaus by securing percentage increases in local funding.

Most of the surviving bureaus became increasingly reliant on local funding from 1975 to 1996. The Delaware County bureau appears to be somewhat of an anomaly in that it experiences a significant decrease in local funding during the early 1990s. In 1999, the Delaware County Youth Service Bureau merged with the significantly larger Youth Opportunity Center, possibly as a result of the depletion of a local revenue source that provided the agency with a substantial and consistent stream of funding for two decades. Currently, the Youth Service Bureau operates as a division of the Youth Opportunity Center, rather than an autonomous agency. Thus, the Delaware Bureau has technically managed to "survive," yet operates with relatively less autonomy since its merger with a larger human service agency.

Findings from Interviews with Key Actors

Table 2 lists key actors' responses to the question, "What is the main factor (or factors) that determines the survival of a youth service bureau?" Half of the interviewees (seven out of 14) reported that "local community support and local funds" was the primary factor that impacts survival. Local community support and local

Table 1: *Percentage of Youth Service Bureau Operating Budgets from Local Sources in 1975, 1976, and 1996*

Survival Status	County of Y.S.B.	1975	1976	1996
Closed	Cass	6	0	.
	Howard	27	.	.
	Marion (Indianapolis)	78	.	.
	Spencer	5	.	.
	Tippecanoe	25	0	.
	Wabash	5	1	.
	White	13	0	.
Surviving	Delaware	11	99	5
	Elkart	99	85	53
	Lake (Gary)	87	55	63
	LaPorte	11	63	60
	Montgomery	27	44	78
	Monroe	5	44	54
	Perry (Lincoln Hills)	*	36	25
	Porter	57	73	70
	St. Joseph	78	18	78
	Vanderburgh (E'ville)	17	33	33

Source: 1976 and 1977 IYSA Handbooks and 1996 Financial Audits and 1997 Annual Reports from Surviving Bureaus.

Code for YSB Budget Tables:
. = Agency closed operation
* = Data were not available for this year

funds were grouped together since the directors interviewed consistently described a linkage between the two. Responses such as "funding is definitely tied to networking in the community" and "you need to have community connections to get local funds" were typical. While the definition of what constituted "community support" varied from director to director, community support was generally viewed as being synonymous with local funding. Reasons surviving bureaus were able to cultivate community support include the following:

- A good working relationship between a bureau's executive director and key public officials, such as local judges, probation officers, and school administrators.
- An active board of directors that is able and willing to assist the executive director secure and maintain financial resources.
- Consensus by county residents that the bureau's services are needed.

Table 2: *Survival Factors as Reported by Key Actors (n=14)*

Survival Factor	Number of Directors Reporting
Local Community Support and Local Funding	7
Ability of Board and Director to Secure Resources	3
Positioning Agency to Receive Funding	2
Diverse Funding Base	2

Many directors, especially current directors of surviving bureaus, pointed to the importance of maintaining good working relationships with key public officials. Directors often cited county commissioners, judges, and the director of the county probation and/or welfare department as playing crucial roles in funding youth service bureaus. One director stated a need to "have two or three of my staff" read all written correspondence to the local welfare department in order to ensure that "we are presenting the image of being cooperative and positive, yet getting the point across." This director took great strides to portray his bureau in the most favorable light, since agency administrators "Get rewarded the most for doing networking and politicking. If you know your representatives and scratch their back, funding will come your way." While the term "representative" was used in this statement in reference to elected local officials who had some control over public resources, this director also elaborated on the need to align with non-elected county officials, such as welfare and probation directors. In some cases, the directors interviewed were cynical about the motives of county officials with regard to allocating tax dollars to youth service bureaus. A current director of a surviving bureau stated, "Our bureau has been able to secure ongoing funding from the county because of laziness from the court." This director proceeded to explain, "It's easier for them to continue what they are doing. They often don't seem to care about the services. Funding our bureau gives the illusion that they are advocating for their constituents." Thus, this director believed that a local judge or other county official gained political points by supporting the delinquency prevention programs offered by the local youth service bureau. While all the directors interviewed did not necessarily share these sentiments, most indicated that the quality of their relationships with local officials was linked to agency survival.

One director stated, "All the things that can check the quality of your agency's programs can be deceived." This quote represented the view of several directors that current methods for assessing the actual impact of human services were flawed. The definitions and methods of measuring quality in service delivery often vary and are generally difficult, if not impossible to quantify, this ambiguity with regard to program effectiveness makes the political nature of sustaining agency resources a focal point.

Closely related to community support is the ability and willingness of an agency's board of directors to assist in securing and maintaining fiscal streams. Public officials often assumed roles as board members and governing officials with the original youth service bureaus. Many of the directors interviewed discussed the pivotal role elected public officials, such as county commissioners and judges, have played in bureau survival. As branches of city or county government, three of the 10 surviving bureaus operate in contexts where public officials exercise considerable control over a bureau's financial resources. As public agencies, these bureaus are subject to a governing board that includes county commissioners, mayors, and/or judges. The former agency director of one of these agencies noted the influence a county judge played in the bureau changing from a nonprofit to a public agency. This judge, who happened to be the board president at the time of this monumental decision, concluded that the bureau had a greater chance for survival if it became a part of the county government. The judge believed that the

annual allocations that the bureau would receive as a local governmental agency would provide a more stable financial base. While the other interviews did not reveal similar stories of a bureau's fate being placed so firmly in the hands of a public official, most directors of surviving bureaus stated that their bureaus had historically recruited judges, probation officers, and school officials to become members of their board of directors. These elected officials and civil servants often used their influence to secure service contracts and governmental subsidies for bureaus. In some instances, these officials could also refer clients to bureaus. Indeed, the interdependence between the government and nonprofit sector with regard to providing human services may be reflected by the number of directors who reported including these professionals on their governing boards.

In addition to recruiting public officials to serve as board members, some directors reported that they actively sought out key business leaders, such as bank executives and other corporate chief executive officers, as board members. Some of these board members made sizeable donations to the bureaus they served. In addition, some possessed contacts within the community that increased the public awareness and visibility of a bureau. "Our agency received a $25,000 contribution from an individual who stated that he gave to our agency because he knew everyone who knew us." This statement, made by a director who strategically recruited bank executives as members of her board, speaks to how some directors have enhanced their bureaus' fiscal resources through planned board member recruitment efforts. This same director reported that she made the relationship between the agency and a board member "as easy as possible by providing a dinner at every meeting, having the executive director take minutes, and not overloading members with tasks." Several directors mentioned the importance of finding the right mix between active board involvement in securing resources and not burning-out volunteers. Since "board members don't have the social service background to know what's coming or going" with regard to program development, most directors stated that their board members were typically charged with fundraising events, connecting the agency with potential funding sources, and policymaking. The responsibility for "running the organization" was seen as the jurisdiction of the executive director. In some cases, directors were still working at mobilizing board members to take more active leadership roles with the agency. A director of a surviving bureau stated, "Our board has traditionally gone along with everything that the executive director wanted. Now we are to a point where we want them to be more active." Overall, the key actors interviewed perceived a need to utilize board volunteers in acquiring and maintaining bureau financial resources. The short-lived nature of many grants, public allocations to bureaus that were occasionally subject to changing political climates and taxpayer sentiments about social service spending, and growing competition among human service providers, were directly or indirectly given as reasons for needing an active board of directors.

Although the "people served by bureaus often do not have the political clout to lobby for services on their own," the key actors cited several examples of how county residents aided bureau survival. Some directors emphasized the historical contributions of volunteer groups, such as the League of Women Voters, in lobby-

ing for county and state funding for local bureaus. In some cases, the "grassroots" nature of bureaus and the active involvement of the general citizenry played a part in bureau survival. Some bureau directors perceived the longevity of their organization as being at least partially related to the perpetuation of this grassroots mission "by not affiliating with any national organizations," such as "Big Brothers-Big Sisters and the YMCA." While the majority of interviewees did not agree that affiliation with national organizations was problematic, the continuation of local funding for some bureaus may have been tied to primary or exclusive strategic alliances with county-based organizations. Two directors pointed to the maintenance of primarily local affiliations as somewhat related to continued tax dollar support for their bureau. In some cases, "good press" at the local level mobilized county residents to rally around youth service bureaus when elected officials threatened to cut public subsidies. Several bureau directors noted that "the uniqueness of the services we offer" enhanced public support. For some bureaus, the fact that they provide the only shelter care for county youth placed outside the home is a huge selling point for county residents. Other bureaus were among the few agencies providing delinquency prevention services. This induced favorable public sentiment when agency funding cuts were threatened. Directors placed varying degrees of emphasis upon the importance of these elements of community support. However, they consistently indicated that the establishment of strong relationships with community leaders resulted in stable local funding streams. The network of community support that was fostered through relationships with other county organizations, effective board leadership, and public recognition, contributed to bureaus' reputations as quality service providers.One director reported "Getting funding for our agency has gotten a little easier since we proved ourselves during the '70s and '80s."

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the symbiotic relationship nonprofit human service agencies hold with local governmental institutions. All three data collection sources revealed the relationship between local funding and survival to be more significant than the other survival factors examined. As a result, positive relationships with key stakeholders are essential for organizational survival. In such circumstances, the nature of a social service administrator's job is extremely political. Efforts to more effectively lobby for increased funding support from governmental and private institutions may be improved if nonprofit social service agencies can demonstrate program successes. While the United Way of America (1996) has encouraged nonprofit organizations to develop methods of showing more tangible program results, this research and planning entity also cautions nonprofit administrators as to the limitations and potential problems of outcome measurement.

Even the most sophisticated attempts to assess program outcomes often fail to reveal the impact of service interventions on participants' wellbeing, nonprofit administrators may be inclined to view such efforts with skepticism. Indeed, agency directors may consider organizational survival to be the only truly "measurable outcome." Nonetheless, in the contemporary environment, social work administrators must engage in some form of program evaluation. Brief evaluation forms completed by program participants meet the basic requirements of some

funding institutions and are, therefore, readily utilized by administrators. While well-structured and clearly written participant evaluation forms may elicit useful feedback for improving programs, they fail to glean information from a key group of stakeholders within the nonprofit marketplace. *Findings from this study point toward the need to incorporate key stakeholders within program evaluation processes.* Stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in assessment activities because of their substantial influence upon and access to quality of services. Although key stakeholders are typically not direct recipients of human services, they make decisions that affect consumers. Consider, for example, the influence of local judges that determine placements for at-risk children. A judge who fails to see the justification for expanding a residential treatment center for youth may discourage county commissioners' approval of an agency's request to increase county allocations. Evaluation forms administered to stakeholders on a regular basis may be used to detect and follow-up on any concerns these influential individuals may have with regard to new program directions or expansions. These evaluations may also serve as a subtle means for involving stakeholders to a greater extent in an agency's future growth. Conducting follow-up interviews that address suggestions articulated in the written evaluations with stakeholders unobtrusively facilitates this involvement.

In order to enhance survival, social workers need to involve local stakeholders in specific ways, such as through program evaluation strategies. However, a broader implication of this study includes the largely political nature of running a nonprofit agency. The importance that networking with local political figures plays in bureau survival seems to stem from dependence on local governmental funding. Both the quantitative reports and interviews demonstrated that IYSB's have become increasingly reliant on revenue from county and city governments. In his examination of the political nature of organizations that depend on governmental revenues, Wilson (1989) characterized governmentally funded agencies that lack clear service delivery outcomes as "procedural organizations." Executives in procedural organizations depend less on technical knowledge than on skills to find political support, cope with critics, and negotiate a resolution to controversies. In order to compete with other human service providers for service contracts and informal endorsements of programs by stakeholders, nonprofit agencies need directors who can attain success in "currying favor and placating critics" (Wilson, 1989, p. 204).

There is a paradox here. Although a marketplace for human services does exist, it is often restricted by governmental regulations. While even the proprietary marketplace is subject to certain state and federal requirements, the governmental grants and allocations received by nonprofits often dictate the types of clients (i.e., showing proof that a certain percentage of low-income persons are served) and the kinds of fiscal control policies implemented. Non-profit agencies are typically affected more than for-profit agencies. In light of these unique marketplace dynamics and the dependence of nonprofit organizations upon key stakeholders within this market, nonprofit directors need to spend considerable time attending to the needs and demands of select community leaders. Some directors may conclude that the time spent currying favor and placating critics is time taken away from the real work of the agency (Wilson, 1989).

A feature that may distinguish nonprofit procedural organizations from their public counterparts is the time nonprofit directors spend in promoting their services. While nonprofits are primarily dependent on governmental revenues for survival, they also receive funding from other institutions. These non-governmental resources include community foundations and United Ways. Both of these institutions are primarily supported by local individuals and businesses that want to see their donations spent on worthwhile projects. To promote programs funded by these private institutions, nonprofit directors and volunteers may decide to participate in community service groups or local festivals.

The stakeholders described thus far act as a primary constituency group for nonprofit organizations. Wilson (1989) postulates that a common denominator in successful agency executives is their ability to find a constituency. Based on this study's findings, local judges and other county officials are logical constituency groups for human service providers. Furthermore, public officials often speak on behalf of social work consumers, such as children who are wards of the state.

The findings of this study suggest that university courses in social work administration need to prepare students for the political nature of nonprofit agencies. Professors might invite "typical" stakeholders in human services, such as local judges, county commissioners, and other public officials to speak to their students on issues pertaining to human service delivery strategies. These lectures and/or discussions may be followed by exercises in the construction of program tools to elicit feedback from key agency stakeholders. Through the presentation of various scenarios, students might learn skills and strategies for networking with local community leaders. They could explore common ethical dilemmas that stem from attempts to balance needs of clients and those of key stakeholders. Within the contemporary environment, administrators require such knowledge and skill to maintain the survivability of nonprofit agencies. Ethical dilemmas stemming from balancing the needs of public officials with those of clients also need to be explored within social work classes. Case studies that examine funding dilemmas and successes experienced by nonprofits also need to become an integral part of administrative classes. Business and public administration classes already make frequent use of "real life" examples with regard to organizational survival. In this effort to advance student understanding of nonprofit survival techniques, social work researchers should subsequently pursue studies that further investigate the pivotal role local stakeholders play in sustaining these agencies.

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Issues in the Seclusion and Restraint of Juveniles: Policy, Practice and Possibilities

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Abstract: *The appropriate use of seclusion and restraint (S/R) is an important issue among juvenile justice professionals. Recent newspaper articles have brought the issue to the attention of the United States Senate, law enforcement agencies, and the general public. The result has been a series of investigations and publications by the Senate, law enforcement, and professional associations. Despite the attention this issue has received, professionals have yet to reach a definitive agreement as to what constitutes appropriate procedure. The authors of this article review several pieces of recent legislation and the professional and popular literature regarding the use of S/R. They identify major issues currently under discussion, highlight areas of consensus, and enumerate several dimensions that require further exploration. Finally, the authors discuss the implications of S/R for social work practitioners, including the importance of education and training, monitoring, hiring, policy advocacy, and ongoing research.*

Keywords: Seclusion, restraint, juveniles, residential treatment, delinquency

The use of seclusion and restraint (S/R) to manage juveniles in custody is an important issue among practitioners. The United States Congress, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), state legislatures, and professional associations have recently conducted investigations, issued statements, or initiated discussions in this area. Additionally, the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel (Kestin, 1999) and the Baltimore Sun (Probes, 1999, December 8) have published exposés of excessive and inappropriate use of S/R. The Hartford Courant (Hartford, Connecticut) published a series of articles reporting injuries and deaths in juvenile and adult facilities resulting from S/R (Eleven, 1998, October 11).

Decisions regarding the use of S/R are complex. Conditions in which juveniles are secluded exist along a continuum from voluntary, insecure "time-out" to locked, padded rooms with restraint devices. Restraint can be conceptualized along at least three continua: 1) the degree to which movement is restricted, 2) the degree of discomfort experienced, and 3) the degree to which mechanical or chemical devices are used (Cohen, 1997; United States General Accounting Office [GAO], 1999).

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Choices are further complicated by the conditions adolescents' experience. Juveniles may experience physical or psychological problems. A juvenile with diabetes or a seizure disorder may require close monitoring while in seclusion. Staff who elect to restrain a juvenile may exacerbate the violent behavior of survivors of abuse if they use a highly restrictive or aggressive technique (GAO, 1999).

Staff must also consider safety. The Hartford Courant uncovered 142 S/R-related deaths among all age groups nationwide between 1988 and 1998. Twenty-six of the victims were children. This is more than likely an underestimate, since many jurisdictions do not report these statistics (Eleven, 1998, October 11). The risk of harm extends to staff as well. According to a Congressional report, more mental health staff are injured while restraining patients of all ages than during any other activity (GAO, 1999).

Decisions regarding S/R also must be made in response to unexpected escalation of behavior. Often, there are few guidelines. Training may be deficient or absent. Frequently, there is little opportunity to consider special client needs.

Discussions among legislators, professionals, and the press might lead to the development of a policy that would assure only safe and appropriate use of S/R. These discussions have produced inadequate results, however, for several reasons. Prominent among them is the fact that the problem has been inadequately defined. That is, decision-makers have failed to consider all the dimensions of the problem and have ignored some of the issues within the dimensions they have considered. This paper contributes to the discussion of S/R by: 1) introducing the discussion from legislative, professional and popular literatures, 2) identifying the dimensions of the problem, 3) describing the issues in each dimension, and 4) discussing the implications for practitioners.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND PROFESSIONAL POLICIES AND POSITIONS

In 1999, in response to press exposés, several attempts were made to regulate the use of S/R in various settings. The 106TH Congress saw the introduction of at least five bills. Several states began the process of amending their statutes. At least one lawsuit was filed to keep federal provisions from being enforced.

Federal Legislation

The Hartford Courant series (Eleven, 1998, October 11) alerted Congress to the need for legislative attention. Members authorized an investigation across jurisdictions. The results are summarized in a report by the GAO. The GAO reviewed S/R with adults and juveniles with mental illnesses or mental retardation who are in residential treatment. It also examined federal and state policies with regard to this population (GAO, 1999).

GAO investigators identified multiple problems. For example, only 15 states had mechanisms for reporting deaths. Inconsistencies in regulations between types of facilities (such as psychiatric facilities and detention centers) were identified. Some had training and well-defined procedures. Others offered no training or guidelines.

Investigators also discovered several program characteristics that appear to reduce the inappropriate instances of S/R. These characteristics included: 1) clearly defined policies and procedures, 2) reporting requirements, 3) staff training, and

4) requirements for monitoring. The study suggested that HCFA improve reporting mechanisms and standards, establishing guidelines for federally-funded facilities (GAO, 1999).

In response to the report, Congress introduced five bills. One of those bills became law during the 106TH Congress. The others are currently at various stages in the legislative process.

The bill that became law was S. 976, the Youth Drug and Mental Health Services Act (YDMHSA). It became P.L. 106-310, the Children's Health Act (CHA).

CHA affects facilities receiving federal funds for juveniles by forbidding the use of S/R for discipline or convenience. CHA specifies that S/R may only be used to assure the safety of residents and staff, and then only with a written order by a physician or authorized practitioner. The order must specify the length of time and the circumstances under which the restraints may be imposed. It also attempts to assure that all persons who may need to administer restraints be adequately trained and skilled in their use (CHA, P.L. 106-310).

CHA also addresses the reporting of S/R-related deaths. It requires that death occurring within 24 hours of an incident of S/R be reported within seven days. The law also defines both restraint and seclusion. These definitions are consistent with the language used in the other three bills.

(1) RESTRAINTS—The term 'restraints' means,

> (A) any physical restraint that is a mechanical or personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move his/her arms, legs, or head freely, not including devices, such as orthopedically-prescribed devices, surgical dressings or bandages, protective helmets, or any other methods that involve the physical holding of a resident for the purpose of conducting routine physical examinations or tests or to protect the resident from falling out of bed or permit the resident to participate in activities without the risk of physical harm to the resident (such term does not include a physical escort); and
>
> (B) a drug or medication used as a restraint to control behavior or restrict the resident's freedom of movement and is not a standard for treatment for the resident's medical or psychiatric condition.

(2) SECLUSION—The term 'seclusion' means a behavior control technique involving locked isolation. Such a term does not include a time out.

(3) PHYSICAL ESCORT—The term 'physical escort' means the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a resident who is acting-out to walk to a safe location.

(4) TIME OUT—The term 'time out' means a behavior management technique that is a part of an approved treatment program and may involve the separation of the resident from the group, in a non-locked setting, for the purpose of calming. Time out is not seclusion.

As with many pieces of legislation, much of the meaning of CHA is left to the interpretation of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The law directs HHS to 1) identify what "emergency circumstances" must exist in order to preclude the approval of an authorized physician or practitioner, 2) identify which facilities will be excluded from the Act by operationally defining "non-medical, community-based facility for children and youth," 3) define state agencies to train and certify staff, provide licensure, and conduct monitoring activities, and 4) provide an interim identification of those who are competent to monitor the well-being of a child experiencing S/R.

In response to CHA, HHS issued Interim Final Rule 42 CFR, Parts 441 and 483. Among other operational guidelines, the Rule specifies which treatment facilities are excluded, who may issue orders to employ S/R, and the conditions under which those orders may be waived. Although the Rule answers some important questions, it raises some other critical issues. For example, if some treatment facilities are excluded from the guidelines, what steps will be taken to protect juveniles in those settings. In addition, the Rule requires that a board-certified psychiatrist or a licensed physician trained in mental health issues dispatch a written order before a youth can experience S/R. Alternatively, if no physician is available, a registered nurse can make the decision, then obtain the physician's signature. Although this may seem reasonable, it is impractical for many situations. S/R decisions must often be made quickly, with little opportunity to consult either a physician or nurse. Failure to do so is likely to result in injury to the juvenile or staff. Further, the order assumes competence in S/R by psychiatrists and physicians (a dubious assumption given the frequency with which these practitioners have erred on these decisions in the past), and assumes the incompetence of those who might be much more qualified, such as licensed psychologists and social workers who interact in a much more personal, much more frequent manner with juveniles who may require S/R. Clearly, although Congressional intent is excellent, both the law and the rule supporting it may require additional review and revision.

The other four S/R-related bills address different populations and contain different specifications. House Bill 837, the Mental Health Juvenile Justice Act (MHJJA), provides for cross-training among the juvenile justice, substance abuse, and mental health systems. It requires that a staff member monitor isolated juveniles once every 15 minutes and review the necessity for seclusion at least every four hours. The bill also requires that juveniles secluded for 24-hours be examined by a physician or licensed psychologist (MHJJA, H.R. 837, 106TH Congress, 1999). MHJJA was under consideration in the House of Representatives at the end of the 106TH Congressional session.

H.R. 1313, the Patient Freedom from Restraint Act (PFRA), applies to facilities serving juveniles or adults that receive Medicare or Medicaid funds. It limits the use of S/R to two consecutive hours. It requires physician approval, prohibits the use of standing orders, and allows for emergency exceptions. It specifies S/R as a last resort, and then only in a "least restrictive" manner (PFRA, H.R. 1313, 106TH Congress, 1999). H.R. 1313 remained in the House at the close of the 1999-2000 session.

The Restraint Safety Act (RSA), H.R. 3010, governs facilities receiving Medicare and Medicaid. It requires that providers use restraints only to ensure physical safety,

and then only with the written order of a physician or licensed practitioner. Facilities must develop policies that determine the duration of S/R as well as the circumstances under which it can be used (RSA, H.R. 3010, 106TH Congress, 1999). RSA was slated for further consideration by the House of Representatives during the 107TH Congress.

The Compassionate Care Act (CCA) requires hospitals and other health care facilities that receive Federal assistance to take specific steps to ensure the rights of patients. It specifies that S/R may be used only to assure the physical safety of the patient or others and then only under the written order of a physician. It also requires that states establish monitoring systems for the facilities, and stipulates the loss of federal funding for failure to comply (CCA, S. 750, 106TH Congress, 1999). CCA was being considered in the Senate at the end of the 106TH Congress.

If passed, these bills will contribute to a policy framework that assures safe, humane S/R. They are, however, only a step, because they leave gaps in the safety net. For example, three bills affect only federally-funded facilities, leaving questions about private facilities. Other gaps include a lack of definition of terms, such as "authorized practitioner" (S. 750) and "last resort" (H.R. 1313). Certainly, it is to be expected that states would fill some of these gaps, yet a lack of awareness of the severity and dimensions of the problem may inhibit states from acting as they need to act.

State Legislation

Many states have yet to create legislation governing S/R. Although the GAO (1999) report identified 15 states that had made at least some response, space precludes discussion of all state-level legislation. Two pieces of legislation, however, (Utah and Connecticut) are illustrative, and will be used as examples.

Utah State Code R547-4-17 addresses S/R with incarcerated youth. It limits the time a juvenile may be kept in "secure observation" to no more than three hours for rule violation and no more than 24-hours when they become a threat to self or others. Juveniles may also be secluded for up to 24-hours when they appear to be an escape threat. If a youth is secluded, a schedule must be established for status reviews. The reviews must include both observation and interviews, with particular attention paid to visual and auditory monitoring (Utah Administrative Code R547-4-17[10], 1999).

In Connecticut, legislation was proposed to regulate S/R with children with mental illness, emotional disturbances, or who are in need of special education. The bill specifies that a "life-threatening physical restraint" may not be used on a person who is physically or mentally disabled. Furthermore, juveniles in S/R must be continuously monitored. The bill provides that the restrained person must be "regularly evaluated," but does not define the terms "evaluated" or "regularly." It also requires that all instances of S/R be documented in the child's record (Connecticut Public Act No. 99-210, 1999).

Although the states that have begun to consider legislation are to be commended for their work, it is clear that all states have a great deal of work to do. The examples given here repeat many of the provisions of the federal bills, while ignoring other important dimensions and issues. In most cases, little has been done to describe abstract federal standards in more operational terms.

Professional Organizations and Accrediting Bodies

Many professional organizations and accrediting bodies have responded to the new legislation. Some have opposed specific provisions. For instance, the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) filed a lawsuit to block an interim HCFA provision. The provision requires that a physician or licensed practitioner conduct a face-to-face evaluation within one hour of the seclusion or restraint of a patient in a federally-funded facility. They argued that the requirement is clinically unnecessary because dialogue about patient care should be ongoing. Furthermore, they argued that complying with this provision would require additional staff, constituting a costly and inappropriate use of funds (NAPHS, 1999).

In general, professional organizations (including the AHA and NAPHS) have welcomed new legislation and have begun to develop professional statements and policy guidelines to support and define them. For example, in its August, 1999 Federal update, the American Psychiatric Association(APA) supported many of the provisions of the federal legislation (APA, August, 1999).

Responses to S/R have identified, defined, and addressed many dimensions of the problem of inappropriate S/R. These constitute a beginning, but only a beginning, since they neither encompass all the dimensions that need to be considered comprehensively or adequately address issues within each dimension. The responses are fragmented, so that critical issues neglected by federal legislation may also be ignored by state or professional bodies. In order to assure optimal effectiveness in regulating the use of S/R with juveniles, a comprehensive, coordinated response must be developed. To develop this response, all dimensions of the problem need to be identified, and all issues within the dimensions considered. The next section of this paper identifies those dimensions critical to an effective response and describes the issues within the dimensions.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT PROBLEM

The literature review revealed dimensions crucial to the discussion of S/R including: 1) types of juveniles, 2) purposes for use, 3) types of S/R, and 4) measures to assure proper S/R. There are several critical issues within each dimension.

Types of Clients for Whom Seclusion and Restraint is Used

The literature identifies five categories of juveniles with whom S/R has been used. These include juveniles who: 1) act out, 2) require behavioral intervention, 3) are mentally retarded and are acting out, 4) are mentally ill and are acting out, and 5) are in custody but are not acting out. Decision-makers have been unclear as to how S/R should be used with some of these groups.

S/R techniques are used with juveniles who are acting out, sometimes to prevent them from harming self or others, and sometimes as behavior modification (GAO, 1999). The appropriateness of S/R for these purposes will be discussed in the section below, but it is important to note that there is often disagreement as to when safety becomes an issue. Moderate forms of seclusion, such as sending a youth to an unsecured "time-out" room, may be appropriate for those whose behavior had begun to escalate but has not yet reached a dangerous level. Other behavior mod-

ification techniques may also be used with juveniles who are not behaving dangerously. On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to predict, particularly with unfamiliar juveniles, who will become dangerous. Furthermore, escalating behavioral problems by violence-prone youth do not always indicate that dangerousness is imminent. Policies and supportive materials must be developed that help practitioners distinguish between dangerous and non-dangerous situations.

Some juveniles suffer from mental disorders that are conducive to acting-out behaviors. The presence of youth with bipolar disorder, hallucinations, explosive disorder, and other conditions has implications for practitioners. Other juveniles experience mental retardation and may be prone to harmful behavior when frustrated or angry (GAO, 1999). Abuse survivors comprise another group of juveniles who may exhibit behavior problems in state custody (Ellis, O'Hara & Sowers, 2000). These youth may have particularly strong reactions to restraint and seclusion (GAO, 1999). Research has shown that punitive, confrontational environments may recreate aspects of the abusive situation for survivors, exacerbating emotional problems and behavior (Ellis, O'Hara & Sowers, 2000). Because large numbers of the juveniles in custody may have been abused, the use of physical force should be minimized.

The final group with whom S/R is sometimes used is juveniles who are in custody but are not acting out. An example of this situation is when youth are "locked-down" for facility management purposes or for staff convenience. Some of the federal bills and state responses forbid S/R for specific categories of youth. Others do not distinguish between those who do not experience mental disorders and those who do. The literature is consistent in condemning S/R for juveniles who are not acting out.

Purposes of Seclusion and Restraint

The literature identifies several purposes for which S/R is used. While some purposes are appropriate, others are not. The uses of S/R include: 1) safety of the juvenile, staff, and others, 2) behavior modification, and 3) staff convenience.

Many juveniles in custody either have a history of, or a propensity for, violent behavior. This behavior may constitute a threat to self or others. Consensus exists that in limited instances when a juvenile's behavior is sufficiently dangerous, it is appropriate to use S/R to assure the safety of everyone involved. However, several issues remain.

One important issue involves determining when a threat actually exists. Untrained or inexperienced staff may perceive some non-threatening actions as threatening and may overreact. Staff may be tempted to use S/R techniques to de-escalate behavior rather than use preventative measures, or they may use it to "teach the kid a lesson." Another issue involves selecting techniques that are appropriate for a particular juvenile or situation. Some situations may call for restraint, while others call for seclusion. Practitioners have also used both (for example, placing a youth in a safety jacket within a secluded room or using physical restraint until chemical measures can be introduced) (GAO, 1999; Kestin, 1999).

Physical pain associated with S/R is another issue. Certain holds and "take-downs" can be painful and dangerous. Chemicals, such as pepper spray, may also

induce pain (Cohen, 1997). Pain should be minimized in S/R intervention (GAO, 1999). Certainly, if restraint becomes a necessity, interventions designed to avoid injury to both juveniles and staff should be used.

Juveniles may also experience psychological distress. As noted above, a high prevalence of past abuse suggests that S/R may have negative effects for some youth. In addition, juveniles who are depressed, experience attachment disorder, phobias, or other disorders may experience harmful distress (GAO, 1999).

Two other important issues involve the frequency and duration of the intervention. Some juveniles in custody may never require S/R. Others may be secluded or restrained frequently. Practitioners must examine their management techniques and environmental milieu to determine whether they are producing an environment that is conducive to acting-out behavior. Practitioners should consider identification of behavioral antecedents, appropriate de-escalation techniques, effective control of environmental stimuli, and use of appropriate medication. Frequent application of S/R may be an indication of staff failure (GAO, 1999). When program conditions exacerbate the volatility of juveniles, administrators must provide staff with training, monitoring, incident reporting systems, and regular review of procedures.

The use of S/R for behavioral conditioning or staff convenience also presents several issues. The literature cites instances in which S/R techniques have been used for behavior conditioning (GAO, 1999). In these instances, staff may attempt to elicit desired behaviors from juveniles or deter them from undesired behaviors by secluding or restraining them. The literature is consistent in its condemnation of this practice. It is important to note that the voluntary use of insecure "time-out" to prevent the escalation of problem behavior is an anger management strategy rather than behavior conditioning.

Although experts agree that S/R should not be used for behavior modification, this agreement is at an abstract level. From the perspective of a supervisor reviewing an incident of S/R, the distinction between controlling dangerous behavior and punishing undesirable behavior can sometimes be unclear. Often the distinction lies in the motivation of staff, which can be difficult to assess. Operational guidelines must provide clear directions that minimize the potential for accidental or deliberate misuse of S/R.

Staff convenience is another unacceptable reason for using S/R (GAO, 1999). Staff may be tempted to deal with difficult juveniles by secluding or restraining them. In addition, staff may use S/R as a group management tool, locking down some juveniles while working with others in order to make it easier to control the entire group. The literature is relatively consistent in condemning using S/R for these purposes

Types of Seclusion and Restraint

The literature identifies several S/R techniques. Generally, they can be grouped into six categories: 1) assertive physical restraint, 2) aggressive physical restraint, 3) chemical restraint, 4) mechanical restraint, 5) voluntary seclusion, and 6) involuntary seclusion. The literature does not specifically address many of these categories.

The term "assertive physical restraint" (ASPR) was not found in the literature. It is used here to indicate physical control techniques that cause minimal discomfort. Several ASPR systems have been developed and marketed commercially. Generally, the literature supports assertive restraint, although some experts argue that no restraint should ever be necessary (GAO, 1999).

ASPR includes techniques that are less concerned with the comfort of the juvenile. Examples include take-downs, arm twisting, and striking the juvenile. Despite opposition from experts, these techniques are used in some jurisdictions (Eleven, 1998, October 11; Kestin, 1999; Probes, 1999 December 8).

Chemical restraint refers to the use of chemical products, including pepper spray, medication, and other substances. Pepper spray has received some attention in the literature. Studies have found it to be of limited effectiveness and potentially dangerous to juveniles and staff (Cohen, 1997). Medications are also used to control juveniles' behavior. It can be difficult to distinguish between appropriate use and the misuse of medications. Although it is clear that some psychological problems have a biological component and that the appropriate use of medication can help troubled juveniles normalize their lives, it is equally clear that medications are sometimes abused, even when administered under the care of a psychiatrist (Kestin, 1999).

Mechanical restraints include straitjackets, safety jackets, "four-point" chair or bed restraints, and similar devices (GAO, 1999; Kestin, 1999). There are several issues in mechanical restraint, including the degree of discomfort produced, the duration of restraint, and the circumstances in which use is appropriate. Confusing terminology complicates the issues. One author once inspected a facility in which "safety jackets" were used. On closer examination, the safety jackets were found to be little more than straitjackets designed to hold the juvenile's arms at his side rather than behind his back.

Voluntary seclusion refers to the separation of juveniles from other persons in a closed or secluded area either at the suggestion of staff or of the juvenile's own volition. Some practitioners refer to this practice as "time-out." Time-out, when genuinely voluntary, is not criticized in the literature. Since it is voluntary, time limitations are less important, although staff should closely observe and monitor juveniles.

Involuntary seclusion is the forced separation of individuals into an isolated area. The literature provides some standards for enforced seclusion. Examples include Utah provisions that limit the number of hours a juvenile may be secluded and Connecticut statutes that require regular evaluation.

Measures to Assure Appropriate Seclusion and Restraint

A variety of measures have been employed to assure appropriate S/R. Some have very effectively minimized incidents. The measures can be grouped into seven categories: 1) policy measures, 2) preparation and training, 3) preparation of juveniles, 4) monitoring and reporting, 5) supervision of staff, 6) staffing, and 7) adequate facilities.

S/R-related policy measures include guidelines for appropriate selection and use of S/R techniques, requirements for reporting and monitoring, requirements for

staff training, and specifications as to what categories may not be secluded or restrained (Connecticut Public Act No. 99-210 (1999), Utah Administrative Code R547-4-17[10], 1999, YDMHSA, Senate Bill 976, 106TH Congress, 1999). Unfortunately, the framework of these policies is not comprehensive. Both the variety and degree of protection varies among jurisdictions. There are gaps caused by failure to address some of the dimensions and issues of the problem, lack of coordination between federal and state lawmakers, and lack of consensus among professionals.

Clear, comprehensive policies and procedures related to S/R must be developed (GAO, 1999). Policies should address the dimensions discussed above and should authorize only techniques that meet legal and professional requirements. Procedures should be clearly written and clearly specify the consequences of failure to observe them. Staff must be trained in safe, effective techniques and help to develop the necessary decision-making skills (GAO, 1999). Training should include hands-on practice and role-play in effective de-escalation and anger management techniques.

The manner in which a juvenile is introduced into a detention or treatment environment is very important (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 1996). Rules and consequences for violating those rules must be clearly explained. Juveniles entering the facility might also be paired with youths who have a stable record of behavior so as to provide peer mentoring.

Several states have reported that incidents of S/R decreased when systems for reporting incidents were implemented (GAO, 1999). These systems must exist, both internally and externally, for programs and facilities. Internal systems of reporting must provide a mechanism for assuring that incidents are reviewed. These reviews should include both an evaluation of the propriety of the actions taken and an examination of the preventative measures that might have been taken to avert the incident. External systems should include a review of the incident reports and a random sampling of juvenile records. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, government and accrediting agencies might conduct simultaneous, coordinated monitoring visits.

Adequate supervision of staff is another key to minimizing problems (OJJDP, 1996). Harried staff who are not adequately supervised may cut corners and ignore safeguards. Adequate staff is also a key to reducing inappropriate incidents of S/R (OJJDP, 1996). When there are sufficient staff present, situations that can lead to behavioral escalation may be recognized and attended to promptly. Furthermore, if S/R becomes necessary, an adequate number of staff must be present to execute the technique.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS AND LAWMAKERS

The issues described above demonstrate the importance of practitioners' involvement in developing a policy framework for the appropriate use of S/R. It is clear that there is sufficient knowledge to develop this framework. This knowledge exists, however, at various levels of the system. To develop an effective response, practitioners at all levels need to play a role. These levels include direct practitioners, administrators, advocates, advisors, and researchers (Ellis & Sowers, 2000).

Parents, juveniles with experience in the system, and other citizens should become involved as advocates, using their influence to press for the necessary changes.

Implications for Direct Practitioners

Direct practitioners should educate themselves in appropriate techniques of prevention, de-escalation, seclusion, and restraint. Where training is available in their agencies, practitioners should take advantage of such opportunities. When opportunities are not available, they should use such resources as professional organizations and professional literature to gain an awareness of appropriate procedures.

Practitioners must also monitor the activities of their co-workers. They should share the information they gain and encourage others to use it. When necessary, they should report policy violations. Practitioners can also advocate for appropriate procedures and techniques in their agencies. They can share information with their supervisors and participate in groups to develop agency policies regarding S/R.

Implications for Agency Administrators

Administrators must assure that agencies use thorough hiring procedures, carefully formulate policies, use effective training programs, implement effective monitoring systems, and participate in ongoing education. They can help develop policy statements for professional organizations and draft legislation. Self-regulation is often preferable to government intervention. Responsible action on the part of agency administrators may help to minimize the need for government involvement.

Implications for Advocates and Advisors

Practitioners who advocate for change and who advise key persons within the system have a vital role to play. Advocates and advisors should educate themselves about each of the dimensions and issues relevant to S/R. They should work with decision-makers to assure that the framework is comprehensive and seamless (including all types of programs that serve juveniles, both publicly-funded and private).

Implications for Researchers

Researchers should investigate safe and effective practices with regard to facility management, prevention, de-escalation, seclusion, and restraint. Their studies should include all the dimensions and issues related to S/R. They should also consider both the physical and psychological well-being of juveniles and practitioners.

Implications for Professional and Accrediting Organizations

Professional and accrediting organizations must develop strong, comprehensive position statements. They must enforce corrective measures for failure to comply. Professional organizations can also be involved in training and research, either by conducting these activities or by collaborating with educational and research institutions.

Implications for Legislative Bodies

Several effective policy innovations have been identified above. Innovations that should be considered include: 1) clear standards for reporting incidents, 2) standards for reporting the degree of discomfort that may be caused by an intervention, 3) standards for the level of danger of an intervention, and 4) standards for testing products used in S/R. In addition, state and federal legislators should coordinate responses, so that issues not addressed at one level are addressed at another. Sanctions other than loss of funding must also be developed. The withdrawal of funding may further complicate staffing problems and result in agency closure. When agencies fail, many juveniles are thrust into an already overburdened system, thus worsening conditions lawmakers intended to improve.

SUMMARY

Issues that regard the use of S/R in managing juvenile offenders are serious and are of great concern to both professionals and the American public. Legislative, professional, and popular literature provides some guidelines for practitioners. Further discussion and research are needed to assure that S/R techniques are appropriately used and that the potential for harm to juveniles and staff is minimized.

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Healing Rituals for Survivors of Rape

Colleen Galambos

Abstract: *Therapeutic rituals focus on clinical healing within different contexts and client populations. This article explores the use of therapeutic ritual at individual and collective levels to help survivors of rape to heal. This technique is applied to both levels through a discussion of two rituals developed for rape survivors. Results of a study that examined participant comments about a collective ritual for healing are discussed. Findings indicate that participants attend the ritual to be supportive of others and to be supported themselves. Family members attend to obtain information about rape. This article explores practice implications from a service planning and implementation perspective.*

Keywords: Therapeutic ritual, rape survivors, individual ritual, collective ritual, community ritual, ritual elements

The use of rituals for healing purposes can be traced to ancient times. Rituals have been practiced within a variety of cultural and religious contexts (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1996; Guilmet & Whited, 1987; Idowu, 1992; Jung, 1964a; 1969). Jung (1964a, 1969) regarded rituals as a mechanism to promote transformation and rebirth. Ritual as a process is defined as a renewal of personality functions that are healed, strengthened, and improved through a ceremonial process (Jung, 1969).

Jung also recognized the therapeutic importance of ritual. Symbols and ritualistic behavior, when appropriately used, tap into unconscious meaning (Jung, 1964b). Therapeutic ritual has more recently been applied to grief work, (Bolton & Camp, 1989; Bradley, 1990; Reeves & Boersma, 1990), couple and family therapy, (Hughes-Schneewind, 1990; Laird, 1984; Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992; Mackey & Greif 1994; Olson, 1993; Parker & Horton, 1996; Sand-Pringle, West, & Bubenzer, 1991), group work (Banawi & Stockton, 1993), and treatment of anorexia and bulimia (Brown, 1991). The importance of therapeutic ritual for survivors of incest and ritual abuse has also been documented to be an important component in the self-healing process. Therapeutic ritual contributes to positive coping (Juhasz, 1995; Winslow, 1990).

This article examines the use of therapeutic ritual with rape survivors for community and self-healing. First, the use of ritual is explored as a technique to promote growth. It is applied at the collective and individual levels through a discussion of two rituals developed for rape survivors. Secondly, it reviews the findings of

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a study that examined participant comments about attending a collective ritual for healing as one method to measure the impact of this experience on attendees.

RITUALS—DEFINITION, STAGES, AND ELEMENTS

Rituals may be defined as symbolic acts or rites that help people do the work of relating, changing, healing, believing, and celebrating (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992).

Henry (1992) regards rituals as symbolic acts that confirm a meaning system or a culture and help to define a community. In this regard, cultural values can be examined collectively and validated through rituals and ceremonial practices (Henry, 1992). Rituals can be performed within an individual context (Winslow, 1990), family settings (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992; Laird, 1984), in groups (Banawi & Stockton, 1993), and on a collective level (Mullis & Fincher, 1996).

Rituals have a form and a determined course. Roberts (1988) identified three stages that are important to the ritual process. Stage one is a separation stage, at which time the individual prepares for the ritual and separates from everyday routine. The second stage is transitional, where the individual encounters the ritual and explores new roles and identities. The third stage, reintegration, moves the participant back into everyday experience.

Generally, rituals are composed of both open and closed elements. Open elements allow individuals some flexibility to attach their own meanings to the ritual. Participants are allowed to create or add to its content. Closed elements provide some structure and safety measures for the expression of strong emotion. These elements are established and provide form and direction for behavior.

Roberts (1988) discusses several other elements of importance in healing rituals: (a) affirmation of pain and loss, which conveys acceptance and understanding to the participant, (b) alternation of holding on and letting go, which provides the individual with a transition from the present to the future, and (c) action to celebrate finality, symbolizing the end of the ritual. These elements function to provide structure to the ritual process.

Symbolism is integrated throughout the ritual experience and comprises another essential element (Jung, 1964b; Laird, 1984; Moore & Myerhoff, 1977; Parker & Horton, 1996). Each symbol must have a direct and obvious connection to the event or ritual purpose, and it must add to the meaning of the ritual. For instance, lighting of candles in a candlelight vigil represents restoration through active movement from dark to light. It also symbolizes hope for better days.

RITUAL PURPOSE

Rituals are used for various purposes. Sometimes they signal or mark a rite of passage or a transformation, such as a marriage ceremony or a baptism. They are also used for celebration or commemoration, as in the case of religious worship, birthdays, holidays or anniversaries. Another purpose for rituals is to accomplish some type of restoration. It is this third type of ritual, also referred to as a liberation ritual, which is the most beneficial for survivors of rape.

Liberation rituals help individuals release themselves from an event or action, and, therefore, are particularly helpful for recovery from trauma, violent acts,

abuses, or betrayals (Parker & Horton, 1996). Restoration is accomplished through a symbolic removal or disengagement from the harmful event (Parker & Horton, 1996). Negative forces are symbolically ended, dispersed, or accursed. Closure is then attained, and participants are encouraged to remove the pain. This process is designed to empower the individual, and the final focus is on hope for the future. Juhasz's (1995) exploratory study of ritual abuse survivors discusses the therapeutic use of rituals as a technique to transition from destructive ritual behavior, such as self-mutilation, to more positive forms of ritual behavior, such as incense burning. This ritual transition assists in the development of positive coping. The use of liberation rituals in conjunction with counseling and other supportive services can assist in the healing process of survivors of rape.

INDIVIDUAL RITUALS

Individual rituals serve to provide meaning and growth experiences to one person. Jung (1969) suggests that an individual experience of transformation through rituals requires a higher level of consciousness and, therefore, effects long-lasting changes. Persons who engage in individual rituals can use the ritual process as a medium to alter undesirable aspects of the personality, to reframe experiences, and to change the meaning of a behavior or an event (Juhasz, 1995; Jung, 1969; Winslow, 1990).

One benefit of an individual ritual is that it can be designed to meet the specific needs of a client. Knowledge of a client's strengths, weaknesses, and desired areas for change help the client and social worker customize the ritual. Individual rituals also allow for a greater use of open elements. With professional guidance, a client can develop healing rituals with symbols that have personal meaning and may be more effective for personal growth. The private aspect of individual rituals is another benefit to consider. Individual rituals can be performed without anyone else present, enabling them to contain personal elements that remain confidential.

The Candle Ceremony

The Candle Ceremony is an individual ritual designed to assist survivors of rape to gradually move toward healing and growth (see Appendix A). The ceremony is structured so that the survivor is encouraged to remember the rape event. Remembrance is an important part of the ritual. So often, survivors are encouraged to forget the rape experience and move on rather than move forward (Brown, 1991). Encouraging remembrance provides an element of recognition within the ritual, acknowledging that the rape occurred and giving the survivor permission to think about it. The ritual is also structured so that survivors can focus on the good or positive elements of their lives. This aspect of the ritual encourages healing and emphasizes client strengths and a movement forward.

This healing ceremony is designed as a liberation ritual and contains both closed and open elements. The closed elements include the actual form of the ritual as a candlelighting and as a movement from dark to light in symbolism, action, and thought. Other closed elements include Imber-Black and Robert's (1992) three essential elements of affirmation, holding on/letting go, and actions of finality. These elements are contained in the ritual's structure. Affirmation is achieved

through the process of remembering the pain and lighting the dark candle, followed by the celebration of goodness symbolized by igniting the light candle and focusing on the positive aspects of the survivor. "Holding on" is the part of the ritual that directs survivors to think about the event, which allows them to hold on to the experience. "Letting go" occurs through the release of feelings and eventually focusing on the goodness or positive aspects of the survivor's life. Finality is contained in the actual extinguishing of the candles. The open elements involve a series of choices about the definition of regular performance of the ritual, how, and what dark and light aspects of a person's life will be acted out, and whether the ritual will be individual and private or a group effort.

COLLECTIVE RITUALS

Rituals applied to a collective or community level provide the opportunity for people to withdraw from their routine and experience themselves as part of the larger group (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977). Jung (1969) describes this group process as collective experiences of transformation. These group experiences provide an individual with strength and purpose that cannot be obtained in isolation (Jung, 1969).

Collective rituals provide a mechanism that makes public statements about social issues and conditions. Others can be available as witnesses or fellow participants who affirm the experience. This group experience can mitigate the isolation often felt by rape survivors.

Another function of collective rituals is that they communicate shared constructions of reality and legitimize social prescriptions and societal views through the use of symbolism (Laird, 1984). Collective rituals can be used to express group values and shared meanings, and also help to develop them within the group context.

The Candlelight Vigil

The Candlelight Vigil for Rape Awareness is an example of a collective ritual. It was initially developed to provide support for survivors and to increase awareness of rape in a small suburban/rural county. The format of the vigil was designed to: (a) draw on the expressive arts of music and theater, (b) provide auditory information through panel discussion, political discussions, speaker presentations, and survivor testimony, (c) provide written resource and service information, and (d) combine ritual and ceremony for community and survivor healing. It is an annual planned event. Survivors indicated that they have attended the vigil multiple times and anticipated attending the next one. The vigil was held in a large church at the center of town. Participation by survivors and members of the community was encouraged through advertising, networking, and word-of-mouth. In addition, invitations were sent out to key community leaders and service providers.

The symbol for the rape awareness campaign is the coupling of two ribbons–one black and one light blue. These ribbons symbolize the awareness aspects of the campaign; the colors represent bringing the issue from the dark into the light. The campaign slogan, "Rape Awareness: Bring It Out of the Dark," is symbolically represented in the vigil through a traditional candlelight ceremony.

Each vigil attendee received a small candle upon arrival at the church. The candlelight ceremony was preceded by a formal program that consisted of opening remarks by event organizers and several formal presentations. Included were speeches by political representatives, survivor testimonies, and panel presentations by service providers. Theater, poetry, and music were also incorporated into the program as artistic mediums tapped into the groups' emotional response and offered the opportunity for group sharing and participation. Every vigil ends with an introduction to the candlelighting ceremony, the lighting of the candles, and an uplifting group song. The selection of music was deliberate; the music was chosen for its symbolism in relation to the vigil theme. Upon completion of the song, the candles were extinguished. The vigil served as a symbolic representation of hope and release.

Comments by survivors indicated a need for a therapeutic healing process in-between the annual vigil. The Candle Ceremony served this function. A copy of this ceremony is passed out to each vigil attendee upon arrival at the event. This ritual continues the light-into-dark symbolism through its use of dark and light-colored ribbons and candles and through the act of lighting and extinguishing candles.

METHODOLOGY

In an effort to examine participant reactions to the candlelight vigil, a questionnaire was developed to obtain general information about participants and their experiences in attending the event. The questionnaire was exploratory in nature.

The main purpose of the candlelight vigil was to serve as a protected space for families, friends, and survivors of rape and to provide an opportunity for survivors to have a voice and to be heard. Two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire in an attempt to ascertain whether this was achieved. The questionnaire also had 12 forced-response questions comprised of demographic type questions, such as age and gender, rape survivor status, frequency and reasons for attending the candlelight vigil, and the impact of participation on the respondent.

Approximately 200 questionnaires were distributed to all attendees at the third annual candlelight vigil. Since the primary purpose for attending the event was to provide healing and support, attendees were not pressured to complete the questionnaires. To protect the ambiance of the event, only one verbal request was made to fill out the questionnaire. Participation was both voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were asked to hand in completed questionnaires at the end of the vigil or mail them to the college. Mailing information was printed on the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

Despite the low response rate of 16% (N=32), a few clues emerged from the data. About one-third (31%) of the 32 respondents identified themselves as rape survivors. The remaining respondents indicated they had not been raped. Thirteen percent reported that they were family members of someone who survived rape, and 66% indicated that they were friends of someone who survived rape. Twenty-two percent identified themselves as a community helper or advocate. Most

respondents had either experienced rape or knew someone who was raped. Additional demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Demographic Information on Candlelight Vigil Participants (N=32)*

	n	Percent
Type of Participant*		
Survivor of rape	10	31
Family member of a survivor	4	13
Friend of a survivor	21	66
Community helper	7	22
Student	26	81
Gender		
Male	2	6
Female	30	94
Age (in years)		
13—18	3	9
19—29	24	75
30—49	3	9
50—65	1	3
Over 65	1	3

**Note: Participants could designate more than one category.*

Fifty percent of the survivors reported that they had attended the candlelight vigil to support themselves and 40% indicated that attending the vigil made them feel good. The results showed that these survivors attend community rituals, such as the candlelight vigil, to receive support. This is one of the main purposes of a collective ritual. For these survivors, the candlelight vigil was regarded as an event where they would find comfort and understanding. Survivors reported positive feelings about attending the event. These findings support the preliminary discussion in this article that relates to the purpose of community rituals, in that they provide support and define a comfortable or good space.

All family members reported attending the vigil to obtain more information about rape. This finding suggests that family members regard the candlelight vigil as a place where resources and information will be available, which also ties into the purpose of a community ritual. Obtaining information about rape is one way in which families can be concretely supportive; the secondary gain is that they obtain support for themselves.

Seventy-one percent of friends of survivors of rape reported attending the candlelight vigil to support a rape survivor. Fifty-four percent of the respondents who had not experienced rape reported that they received information about rap e.This finding indicates that for these respondents, the candlelight vigil provided an opportunity to demonstrate collective caring and concern. Much needed information that is readily and visibly available about rape was received, which again tied into the purpose of a community ritual.

Two open-ended questions were used to provide a more qualitative perspective. One question asked respondents to describe the most important part of the candlelight vigil. The second question was added mainly for program evaluation purposes. It asked respondents for suggestions to improve the ritual. Responses were analyzed for themes and patterns that emerged from the respondent's handwritten comments.

Survivor Comments

Several respondents commented that they found the structured healing rituals within the candlelight vigil to be the most helpful part of the evening. As indicated earlier, these rituals were designed to include both open and closed elements and Robert's (1988) three elements of healing. For these respondents, participation in structured rituals became a significant part of the evening and helped with their own transformation process.

Another respondent suggested that the testimony of the survivors was the most important part of the vigil. Still, another observer pinpointed "giving support to the survivor" as most important. Allowing survivors an opportunity to speak and providing community support to survivors are two significant purposes of collective rituals, and these comments lend credence to their importance.

Other comments centered on the themes of support, strength, having a voice, and not feeling alone. One survivor remarked, "The most important part of the vigil is knowing I'm not alone." Collective rituals allow for just this type of opportunity. Participants can experience themselves within a larger, supportive group context.

Another participant reflected, "To me, the most important part of the vigil is the bringing it out of the dark theme. It is a dark, ugly thing that cannot be stopped without first acknowledging its existence." These comments point to the impact that the community ritual experience has on the creation of a collective voice to raise concerns about rape and violence. Another respondent commented, "It's the only thing in life which makes me feel." This comment can be linked to Imber-Black and Robert's (1992) affirmation of pain and loss. Within the protected space that was created, this community ritual provided this respondent with the opportunity to express painful feelings, something this survivor apparently has not been able to achieve outside of the context of the candlelight vigil.

One respondent attached a letter to her questionnaire in which she described her rape experience and provided a detailed discussion of her reactions to the candlelight vigil. She wrote, "Please convey my thanks to all who gave of their time and energy to put on the vigil. Even though I perk up when there is information available about this issue, there is much I learned last night. It also reminded me that all the years of denial, shame, and self-blame were not my fault and that there is hope for young women now to deal expediently with the onslaught of emotions after rape occurs." These comments articulate the positive impact the event has on survivors. For some survivors, participation in a collective ritual can be an empowering process; it provides an opportunity for them to have a voice in society.

The majority of responses to the second question, which regarded suggestions for improvement, emphasized personal experiences. Major themes included

reducing speeches made by political representatives, lessening the number of speeches in general, and increasing the opportunity to hear from survivors. Evidently, what make events like these so important are the opportunities for personal reflection, survivor stories, and personal transformations. There are too few events that allow for this type of honest discourse.

Limitations

This study attempted to obtain information regarding the impact of attending a candlelight vigil for rape awareness on individual participants. The sample size was small, and there was a low response rate, probably due to the sensitive nature of the information being collected. Respondents were obtained using a convenience sampling technique, although analysis was descriptive and qualitative in nature. Given these methodological limitations, the results cannot be generalized to the broader population.

Although the numbers are small, this study can serve as a pilot to guide future research in this area. The profession could benefit from more information about the use of community and individual rituals as a practice technique. Those who did respond articulated that participation in this event provided meaning for them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Ritual is an important practice technique that can be used on an individual, group, or community level. Practitioners are in an excellent position to develop and apply therapeutic rituals to promote client healing. Rituals can be beneficial in the healing process for a variety of problems and can be adapted to any setting. The planned use of ritual can also heighten awareness about an issue and serve as an important medium for change.

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Appendix

The Candle Ceremony

Perform this ceremony in-between annual candlelight vigils.

After this candlelight vigil, purchase one light-colored candle (light blue, white, or cream) and one dark-colored candle (black, brown, dark blue, or dark green).

Light these candles regularly in a private, comfortable space. The definition of "regular" depends on you and your own healing process. The candles can be lit daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. It is important that you establish your own pattern. Choose a private area that feels comfortable, an area where it is least likely that you will be interrupted. It could be a family room, a kitchen, or another area. Choose a time that feels comfortable to you, a time when you are least likely to be interrupted.

Light the black or dark candle first. This candle symbolizes the dark, the pain, the bad. As you light the candle, think about the bad, and those who raped you and made you suffer and hurt. What you do next is up to you and your individual healing. You can think about, speak out, or shout names, events, or actions that hurt you and places where you were hurt. Whatever you remember should be about your dark images and your pain. Spend as much or as little time as you feel you need with the first part of this ceremony.

After you are through with this first part, focus on the light blue or the light candle. This candle symbolizes the healing, the light, the goodness. Light the candle. As you light this candle, think about what is good in you and your life. Think about your strengths, your greatness, and your blessings. What you do next is up to you and your individual healing. You can think about, speak out, or sing out the good parts of your life, give examples of your healing, parts of yourself and your personality that please you, people who have been supportive of you, etc. Spend as much time as you feel you need with the second part of this ceremony. Now, extinguish both candles.

Remember: You are strong. You are goodness. Healing is powerful. Your strength and your healing will overcome your pain. You will be healed. Repeat this thought in your mind.

Your candlelighting ceremony can be a private ceremony, or you can invite close family members, friends, or other survivors. This is a personal choice. Do what you believe will benefit you most. Do what you feel will provide you with the best healing experience.

Note: For friends of survivors who are asked to participate in the candlelighting ceremony, please recognize that this ceremony is very important to the healing process. If you are asked to participate, attend regularly. Your support is critical to the healing. Take seriously the personal struggles. Your understanding will contribute to the healing process.

Survivors, if you ask a family member or friend to participate and you feel that they are not supportive of the ceremony or your healing, do not ask them back again. You need positive influences and support to heal. Seek out people who can be encouraging.

Perceptions of Welfare Recipient Fraud and Provider Fraud: A 20-Year Follow-Up

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Abstract: *This study replicated Roff & Klemmack's (1983) investigation of adult Alabamians' opinions regarding the degree to which welfare recipients and welfare employees defraud the government. The majority of the current respondents continue to see recipients as dishonest, but the mean recipient fraud index score dropped from 13.34 to 11.34. As was the case in the earlier study, beliefs that recipients defraud the government predicted lower support for government programs. The percentage of respondents who believed welfare employees to be dishonest doubled from 15.4% to 30.0% from 1981 to 2000, and the mean worker fraud index score increased from 4.14 to 7.02. Consistent with the previous study, beliefs that welfare employees are dishonest predicted higher, not lower, support for government programs and services. Social workers should be aware that a growing proportion of the population questions the integrity of those running welfare programs.*

Keywords: Welfare, fraud, support, public opinion

The American public welfare system has changed dramatically in recent years. The passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L.104-193) represented a major change in governmental policy that resulted in tightened eligibility requirements, strict time limits for receipt of benefits, and strenuous efforts to assure that potential recipients who can work do so instead of receiving government aid. One impetus for these changes was a strong belief on the part of the public and legislators that there was substantial misuse of the public welfare system by recipients capable of self-support. Numerous studies pointed to public perceptions of welfare recipients as lazy, immoral, dishonest in applying for benefits, and uninterested in working to support their families (Cook & Barrett, 1992; Feagin, 1972; Gilens, 1999; Kallen & Miller, 1971; Kaufman, Stuart, & MacNeil, 1999; Kluegel, 1987; MacLeod, Montero, & Speer, 1999; Ogren, 1973; Williamson, 1974).

The citizenry held negative opinions not only about welfare recipients but also about the administration of public welfare programs. Studies have found the pub-

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lic to believe welfare programs to be inefficient, ineffective in reaching their goals, and subject to fraud (Cook & Barrett, 1992; Emerson & van Buren, 1992; Weaver, Shapiro, & Jacobs, 1995).

In 1981, two of the authors of this study conducted a study of attitudes toward welfare in Alabama, a conservative, Deep South state. They found that citizens had very strong beliefs that welfare recipients defraud the government, and these beliefs relate to a lower level of support for the government's helping poor people. A significant proportion of respondents also believed that welfare workers and officials were dishonest in performing their duties, both in helping recipients defraud the government and diverting welfare funds meant for poor people into their own pockets (Roff & Klemmack, 1983).

In the intervening years, Alabama has implemented changes mandated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act. In October 1996, the AFDC caseload in Alabama was 40,328 families (calculated from information in the American Institute for Full Employment, 2000). In October 2000, the caseload had dropped 53.3% to 18,818 families, with an average household benefit of $142 (Alabama Department of Human Resources, 2000).

Following these changes, the authors were interested in learning whether the perceptions of dishonesty among welfare recipients and welfare employees had changed. This article reports on a replication of the 1981 study. The specific purpose of the replication study was to determine if perceptions of provider fraud, recipient fraud, and welfare orientation had changed in the nearly 20-year period and whether the relationships among these opinions had changed, as well.

METHODS OF STUDY

The original study was based on analysis of data collected in the fall of 1981, from a probability sample of 1,030 Alabama adults. The authors used probability sampling to identify names from telephone directories and collected data using a mailed survey. The response rate was 57.7%. Respondents were predominantly White (81.3%), male (66.2%), married (71.9%), and at least high school graduates (75.2%).

The replication study is based on data collected in the summer of 2000 from a sample of 467 Alabama adults obtained using telephone interviews and a random digit dialing method. Using the most stringent of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2000) standard response rate calculations (RR1), the response rate was 20.5%.

Similar to the previous sample, respondents tended to be White (80.7%), married (67.2%), and at least high school graduates (87.3%). However, unlike the previous sample, respondents were predominantly female (63.8%). The predominance of females is typical for telephone surveys.

Measures used in both studies were composed of items using a four-point response scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The specific measures were (a) a three-item Likert-type index measuring beliefs about whether welfare employees attempt to defraud the government, (b) a four-item Likert-type index measuring beliefs about whether recipients of services attempt to defraud the government, and (c) a four-item Likert-type index measuring sup-

port for governmental assistance to needy persons (see Tables 1 and 2). The authors constructed the first two indices; the welfare orientation measure was based on a measure developed by Comrey & Newmeyer (1965).

FINDINGS

As was the case in the earlier study, a majority of respondents to the 2000 study saw welfare recipients as dishonest, undeserving of help, and unwilling to leave the welfare rolls (see Table 1). However, the percentage of respondents holding unfavorable opinions of welfare recipients was substantially lower in the 2000 study than in the 1981 study. There was a 23% decline in the percentage of people agreeing that recipients who get welfare do not deserve it. There was a 14.8% increase in the percentage of those agreeing that people who get welfare try to get off of it as soon as possible and an 18% decrease in the percentage agreeing that people applying for welfare are not honest about their needs. Not surprisingly, given the significant changes in these items, the mean score on the recipient fraud index dropped from 13.34 (SD=2.74) to 11.34 (SD=2.72) on a scale ranging from 4 (no perception of fraud) to 20, a statistically significant change $t(1427)=-12.82$, $p<.0001$).

In contrast with their more positive perceptions of welfare recipients, respondents to the 2000 survey were more negative about the honesty of providers than were their counterparts in 1981 (see Table 2). Still, a minority hold negative views of welfare workers, but that minority is noticeably larger than in 1981. While there was virtually no change in beliefs about whether welfare workers help recipients cheat (slightly more than a quarter think they do), there was a 12.3% decline (from 52.1% to 39.8%) in the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement that welfare officials are honest and a 50% increase in the percentage believing that welfare funds intended for poor people go into the pockets of welfare officials (30.9% to 45.2%). The mean score on the provider fraud index increased from 4.14 (SD=2.81) to 7.02 (SD=2.08) on a scale ranging from 3 (no perception of fraud) to 15, a statistically significant change $t(1420)=19.26$, $p<.0001$.

Table 1: *Percentage of Respondents Perceiving Different Types of Fraud by Welfare Recipients*

Item	Percent Perceiving Fraud	
	1981 (N=1,030)	2000 (N=467)
Many of the people who apply for welfare are not honest about their needs.	86.2*	68.3
Most of the people who get welfare try to get off it as soon as possible.	9.0	23.8
Many of the people who get welfare do not deserve it.	84.9*	62.1
People on welfare turn down jobs so they can keep collecting benefits.	73.7	67.7

Note. The values represent the percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.
* Difference between percentages in 1981 and in 2000 is statistically significant ($p<.05$) using a two-tailed t-test of differences in proportions.

Table 2: *Percentage of Respondents Perceiving Different Types of Fraud by Welfare Employees*

Item	Percent Agreeing	
	1981 (*N*=1,030)	2000 (*N*=467)
Most welfare officials are honest.	52.1*	39.8
Welfare workers help people on welfare try to cheat the government.	29.1	28.7
Much of the money that is supposed to go to poor people ends up in the pockets of welfare officials.	30.9*	45.2

Note: The values represent the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.differences in proportions.
*Difference between percentages in 1981 and in 2000 is statistically significant ($p<.05$) using a two-tailed t-test of differences in proportions.

Table 3: *Percentage of Respondents Agreeing Government Should Provide Different Types of Benefits and Services to Poor People*

Item	Percent Agreeing	
	1981 (*N*=1,030)	2000 (*N*=467)
The government should guarantee that every citizen has enough to eat.	40.7*	67.4
It is the responsibility of government to take care of people who cannot take care of themselves.	52.5*	62.1
The government should use tax dollars to provide services to special groups of people such as the poor, the old, and the disabled.	75.8*	87.6
If the government must go deeper into debt to help needy people, it should do so.	32.2*	42.6

Note: Values represent the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement.
*Difference between percentages in 1981 and in 2000 is statistically significant ($p<.05$) using a two-tailed *t*-test of differences in proportions.

Finally, current respondents were considerably more supportive of government assistance to needy persons than were those in the 1981 study (see Table 3). The greatest gains in support were on items that specifically mentioned in-kind benefits. The percentage believing the government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat rose 27%, and the respondents who agreed that the government should provide services to help the poor, old, and disabled rose 12%. The mean score on the welfare orientation index increased from 9.91 (SD=3.75) to 11.07 (SD=2.73) on a scale ranging from 4 (no assistance) to 20, a statistically significant change $t(1432)=5.90$, $p<.0001$.

One hypothesis to explain why the 2000 sample is more favorable toward welfare recipients and welfare policies is that the 2000 sample is predominantly female. Analysis of the 2000 sample by gender, however, revealed only one statis-

Table 4: *Regression of Welfare Orientation on Perceptions of Recipient Fraud and Welfare Employee Fraud*

Variable	1981 β	2000 β
Perceived Recipient Fraud	-.25	-.26
Perceived Government Official Fraud	.12	.12

Note: All beta coefficients are statistically significant, $p<.05$.

tically significant difference: females were more accepting of government debt to help needy individuals (M=3.13, SD=1.06) than were males (M=2.87, SD=1.16) $t(460)=2.40$, $p<.05$.

The authors used multiple regression analysis to determine how respondents' beliefs about provider and recipient fraud affected their willingness to have the government help needy persons (see Table 4). As was the case in 1981, beliefs that recipients defraud the government predicted low support for governmental programs (β=-.25 in 1981 and β=-.26 in 2000). Also, as was the case in 1981, beliefs that welfare workers defraud the government predicted higher, rather than lower support for government assistance programs (β=.12 for both 1981 and 2000). This last finding requires explanation. Official fraud was not correlated with welfare orientation in either 1981 or 2000, suggesting that respondents do not wish to deprive recipients of help because of any fraudulent actions by welfare workers. When beliefs about recipient fraud are controlled, the emergent positive relationship between official fraud and welfare orientation could be compensatory. That is, respondents may think it necessary for the government to be more generous to recipients to correct for abuses of officials.

DISCUSSION

These findings indicate there have been shifts in the attitudes of Alabama citizens about welfare in the last two decades. The tendency to see welfare employees as dishonest, while still characteristic of a minority of respondents, has grown substantially despite the absence of scandals regarding the use of welfare funds in the state in the last 20 years. It may be that a generalized distrust of government and public officials accounts for this change. In the years between 1981 and 2000, for example, one Alabama governor was convicted of illegal use of campaign funds and forced from office. Also, a recent CEO of the state's public welfare department (a political appointee who was not a social worker) was forced to resign her post when it was discovered that she had falsified her resumé.

Harsh attitudes toward welfare recipients appear to have softened somewhat in the 20-year period, although the clear majority of respondents continue to doubt recipients' honesty and motivation to work. Current respondents may believe that changes in the welfare system, which have occurred since 1996, have helped rid the rolls of many fraudulent recipients. Similarly, current respondents are more favorably disposed toward government programs for needy people than were their predecessors. These findings may reflect recent respondents' reactions to an improved economy and unprecedented Federal budget surpluses.

Alabama citizens are generally favorably disposed toward government assistance for poor people. This support is reduced, however, when recipients are seen as dishonest. As was the case in 1981, although a substantial minority of respondents believe welfare providers are dishonest, this perception does not translate into lower support for government assistance to needy people.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Social work has a long history of challenging stereotypes about poor people and advocacy for programs and benefits for people in need. Thus, it is encouraging to see that there has been a substantial reduction in negative beliefs about the poor over the last 20 years. As this study indicates, however, beliefs about the dishonesty of poor people remain prevalent. Practitioners should continue to try to shape public opinion about the realities of welfare recipients and welfare programs. This is particularly important because of the strong relationship this study found between perceptions of the poor and levels of support for government programs and services for poor people.

Social workers must also be aware that a growing minority of the public has little confidence in the integrity of people employed in welfare departments and offices. Fortunately, these negative perceptions of providers have not affected program support. It is possible that these increasingly negative attitudes are primarily due to negative impressions of executive level management, rather than of most social workers or other lower level workers in public welfare agencies. Nevertheless, these findings underscore the importance of honest and ethical conduct on the part of all workers in human services.

Clearly, findings from a single state cannot appropriately be generalized to any other state or to the nation as a whole. However, since states now have unprecedented discretion in policymaking about public welfare programs, state-level analyses of public opinion about public welfare are becoming increasingly important. Social work advocates for poor people in other states should contribute to the efforts to understand state-specific public opinion about welfare programs and how these opinions affect program support.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

It is important that social work students understand the stigmas attached to the clients they serve and the need for them to develop skills to challenge inaccurate, negative stereotypes whenever possible. Skills that shape public opinion and state level lobbying on behalf of poor people will become increasingly important due to the recent shift in decision-making regarding public welfare policy at the state level (Schneider & Netting, 1999).

As social work professionals, students must also be aware that they are likely to be stigmatized by association with an unpopular client group. The growing mistrust of public welfare employees reflected in this study highlights the fact that as representatives of the state, social workers may be subject to the same kinds of public scrutiny as are high-level elected and appointed officials. This underscores the importance of social work students' early socialization to impeccable ethical behavior as a hallmark of the social work profession.

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