REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

Volume 19, Number 3 Summer 2013

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www.rnoph.org

PUBLISHED BY CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Current Issue Cover Art: Christina Geerts

OPEN CALLS AND PENDING SPECIAL ISSUES AND SECTIONS

Pending Publication

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Honoring Our Indigenous Elders
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ISSN - 1080-0220. Published with Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems software (Edwin Lampugnani, initial consultation and graphics design). Layout uses Scribus Desktop Publishing software (Staffan Melin, consultant). Hosted at Gossamer Threads. Indexed in Social Work Abstracts and Social Services Abstracts. Full text in EBSCOhost SocIndex and Proquest Research Library. This issue was published in February 2015. The backdated volume and issue numbers are as noted on the cover. This standard journal practice will continue until the journal is up to date with its publishing schedule in early 2016. Please see our website www.rnoph.org for information on subscriptions and becoming an individual or institutional Friend of Reflections.

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Letter from the Editors

Michael A. Dover

Abstract: This is the editor's introduction to Volume 19, Number 3. In this issue, the first narratives to the new Teaching Reflections and Historical Reflections special sections are published. For more information on these sections, please see the Call for Narratives on the website. Six additional general submissions are also published in this issue, the sixth to be published at Cleveland State University School of Social Work.

Keywords: teaching; historical; Sonia Leib Abels; Jillian Jimenez; Josh Kanary; Eileen Mayers Pasztor; Robin Richesson

Cleveland State University has published six issues since assuming the role of publishing this wonderful journal in May 2012. In the Cleveland State University website for the journal, found at www.csuohio.edu/class/reflections, you will see at the upper left side a letter from the outgoing editor, Eileen Mayers Pasztor at California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and one from the incoming editor, myself, at Cleveland State University.

This transition began in January 2012, when CSULB announced that the journal would cease publication, due to serious budget cuts in the California system of higher education. Our first issue, V18#2, was not published until October 2013, more than a year later, for reasons which may become apparent here.

This is the first general issue since Volume 19, Issue 1 (V19#1). As can be seen from the cover, this issue, V19#3, is officially Fall 2013, although it is published in February 2015. When a journal gets behind in its publishing schedule, it is standard journal publishing practice to back date the issue, but announce the actual publication date. The actual publication date is noted in the inside cover page. In addition, our online website at www.rnoph.org also notes the actual publication date.

This month, we will complete this volume, by publishing a Special Issue on Interprofessional Collaborative Practice and Education. As the many upcoming special issues noted on our website suggest, our goal is to publish enough issues this year and early next year to complete Volume 22 during the year it was originally scheduled, 2016.

Given the number of issues being published in the months to come, this is a very busy time for the journal. One of the contributions we have made so far is the publication of the entire backfile of the journal on our website. In our archives, we publish not only article PDFs but also the entire issue, including the front cover, inside cover, table of contents, and all other content.

This took some doing. In general, there is a trade-off between efforts to publish the journal and efforts to edit the journal, solicit narratives, interact with authors, etc. Time and effort which went into getting the back file up contributed to our not having kept to as regular a publishing schedule as we would have liked. The patience of authors and readers is very much appreciated as the growing editorial team moves forward with the publication of the planned issues, which will include many of the articles under review or in copy editing status.

The vast majority of authors published in this journal benefit from the revisions or the request for re-submission recommended by our reviewers. Our journal is committed to being a double-blind, two-review, peer reviewed journal, including our special issues. This means there can be a considerable wait from original submission until the final editorial decision, and more time is required until final publication.

To learn the rich history of this journal, one approach is to go back opening the PDF files of the full issues, and perusing the art work, the inside cover page with the lists of editors, reviewers, the creator of the cover art, etc.

I would encourage readers and prospective authors of this journal to explore the letters to the editors of my successors. In particular, it is valuable to read Volume 1#1, where Sonia Leib Abels, the founding editor and now Editor Emerita of the journal, set out her vision for the journal. It is a unique mission, one which takes narrative seriously.

I also want to draw your attention to the wonderful history of the art which has graced the cover of this journal since its inception. Our Art Director, Robin Richesson, MFA, is Professor of Art at CSULB. Robin has been Art Director of the Journal since shortly after the death in October 2009 of *Reflections* editor Jillian Jimenez.

Jillian succeeded Sonia as editor with V5#3. Her death was announced in a letter from the Associate Editor Rebecca Lopez in V15#4, but work she oversaw continued to be published until Eileen assumed the editorship with V17#1. During her editorship, Jillian's husband Dan Jimenez served as art director for many years. If you view the full issue PDFs in our archives you will find that the daughter of Sonia and Paul Abels, Beth Abels, also contributed art. *Reflections* is always looking for art, in particular art for upcoming special issues. Please look at the themes of our special issues, peruse past issues, and think about photography and illustrations which you feel might suit the issue. Please send a JPG or PNG version, and we'll send it to Robin and the guest editors. They will see if they agree that the art would suit that issue.

One of the secrets of this journal is that there has always been a team behind it. Not only the hundreds of subscribers who sustained it in the early years and whose support will still be needed in this online age, but the over 500 authors, of whom 400 have been in email communication with us here at Cleveland State University. And not only the over 70 current reviewers, of whom only the most active ones are listed in our Narrative Review Board on our inside cover.

The cover art for this issue also has a special history. It was created by Christina Geerts, for an issue to have been published in Volume 18#2, prior to the announcement by CSULB that Volume 18#1 would be the final issue published there. We were just about ready to publish an accompanying article by Christina and her co-author, her instructor at the time, Carol L. Langer. It was a wonderful article, although we were running into some technical problems with the art. We planned to publish the article now appearing in this issue, “The Rhinoceros: A Women's Studies Finale,” in our first general issue, Volume 18#4.

Then something terrible happened. We lost Josh. Joshua Kanary, our 2012-2013 graduate assistant, was a wonderful man. An English major from Grand Valley State University, he relocated to Cleveland, guitar and pen in hand, and immersed himself in our community. He became a housing activist and soon a social worker. If ever there was an example of why schools of social work should be flexible with our requirements for how many undergraduate social science courses we require, and why we should welcome those with backgrounds in the humanities and subsequent personal and professional experiences relevant to social work, Josh was it.

However, like many of us coming into the helping professions, Josh was struggling with his own issues. He came from a proud Irish family in Toledo. We who worked with, studied with, or taught Josh remember him telling us about the family gathering in Toledo on St. Patrick's Day that winter. Josh took his own life in April, just a week before he was due to graduate.

Josh had been appointed assistant editor and was set to resume a part-time, paid post-MSW position with the journal. A valuable member of our team was lost, forever.

Josh contributed much to this journal. From September 2012 to April 2013, Josh brought the journal into the electronic age. He facilitated the transfer of journal from Adobe In-Design at CSULB to an early draft of the current design of this journal.

Josh helped develop the Helpful Instructions for Authors and Reviewers. In addition to his always cheerful and friendly presence, Josh single-handedly educated ye olde editor on the nature of narrative. Again and again he tried his best to help me to understand the distinction between exposition (telling the story, providing the context), narrative (providing vignettes that show what happened, as if

the reader was there), and reflection (stepping back to talk about what you were thinking then and what you think now about what happened).

One of Josh's special contributions will endure. His wonderful piece, “Show and Tell: Narrative and Exposition in Reflections,” published posthumously with his prior permission, is found in Volume 18#4. Time and time again our current authors and prospective authors have read this article and found it helpful.

His article is the first of what we hope will be a *Many Ways of Narrative* series. For this, we will accept an essay about writing narratives, and it does not have to be in a narrative style. But why not write a narrative about writing narrative? There truly are many ways of narrative, and we want many such flowers to bloom in this journal.

At the same time, the journal was still coping with the myriad matters associated with publishing as well as editing the journal in its new format. Although my formal original appointment was as editor for a three year term, I found myself functioning as both editor and as the chief cook and bottle washer.

The School of Social Work publishes the journal on behalf of the university (which now holds full copyrights to all back and current issues, thanks to our collegial relations with CSULB School of Social Work, which is an Institutional Friend of *Reflections*). But on a day to day basis I have served as both editor and publisher since May 2012, when the initial agreements with CSULB were signed.

At CSULB, the secret ingredient known to *Reflections* authors was Wendi McLendon-Covey, the Assistant Editor, as well as the copy editors the journal regularly employed. Here, all of us share the roles of copy editing, proof reading, issue production, etc. This work has fallen on the editor, our graduate assistants, and one work-study student each year. Their contributions should be noted.

Steven “Leo” Leopold has been the assistant chief cook and bottle washer since he arrived in September 2013 as graduate assistant. Early on, he began working with Cathleen Lewandowski, formerly of George Mason University and our Director and Professor since July 2014, on the Special Issue on Therapeutic Relationships with Service Members, Veterans and their Families. He graduated in May 2014. As a veteran himself, he soon found a job as a social worker with the Veteran's Administration. However, he volunteered to continue working with Cathleen to publish that issue in November 2014. He is now employed a few hours a week to help us produce the issues. Once copy editing is done, he takes over and assembles the issues in our open-source Scribus desktop publishing software.

Copy editing and proof reading is a team process, involving our current graduate assistant Alison Murphy and our editorial assistant Kailie Johnson. Regarding Kailie, memo to editors: hire the daughter of a librarian if you ever get the chance! The three of us and Leo have a friendly competition to see who can find the most typos, APA problems, and unclear passages.

However, with the support of our individual and library subscribers, readers, authors, and individual and institutional friends, we hope to be able to develop a year-round team, including summer jobs for our graduate assistants and work-study students. A talented copy editor at a university publisher has been recommended to us by one of our frequent editors and reviewers. And we have also located a top notch proof reader with vast experience proofing a nursing journal and with APA style. But work like this, properly done, will cost as much as $1000 an issue. Online journals don't have print expenses, but they do have other expenses. Please consider becoming an individual Friend of Reflections and/or asking your university program or agency to become an institutional Friend of Reflections. See the website for more information. Remember, the content of this journal may be priceless, but publishing has a price.

Editing also has a price, an emotional price. Please let me explain what I mean. Editing all journals is hard work. But editing *Reflections* is more than just hard work. It is more, even, than a labor of love (which it is for all of us on the editorial team). It is hard emotional labor. Each issue contains narratives which are very difficult to read.

When I took this on, I realized that. I had been a longstanding reader of another publication which is equally difficult to read, *Sun Magazine*. But after I began editing *Reflections*, I stopped reading it. It is hard enough to read and edit *Reflections* without taking on the moving fictional and non-fictional articles in www.sunmagazine.org.

Luckily, all of the editorial work doesn't fall on one editor. This is the reason why this section is called Letter from the Editors. There are plural editors of this journal. In addition to the Editor, there is our Associate Editor for Field Education, Denice Goodrich-Liley, who was co-guest editor of Volume 18#2. Denice is on sabbatical this academic year, but is already returning to her work with the journal. She will oversee the formation of a Field Education Editorial Committee to assist her in recruiting authors from among full time field educators, field instructors and students in the field.

In addition, after beginning as an author in the Mentoring Issue (V18#3), Johanna Slivinske, MSW, author or co-author of two books, active clinical social worker, and adjunct faculty member at Youngstown State University, became a reviewer and soon was appointed Associate Editor for Issue Quality. Johanna personally comments on the quality of each issue before it is published, with full powers to stop the presses, if an issue is not of the quality that should be expected of this journal. She also edits and approves the Letters from the Editors, and may contribute one of her own at some time in the near future.

Soon, a conference call will be held of members of the Narrative Review Board, our most active and involved reviewers. In general, my goal has been to involve those who involve themselves in this journal. We hope to build the editorial team in the months to come.

I am seeking an Associate Editor for Review Quality. This editor would work with me to find a way to improve the quality of the reviews, revise the questions asked of reviewers, and make recommendations for criteria for editorial decisions for the new teaching, historical and research reflections sections. We would work together to convene the meetings of the Narrative Review Board. I am hoping that having such an Associate Editor would also create accountability of the Editor, Associate Editors and Guest Editors to the reviewers.

We also seek Section Editors for each of those three sections: Historical, Reaching and Research Reflections.

We are also seeking an Associate Editor and an Assistant Editor for Manuscript Quality. For these positions, a degree in English is required as well as a degree in a helping profession. And we are seeking volunteer copy editors, with a degree in English, who would be supervised by these two editors. This team would oversee the copy editing phase, but also work with authors seeking help with revisions.

Finally, I am seeking an Associate Editor who will be responsible for fully achieving the original interdisciplinary mission of the journal. The person chosen will need to be a published author in this journal who has the academic standing to command respect from academics and practitioners in a range of other helping professions. The goal would be to reach out through professional journals to recruit authors and reviewers for this purpose. Eventually, we may form sections for particular disciplines, with section editors from each discipline.

Please watch the journal site for postings of these positions, which will be open until filled. My own appointment as editor has been extended until May 2017. I will not serve as editor in chief after that time. There will be a national search for the next editor, lead by an Editorial Policy Board to be formed this year by our Director, Cathleen Lewandowski.

Cleveland State University is working hard to provide able stewardship to this journal, which we see as belonging to its readers, to its authors, and to those in the helping professions who are motivated to write meaningful narratives of practice and activism.

Well, it seems as if I have almost used my allotted space without so far providing commentary on each article in this issue. I have already touched on the art work of Christina Geerts which graces our cover. I would like to thank Christina for her patience, as

we postponed using her art work and accompanying article. Her compelling art work of a rhinoceros reminds me to a couple of things.

First, it reminds me of the hippopotamus, which was the graphical mascot of Michigan's Human Rights Party, which elected Michigan's first openly gay male and lesbian public officials in Ann Arbor back in the early 1970s. More recently, remembering Matthew Shepard, Chris Kolb, at the time an Ann Arbor City Council member and later the first openly gay Michigan State Representative, said something which is memorable at this time of national determination to express principled moral outrage as we work to fundamentally reform the nature of police-community relations. Chris said, “Turn your anger into resolve." He repeated, “Turn your anger into resolve.” Narratives of efforts to do so will be published in an upcoming Special Issue on Dismantling Social and Racial Injustice. If you are involved in these movements, please consider contributing a narrative.

Second, it reminds me of a giraffe. *Reflections* has a long history of animal imagery in its art work. Twice published *Reflections* author, Cleveland State University Professor Emeritus Lonnie Helton drew upon such imagery to support his article, “Riding the Giraffe: A Social Worker's Nine Year Journey,” in V5#4.

But reading the wonderful narrative written by Christina and her co-author Carol Langer reminds me of more. It reminds me of what it is like to have an 18 year-old first year college student show up in my introduction to social work or social welfare courses. Christina and Carol's narrative shows how central journal writing can be for first and second year college students, if only we will ask the students to write and if we take what they write seriously. This is their chance to learn in the process of writing, and it is our chance to learn as well, from the opportunity to communicate across generations. The article by Christina and Carol isn't the only compelling article about student/teacher relationships in this issue.

In what is an excellent example of how narrative can be paired with strong theoretical reflections, Felicia Washington Sy traces her background as the daughter of an African-American social activist, her undergraduate experience as an artist and in the theater, and her life as a queer identified academic. She found that her entry into social work produced the receding and the disembodying of much of what she was about. As much as, she points out, the profession makes enhancing human well-being and addressing human needs central to our practice, somehow we often end up with classroom activities that are not always consistent with the urgency called for by the conditions our clients and communities are facing. She uses an autoethnographical approach to discuss how performance art can be integrated into the social work classroom. Short of travelling to her classroom, reading this narrative is next!

I would like to make one additional point about Felicia's narrative. It is an excellent example of how narratives in this journal can make a conceptual and theoretical and methodological contribution, rooted in the rich description of the interaction and context on which the reflections are based.

In the article, “The Resilience of Community,” two social work educators, Kelly Ward and Theresa Hayden, and four students, tell of teaming up to do their best to respond to the devastation which came in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. This is must reading for those interested in disaster relief work, as well as for how to move beyond garden variety service learning to experiences which can transform the lives of both students and faculty.

Claire Bee and Paul Johnson, another student/instructor pair of authors, share their experiences in the social welfare policy classroom. Claire, the student, tells of taking risks in presenting to the class in depth about her own experience of bipolar disorder. Paul, the instructor, places this in the context of his teaching philosophy.

In future issues of this journal, contributions such as these will be encouraged by the new Teaching Reflections section. This section is a place where authors whose narratives concern teaching and learning can contribute to this journal. Please see the Call for Narratives and for Teaching Reflections, Historical Reflections and Research Reflections on our website. *Reflections* has always published such narratives. Starting with two articles in this issue, however, narratives concerning these subjects will

appear in the Table of Contents in one of these special sections. This is partly motivated by a desire to reserve General Submissions for narratives of professional helping and activism with clients and communities. The articles in these special sections, including those in the Special Section on Field Education, are fully peer-reviewed like all other articles published in this journal.

The article in the new regular Historical Reflections section is by Larry D. Watson. In it he inaugurates this section by telling the history of his work at a 100 year-old adoption agency. Seeing a film prompted in the author an emotional return to the memory of his early work as an adoption administrator. *Reflections* narratives often stem from our recollections of our past practice, in light of our subsequent careers. In the process, they can often relate important material for the history of social work and social welfare, as does Larry's narrative. Such narratives are encouraged for this Historical Reflections section. There are several more coming soon.

The first article in the new regular Teaching Reflections section is by Marilyn S. Paul. She discusses university-community partnerships established by Adelphi University. The partnerships produced two conferences on social work with veterans and military families, and a certificate program on military social work, commencing in 2013, with a follow-up conference in 2014.

James H. Williams, author of "A Day in Chicago's Narcotics Court," was previously the author of a narrative about his contributions to union activism (Williams, 2010). In that narrative, Jim didn't mention that he was one of the two dozen participants in the Frankfort Hunger Strike of 1964, one of the most significant events of the civil rights movement. But he had already told this important story long ago (Williams, 1965).

In his contribution in this issue, Jim (of the same name down to middle name as James Herbert Williams of the University of Denver) tells more of his story. This time he tells not of his work as a rank-and-file trade unionist and later union organizer, but of his rank-and-file work in the dungeons of Chicago.

Rarely has a narrative provided as much detail of a social work workplace. His workplace was a place of confinement where social worker and client are thrown together in a mutually constraining environment.

In her account of how her work with people facing addiction took her to an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, Penelope Moore provides three examples of her interactions with her clients. In those sessions, AA was a fact in their lives, and soon in hers. She concludes by stressing the value for professionals to attend open AA meetings, even if they do not have a problem with alcoholism.

True, the same thing might be said of Al-Anon, which Penelope also discusses. Al-Anon is for the friends and families of persons having problems with alcohol. Do social workers working with clients with alcohol problems qualify? Well, odds are they do, since according to some accounts half of all social workers are relatives of alcoholics to start with. True, our clients may not formally be our friends, but the narratives in this issue show how much our lives are tied up with those of our clients.

Reading narratives like these, as this editor had the privilege of doing on this long, cold weekend in February, reminds me of why this journal must continue to grow and develop in the months and years ahead.

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The Artist, the Activist, the Academic: Building a Critical Pedagogy of Embodied Knowledge

Felicia Washington Sy

Abstract: This paper is an example of how autoethnography as personal narrative may be used to explore the relationship between applied research methods, activism, and embodied knowledge. This work is a critical reflection of classroom culture that intentionally extends white, Western, male-dominated epistemology to produce embodied knowledge in the feminist tradition. This paper provides a theoretical framework for classroom instruction that may be transformational for students when combined with arts engagement, feminist teaching, and self-directed learning. This critical framework was developed as a result of social work classroom instruction that occurred from 1998 to 2003 at a small, Midwestern liberal arts college. The paper explains how classroom activities both inside and outside of the classroom may be used to provide avenues for understanding and producing qualitative research that traditional methods of classroom instruction do not produce.

Keywords: autoethnography; activism; embodied knowledge; epistemology; feminism; critical pedagogy

As an African American, female, queer identified artist, activist, and academic I spent my entire educational and professional life trying to force the seemingly disparate parts of my identity into a neat package that "others" could understand and accept to no avail. Admittedly this paper is part of my academic emancipation from routine convention and by extension the emancipation of my students from the confines of Eurocentric, male dominated ways of knowing, being, and doing. Such liberation was built on the foundation of the feminist notion of embodied knowledge defended by Grosz (1994), which reconfigures the subjective experience of the body to challenge Western, dualist conceptualization of mind versus body. According to Grosz, dismantling this dualistic conceptualization opens the possibility of mind into body – body into mind consciousness, because what can be known is always known through the lived experience of the body.

Thus, gender matters; sex matters; form and shape matter; race and ethnicity matter. This perspective suggests that we cannot divorce knowledge from the producer(s) of knowledge. Here, the artist, the activist, and the academic need not be at odds. Rather, these identities converge to produce a pedagogy that informs itself and has emancipatory impact. I accept and integrate the disparate parts of myself thereby I am liberated. This approach suggests, in the words of Hoelson and Burton (2012), that "knowledge is assumed to emerge through social processes that include interaction, language, and narrative" (p. 96).

In this paper, I lay the theoretical framework of embodied knowledge. I then provide a context for the integration of professional ethics and values, social change, artistry, and academic life. Finally, I conclude with providing an extension of embodied knowledge to inform social work qualitative research and classroom instructional methods through the use of performance art as embodied knowledge. This work is based on my social work classroom instruction from 1998 to 2003 at a small, Midwestern liberal arts college.

Drawing on the work of Archer (2000), critical realism maintains that embodied selfhood bears primacy to all other stages of development. If there is no embodiment, there can be no identity development. If there is no individual identity, there can be no social identity, commitment to ideals, or personal agency. According to Archer, first and foremost, humans are embodied beings. It is through this fundamental embodiment that individuals develop the skills necessary to survive and flourish in the world.

Archer's critical realism maintains that embodiment is not contingent on the discursive. On the contrary, Archer claims in fact, embodiment is secondary to the discursive. Long before language development ensues, children manifest intentional causal action

through bodily self-consciousness. Archer asserts that embodied knowledge has three distinguishing characteristics: (a) it is based on sensory-motor exchanges with nature, (b) it is possessed without perception of its cognitive content, and (c) it can only be accessed in direct contact with nature. Embodied knowledge is the knowledge that literally becomes "second nature." For Archer, "It is a 'knowing how' when doing, rather than a 'knowing that' in thought." Archer (2000) exemplifies this embodied knowledge in the free play of children as they throw, swing, slide, build, chase, jump, etc. all the while making personal realizations. These fundamental acts of knowing do not require linguistic mediation. Thus, the primacy of practical action temporally comes before all else, including language itself. According to Archer, words bear no hegemony over "our other doings in the emergence of our sense of self." From this position, there can be no privileging of the rational, discursive self over the sensory emotive self. Emotions become critical and necessary commentaries on the natural, practical, and social orders - aptly defined as our physical well-being, performative achievement, and self-worth, respectively. Personal identity is achieved by striking a balance between multiple concerns on multiple levels by an active and reflective agent, ultimately establishing a commitment to a defined set of values.

Social work education is guided by the mission and values of the profession, which is, in part, to "enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (National Association of Social Workers, approved 1996, revised 1999). This is a call to action deeply rooted in the values of social justice and service. This perspective lends itself to the notion of social worker as activist. Yet, far too often our classroom activities are void of the very real call to act in a manner that creates transformational change. We discuss the methods of social action but provide a limited number of opportunities to live out this action on concrete terms, seemingly justified by very real limitations of time and resources. This produces a subtle disconnect. Furthermore, our methods are often discursive in nature and miss opportunities for lived embodied knowledge that is fundamental, primal as indicated by Archer.

According to Wilcox (2009), disembodied knowledge has weighty consequences for pedagogy, creating barriers for educators in accessing bodily intelligence in classroom instruction. The theories of embodied knowledge from the feminist perspective are often disparaged and poorly understood. In the words of Spry (2001):

> I have often felt like I was speaking from outside of my body in my professional and personal lives. In fact, for me, academe has always been about speaking from a disembodied head. And because I often felt like I was calling out to my othered self, I never questioned the implications of a disembodying discourse. The body in academe is rather like the headless horseman galloping wildly and uncontrollably to somewhere, driven by profane and unruly emotion, while the head – holder of the Mind – is enshrined under glass in the halls of academe. (p. 715)

My personal journey as the artist/activist/academic began many years before I actually entered the profession of social work.

I have always been an artist; I was born an artist. It was the first self in a spirit of multiple identities. A natural storyteller, I could spin a good yarn even before I knew the alphabet. I made elaborate stories about my teacher and my classmates before I ever set foot inside a school. I would string words together in a nonsensical manner just because I like the way it sounded. So, as a child, when my artist self met my activist self I had the tools to critically reflect on my reality to transform my world. Though this sounds lofty for a child of 6 or 7 years, in my upbringing, when other children were riding bikes and going to amusement parks my three older sisters and I were marching, rallying, and door knocking. I am the daughter of a man who was the president of our local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for much of my childhood and adult life. I learned early the power of community organizing. My sense of social justice and racial equality was home grown.

When I was called "nigger" for the first time in the late 1970s I had the tools to fight back. Well

informed by the civil rights movement of the 1960s I knew I could have "Freedom Now!" I looked my accusers square in the face and threatened them with a visit to our Black advocate, a towering, brawny African American man of well over six feet who was known to patrol the halls in the gi and black belt of a karate master. I had won. The taunting stopped immediately. I would not be made inferior, invisible, or silent. These are the roots of the activist within me. It is not casual, accidental or lacking in import. I learned my words were powerful. I learned my words had the power to protect me.

I really honed my writing skills in my undergraduate college experience and in the years following graduation. While in college, I wrote a one act play which I casted and directed myself and a full length play that was directed by my college professor and mentor. During this time I wrote numerous poems, short stories, and performance art pieces. I wrote to express myself, fight oppression, inspire, free, and be freed. I knew I must be seen and heard. Art was my activism, my method, my means. In the early days, I wrote about educational disparities based on race and class, the objectification and erotizing of Black women's bodies, and the failure of mainstream society to recognize Black beauty in a manner that went beyond the superficial.

However, making the transition from poetry and prose to find my academic voice felt near impossible to me. Who was the dispassionate, objective other that the academe called me to be? Surely, it was not me. I would write all of my academic papers in poetry first and then translate them to a voice I thought my professors could understand. It was exhausting and artificial. It was the only way I knew how to write at the time. The more degrees and credentials I earned behind my name following the acquisition of my Masters of Social Work degree, the more I lost touch of the artist. Consequently, the activist became masked by a budding academic choking out an existence not sure to last. For me it was disembodying and I became yet another talking head.

This was particularly surprising to me as a social worker whose profession is steeped in a rich history of activism and social change. I take my charge from the likes of Inabel Burns Lindsay, acclaimed African American activist, educator, researcher, administrator and first dean of the Howard University School of Social Work who worked tirelessly in pursuit of a truly democratic society (Crewe, Brown, & Gourdine, 2008). However, even in the wake of the ancestors, I felt as if I was hovering over my body watching someone else's life. Suspended. Disconnected. Disembodied. I could not make the artist, the activist, and the academic converge. So, by the time I started teaching as an adjunct professor at a small liberal art college in central Minnesota I was only a shell of my former self, the door knocking, activist, militant seven-year-old who could stand up against her oppressors. The tool and methods of the academy available to me at the time were dispassionate and lacking by extension so was my teaching. Not surprisingly a limited, mechanistic approach to research and theory gives rise to an equally stark view of pedagogy (Stetsenko, 2008). I needed to reunite the disparate parts of myself. The effort to reconcile the activist self with the role as academic is shared by others (Goodley & Moore, 2000; Egan, 2001; Burnet, 2003; Stahl & Shadimah, 2007; Stentsenko, 2008). However, much of this knowledge was unknown to me at the time.

So, a little bored and a little defeated I started performing again. My performance art as always was a reflection of my passion to create social change; performance art is my activism. It is exactly through my consciously embodied self as a performance artist that I was inspired to create consequently increasing my personal agency. Personal agency can be defined as the ability to assert one's power over one's material experiences so that people can effect substantial change in our lives (Egan, 2001). This sense of agency becomes the foundation of the work however that work may be defined. Discussed in Egan (2001), it releases and values a "plurality of subjectivities" (p. 12). It is authentic. It is the first steps in the process of "identifying embedded local knowledges" (p. 12) that allow us to relate to others be they students in the classroom or participants in research. One can bring one's self fully to the experience, free from the guise of a "deconstructed, objective, a posteriori examination" (p. 12) so common to both traditional forms of research and classroom instruction.

Freed from the chains of my stunted creative self, I also started little experiments with students in both my Human Behavior in the Social Environment class and my Research Methods class. First, I would ask them to attend my performances on campus that addressed issues of diversity and educational equality in predominantly White institutions of higher learning. The performances were followed by classroom discussions where I asked my students, who were mostly White, middle class, suburbanites, to confront their issues of racial bias and privilege. They were lively discussions where students could compare and contrast their experiences with the realities presented to them in performance. As a consciously embodied performance artist, students could relate to me in ways they could not in my role as professor. I showed vulnerability by presenting my story and the story of those like me. Students could relate to this vulnerability and in this space they felt free to expose their vulnerabilities. Tectonic plates were beginning to move.

Next, I began asking my students to attend other performances on campus and in the community that confronted issues like sustainability, racism, classism, sexism, gender bias and homophobia. We would discuss these performances in class and students were required to write critical reflections about what they were learning about themselves and their worldview in comparison to those who possess a conflicting or competing worldview. These reflections were required to relate back to what they were learning from lecture and their readings on human behavior and research ethics respectively. The critical reflection papers were followed by small group presentations that pooled together the students' collective wisdom about what they were learning about critical social issues. Here is where the magic happened.

Students were no longer content to do standard PowerPoint presentations. They requested to be able to write performance art pieces to demonstrate their learning. I also had pairs of students write a song about the importance of understanding diversity in social work practice. Students also wrote poetry and acted out scenarios of how they'd committed racial transgressions against others or had been transgressed against themselves. They had emancipated themselves from the confines of traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing academics. Such transformations beseech Freire's critical pedagogy and open pathways for an integrative, transformative style of teaching and research (Stetsenko, 2008).

Furthermore, many of my research methods students, who were required to write research proposals as a requirement of the course, were using their performance inspired knowledge to write proposals that were specifically designed to change their communities in some way. For example, one student troubled by the poor nutrition faced in many low income communities, wrote a proposal to use geographic information systems technology to identify “nutritional deserts” in her community that could be used to advocate for more fresh produce in local convenience stores. Another student, whose small rural community did not have a city recycling plan, wrote a proposal to conduct a recycling feasibility assessment that she ultimately planned to distribute to her community city council. Yet another student wrote a proposal to better understand the needs of the growing, underserved Somali immigrant community in her relatively small Midwestern town. As a result of these early experiments, I have come to better understand how performance art can be used to inspire, motivate, and create a call to action in my social work students. By connecting to my activist self I gave permission to my students to do the same. Burnett (2003) speaks about this transformation:

> The life of an academic is enriched, enhanced, and fulfilled by the application of research to actual social change. Applied research that grows out of committed activism enlivens the classroom as an arena of relevance. By being intentional about the dynamics between teaching, research, and service the ivory tower can have its doors open and moved into the hearts of academic-activists who live meaningfully at the intersection of passion and vocation. The activist academic is a way of life – being and doing, action and reflection, teaching and research, theory and practice. (p. 148-149)

The use of performance art as a pedagogy provides a link between embodied knowledge, the call to

action, and applied research methods. Activist methodologies are an intentional departure from the traditional. According to Guajardo & Guajardo (2008) "our task is to do more than construct a different theory of practice. We must also rupture the traditional paradigms and use methods as an instrument of change" (p. 7). To this end, I have since used performance art as a method of social change both in the classroom and in the community for nearly 15 years. Performance art strikes to the core, invokes visceral, emotive responses that provide the fuel for creating action. Students are inspired to transform themselves and their communities not only when they perform but also when they embrace actions, images, and deeds inspired by viewed performance art. My students were naturally moving toward models of community-based participatory research and this type of research "is particularly effective in contributing to the empowerment of oppressed groups and social work researchers are well situated to engage community groups in research because they often have access to these groups" (Stahl & Shdaimah, 2007, p. 1611). Not only can these tools be used as an instructional method, they can also be embraced as research methodology (Stahl & Shdaimah, 2007) and an embodied way of knowing.

Autoethnography

This paper uses autoethnography as personal narrative to examine how performance art can bridge applied research methods, activism as a social work ethic, and embodied knowledge. Autoethnography as a methodology parallels radical ethnography whereby the researcher makes and expressed attempt to include the life stories and experiences of the researcher as part of the research methodology (Dennis, 2005). This effort is not without risk and vulnerability as the writer/researcher exposes his or her self in highly personal ways in an attempt to produce an artifact of the research experience that is both authentic and honest (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009).

Nevertheless, this work is my critical reflection of the classroom culture I created to produce a means of embodying social work research. The effort intentionally extends White, Western, male-dominated epistemology to produce embodied knowledge in the feminist tradition. Specifically, Black feminists have a long history of using autoethnography to theorize about the use of self in praxis (McClaurin, 2001).

Champions of autoethnography produce rigorous a scholarship that is intentionally personal, political, cultural, and social as a means of challenging canonical epistemology in the post-modern era (Dennis, 2005). In response to positivist science which maintains that the truth can only be known through that which is observable and measurable, the post-modern era ushered in a new age that upholds the notion that truth is relative, contextual, and not free from the bias of its creators (Kuhn, 1979). Therefore, autoethnography carves out a space for recognizing the world view of the researcher in all of its social and cultural richness in a manner that makes bias transparent, examinable, manageable, and relative to the context in which it was created. "Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systemically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, para. 1).

Autoethnography, written or performed, creates a gateway for embodied research. Conception to completion, in autoethnography, I am deeply and intimately immersed in the lived experience of the body. Reis (2011) suggests that a break from the dominant, positivist paradigm offers a means for the researcher to bring the creative, reflexive use of self into the research process. As my embodied, creative self, I sit down with my research journals, memos, field notes, laptop computer, and even my sketch pad to create the tactile experience of re-searching through my ideas, my observations, my musings, and my evidence to create something that others will digest and transform in their own process of knowing. The word becomes flesh.

I shift between writing and typing, pounding my fingers to the click-clack of key strokes or sliding my hand across a white lined page. Writing and typing, typing and writing I revert back to hand written words when I am feeling stuck. A more basic technology, pen and ink pull me back to the world of ideas. A word, a sentence, a paragraph, the completed text, the words are alive. They have shape, form and meaning. Words are things. This is the process of embodying ethnography. The researcher explores the self in the environment to

reveal the truth of the moment as part of a social and cultural journey to understanding. According to Ellis (2004):

> It [autoethnography] is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness… Back and forth autoethnographers gaze. First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens focusing on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. (p. 58)

Furthermore, artist/activist/academics like Spry (2001) suggest that autoethnography when performed is an act of academic heresy, she states "Though emotion and poetics constitutes scholarly treason, it is heresy put to good use. And it is heresy I continue to attempt to commit in the 'BEING HERE' of my own scholarly reflection" (p. 709). These treasonous acts in performed autoethnography open a pathway to a new understanding and use for bodily intelligence. When we capture the social and cultural experience through performed autoethnography we rest in the heart of embodied experience.

We understand within the depths of mind and through visceral, emotive relationships that the meaning we create is a rigorous effort to convey the lived experience. The sights, the sounds and the touch of you and me becoming we is something larger than ourselves that connects and weaves the web called culture. Therefore, autoethnography is not a degradation of theory but rather an embodiment of theory. Theory and practice are part of a continuous feedback loop where one aspect informs the next. Thus, when we create narrative and performance through autoethnography we shake the dust off our grand theories and lofty assumptions to animate our understanding of what is the lived experience. Burnet (2003) reasons, "We should not be ashamed of having a perspective since all research is done from some perspective. Methodological problems arise when the researcher is unaware of, or does not acknowledge, her perspective" (p. 143).

Yet, autoethnography as personal narrative is not without criticism. Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011) explain that the methodology, researchers, and products of autoethnography have been referred to as self-absorption, failing to meet the demands of scholarship through hypothesizing, analyzing, and theorizing that is critical to social science research. Critics also purport that it fails to meet the demands of literary excellence necessary for autobiography, thus, placing autoethnography in a kind of methodological no-man's land. However, Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011, para. 39) maintain that:

> These criticisms erroneously position art and science at odds with each other, a condition that autoethnography seeks to correct. Autoethnography, as a method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art. Autoethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical, and analytical and emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena.

In this space the artist, the activist, and the academic may converge to produce a product that is literary, expressive, and passionate. The result is a fruit born in the fertile ground of evidence, ideas, and theory giving rise to the activist nature in which social work was founded. The products of the qualitative researchers' labor often produce a sense of self-advocacy, self-empowerment and resilience for both researcher and participant (Goodley & Moore, 2000).

Autoethnography has the power to inspire, to captivate, and to produce a call to action because it is affective, intimate and performative. Autoethnography when performed taps the primal self; that which is before words. The goal is to produce emancipatory transformation. When one is freed from the confines of positivism a world of possibility opens (Spry, 2001).

Furthermore, "Autoethnographers view research and writing as socially just acts; rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, the goal is to produce

analytical, accessible texts that change us and the world we live in for the better" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, "Critiques and Responses," para. 40).

I am using the concept of autoethnography as personal narrative as outlined by Nash (2004) who skillfully heralds the scholarly use of personal narrative while firmly grounding the approach in social science, ethics, and philosophy. In Nash's words:

> Good teaching, good helping, and good leadership are, in one sense, all about storytelling and story-evoking. It is in the mutual exchange of stories that professionals and scholars are able to meet clients and students where they actually live their lives. It is in the mutual sharing of our personal stories, particularly in the willingness of professionals to listen to the stories of others, that we make the deepest connections with those we are serving. (p. 2)

My use of narrative is reconstructed from my first five years as a social work educator. The reconstruction represents a deeply felt sense of what my students and I were trying to create to better understand ourselves, our biases, human development, complex social issues, advocacy, research, and social justice. I have come to understand that our efforts were about "living social work" and "embodying social work" in our everyday lives as agents of social change in a manner that was both authentic and creative.

Autoethnography as personal narrative was used in this study to illustrate how performance art can be used to inform teaching and research in social work. I've used my memory and journals written from the period 1998 to 2003 to tell the narrative of my experience and the experience of my students. I have constructed the narrative following Nash's (2004) principles of ethical truth telling; I've conveyed this narrative with accuracy and without deceit or dishonesty. Nash maintains (2004, p. 22), "To write a personal narrative is to look deeply within ourselves for the meaning that just might, when done well, resonate with other lives; maybe even inspire them in some significant ways."

I've tried to capture the stages of how my students and I created a classroom culture that went beyond White, Western, male dominated ways of knowing, being, and doing to offer an alternative, consciously embodied model. The stages can be understood as: 1) creating safe space, 2) exploring the environment through the eyes of a performance artist, 3) learning through difference, 4) analyzing what was learned, 5) inspiring and being inspired, 6) embodying knowledge. Each stage/phase of the process is described further below.

Creating Safe Space

"Hmm…Ms. Washington, our other professors let us call them by their first names. Can we call you Felicia?" My students could not have known they were blowing the lid off over 200 years of slavery and oppression in the African American community. They could not have known that my grandmother, Mrs. Audrey Leach, was raised on the sleepy banks of the Mississippi River in a small town in the Jim Crow south. She was allowed to play freely with little white children until the age of twelve. All of the children were on a first name basis. But, at the age of twelve something drastically changed. She was no longer able to call her little white playmates by their first names. They became Miss Sue, Miss Mary, Miss Annie, Miss Jane, but Audrey would remain Audrey and sometimes just "girl." Rather than feeling inferior, she stopped playing with "those girls" as she came to better understand her place in society.

Countless African American men and women have been historically reduced to being called boys and girls, nigger, darkie, jungle bunny, or coon, continually being called out of their names and disrespected. I tell the students my story and the story of my community not in a defensive sense but rather as a means of honoring my ancestors, the masses who were made to feel inferior by being called something less than who they were. "No, you may not call me Felicia. You may call me Ms. Washington." This is who I am and nothing less. Later, this name would become Dr. Sy. But, this act of showing respect was not a barrier. It was an invitation. I would say, "Tell me how you got your name." "What is the story of your birth? Let's get to know each other better." "Have you ever been called outside of your name? How did it feel?" "Do you think if you were practicing social work in

an immigrant community, it would be important to learn the correct pronunciation of your clients' names?"

What's in a name you ask? Answer: Safety and comfort. These early complex conversations set the stage for me to expose myself, my values, and my vulnerabilities to my students thereby allowing my students to do the same. I wanted my students to express themselves. This is something they could not do unless they felt safe and respected in doing so. This first stage was also about reflecting on individual experiences and learning from the experiences of others. This concept would become a major theme in my classes and the beginning of understanding the world through performance art. None of this work could have been done without some established ground rules. Students were reminded that this was a classroom and not a therapy session and to therefore share accordingly. Students were asked to listen respectfully. They also had the right not to share at all. In any event, knowing yourself and knowing yourself in relation to others is considered the first step to becoming consciously embodied. This work is not possible unless students feel safe in the classroom.

Exploring the Environment through the Eyes of a Performance Artist

For me, writing and performing is a basic need like eating, drinking, physical activity or sleeping. If I do not have some form of creative expression in my life, I wither like a fallen leaf. I cannot say the words and the art come easily, but they are a necessary part of feeling grounded and centered in my identity. As previously mentioned, my performance art is a gateway to my activism. I start with a passion against some social injustice. I immerse myself in the phenomenon through the written word, still images, videos, other performances, listening to live conversations, and just by observing what is happening in the world around me. I pay attention. I tune in. I allow myself to be moved by the experience of others. This studying provides the fuel for my creative work. During this period of my career, I was tuning into the stories of students of color in predominately White institutions of higher learning. I compared and contrasted their experiences with my own. Eventually, I cast my net wider to include the stories of non-traditional students, first generation college students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to better understand the challenges of those who entered college on uncommon grounds and the barriers to success they would experience as a result.

My art was a bit like making stone soup. I started with the base of my experience and then added the experiences of others to create a spectacle that had the power to move others in very profound ways. I performed my art on campus, sometimes as a one woman show and at other times in collaboration with another artist friend of mine. I required my students to attend these performances, discuss them in class, and write critical reflection papers on what they'd learned by watching the performance and class discussion. It wasn't without push back from some students, however.

"I can't act, Ms. Washington. I know nothing about acting or performance art." Karen shuffled on her feet looking defeated. "I feel awkward when I have to get up in front of people. I don't really get this whole performance art thing. I'm not creative. Can't I just write a paper?"

I replied, "Well, college is a place where you can safely push yourself in ways you never imagined. Right now, I am just asking that you come see me perform and learn one way to approach performance art as a form of activism. We'll talk about what we learned and then build from there. Ultimately, you are not being graded on the final product, but how much effort you put in and how well you understand the process."

I interpret the exchange above as fear of the unknown and lack of competence. In order to fully understand what was happening in performance, students needed to understand the basic elements of theater including actor, audience, space, text, and spectacle. Students needed to understand how these elements came together to create something that is greater than the sum of the parts.

I am an actor who comes in a particular physical package: large bodied, African American, female, dark skin, and queer. All of these factors relay some perceived, symbolic statement even before I open my mouth to utter a word. Here, the stereotype, the box audience members put me in actually works to

my advantage as I deconstruct each component of their preconceived notions through my performance.

Next, audience is a necessary component in embodying the work. Actor and audience work together in a symbiotic relationship to bring written words to life. The actor feeds off the audience and vice versa to give meaning, in the moment, to the work. Attention to space also gives meaning to the work. Performance spaces provide context and also provide a layer of meaning. Performances can be indoors, outdoors, in theaters, museums, coffee shops, banquet halls, civic buildings, and classrooms. The possibilities are limitless. I want to also suggest that there is another kind of shared space that actor and audience occupy that transcends physical space. This space applies to the emotional realm. It is ideological and replete with meaning. It is something that cannot be seen, touched by the hand, smelled, tasted or heard. It can only be felt with the heart. Also, spectacle draws our attention because of the visual display created. Spectacle is created by props, costumes, sets and staging. Finally, text, in the form of narrative in this study, provides a script that tells a story, offers meaning, and a starting point for critical analysis. Fluency in these basic concepts provided a language for reflection and analysis.

Learning through Difference

As a female, person of color, and a bi-sexual, many life experiences have called me to feel outside of the norm or oppressed by mainstream society in some way. I have always been compelled by stories of difference, in part to better understand myself, normalize my experience and carve out my identity. I've come to know myself better. Through comparison and contrast, I locate myself in relationship to others and society. I've asked my students to engage in critical exploration of their cultural experiences and to recognize areas where they had privilege and where they'd been complicit with injustice. I asked students to uncover what social issues were most important to them. We learned that our experiences were not the same, but that we had more in common than we had different. Our core values were the same; we valued family, friends, education, livelihood, love and intimacy.

Our differences became topics of deep conversation. Our differences were related to our families of origin, family history, bias, and personal identity. In our discussions room was made for vulnerability, doubt, and even anger and outrage. I would say to my students, “Tell me who you are. I will tell you who I am and in our similarities and differences we'll come to understand ourselves better. We'll come to understand the world better.” We had to expand our definition of diversity outside the boundaries of the racial divide. Students shared:

“My mother has mental illness. I grew up taking care of her.”

“No one knew my father was an alcoholic.”

“I was home schooled.”

“We lived on a farm – traveling to the city was such a culture shock.”

“I'm a single mom.”

We all had a story to tell. Many of the students who were quiet in class would open up in their papers. They revealed their level of understanding in ways I could have never guessed based on their level of participation in class. I cannot confess that I knew what I was doing. I was largely led by my sensibilities about what was important and has how to express oneself artistically. I followed my nose and the direction of our good conversations. I graded my success by the level of student engagement, mid-semester feedback from students, and final course evaluations. Things seemed to be working well. So, I persisted.

The concept of learning through difference extended beyond the walls of the classroom; over the years, we saw performances with themes about women's bodies, HIV/AIDS, homosexuality, poverty, Native Americans, African Americans, apartheid, drug addiction, and educational inequality to name a few. Many of these experiences extended outside of our realities, but many of them led to critical self-discovery and further exploration. We were learning through difference.

Analyzing What Was Learned

Performance art unfolded as a bridge between activist sensibilities and a method of rigorous research. In order to accomplish this task, critical

analysis of text and narrative was fundamental. Students described their analysis in 5 to 8 page reflection papers that required students to interpret behavior and apply theories of human development to what they learned as a result of watching various performances and in class discussion. This was one of the more challenging assignments for students, but they generally rose to the occasion. Students were also required to reflect on the elements of theater: actor, audience, space, spectacle and text and make some assessment on how these structures were used in each performance. These analyses introduced rigor into our studies.

Inspiring and Being Inspired

I wanted my students to come away from class and performances feeling connected to what they were learning. I wanted them to understand nuances of experience that could not be learned in a text book. Classroom connections could and should turn into real life experiences that were grounded in embodied knowledge. One student said, “My family originally comes from Appalachia. I want to study how music can be a protective factor against despair in rural Kentucky.” I've come to understand this student's research question as an exploration of herself, factors that influenced her family's move away from Kentucky, and the music that was important to her, producing her sense of embodied knowledge.

Slowly students wanted and asked for more. They were not content with the status quo and asked for opportunities to express themselves creatively. For example, students in my research class read *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol (1991), which documented educational disparities in our nation's largest inner cities. The reading assignment was in preparation for a group project where student were required to write a mini-proposal on how they would go about answering the research question, “What are the mechanisms that allow some inner city youth to excel despite being in disadvantaged school systems?” They were so moved by the stories and scenes in the book that for extra credit they created a script of the text and performed for the author on his trip to visit our campus.

Students were also required to write research proposals based on their understanding of some social problem. To inform their learning, they could use a variety of media including any performance they were required to see for class. Some students listened to protest music of the 1960s and 1970s, others analyzed Nazi war time photos of concentration camps and others read biography about social and religious leaders to name a few. These types of sources were better at inducing an emotive response and better at generating empathy. Students were also required to use resources from their text books and peer reviewed journals. Students were not required to do their research proposal, but they had to conceptualize their projects from start to finish. Many of these projects included components of advocacy and community participation and some of the proposals expressed a direct desire to fulfill a mission of social justice. They could include elements of performance and narrative in their proposals but it was not a requirement.

Embodying Knowledge

“I think I'll be better able to help people with AIDS because I understand the AIDS epidemic in ways that I never would have if I didn't see this play.” This student was describing how he felt after seeing a production of *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner. As a social work educator, this statement epitomizes the most important outcome for the use of alternative pedagogy; improved social work practice. When meaning becomes deeply engrained it has the potential to influence behavior, emotions, and thoughts. Insights gained are the building blocks of skill development. Thus, skillful practice become second thought, common place. It is a natural extension of being connected to oneself and others in salient knowledge. One comes to know that the body understands how to respond in praxis. Therefore, one my primary objectives as an educator were to create opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom for students to acquire their embodied knowledge.

Coda

Performance art as a consciously embodied practice can be used as a form of critical pedagogy, a method for conducting research and a platform for social activism, which is consistent with social work ethics. Through critical reflections and discussions on performance art, personal experiences and the experiences of their peers, students were able to analyze and apply theory. Performance art inspired

them to create their works of art, which ultimately may have the power to inform and inspire others. Performance art meets actor and audience in the place beyond the discursive through the use of spectacle and space to convey meaning often in symbolic form. These audience/actor involvements are visceral and emotive. This may have the power to move others in a call to action, because knowing in the body is the first way of knowing. These embodied practices take us back to something basic, primal as Archer (2000) discussed. The experience invokes bodily intelligence. Wilcox (2009) suggests:

> To avoid the entrapment of the mind/body hierarchy, we need to explicitly name and parse embodied pedagogies whereby the body is at the front and center of knowledge production. Performance, an area where bodily knowledge cannot be dismissed, must be taken seriously in this pursuit…Cultural performances such as dance, music, and theater constitute an important social field where embodied knowledges are not only created but also validated. (p. 106)

Performance art uses text as a fundamental structure. Words convey meaning, which leads to understanding. The text may be poetry or prose derived from the lived experience or imagination inspired by real life events. Narrative critically examined is strategy for learning. As a method for research, performance art may take its text directly from the data, from the researcher's personal narrative, archival information, or oral history. Costa (2005) suggests "Working through narrative process also allows students to explore issues of power and representations of racial, ethnic, and sexual differences that they encounter in their everyday lives" (p. 2). The end product can be disseminated as performance and the performances may have emancipatory capacity for both actor and audience. Again, according to Wilcox (2009):

> Performance capable of cultivating creativity, critique, and citizenship, has much potential for feminist pedagogies. Popular educators and theater practitioners have applied embodied performance similar to Theater for the Oppressed in literacy education as well as social movement mobilization since the 1970s. Unfortunately, most educators in the academic mainstream remain either oblivious of, or resistant to such radical practices. (p. 106)

Yet, performance art as a critical pedagogy and research method is not in opposition to traditional methods of teaching and research. In fact, this particular point of view is grounded in theory, philosophy, analysis, observation, and fieldwork. "It is the experience of planning, engaging in, and analyzing a narrative project that pushes students to think critically about the production of knowledge" (Costa, 2005, p. 4). Traditional methods are not abandoned, but rather the repertoire of research and teaching tools are expanded. Such efforts may unite the artist and the academic in conscious embodiment.

The disparate parts of the artist/activist/academic have a pathway for reunification through the use of performance art because all parts of the self are required in order to engage in an authentic fully pressed experience of identity. These determinations may produce a platform for action because the consciously embodied work calls for transformation. For professors and students alike, this work is grounded in analysis of narrative. Costa (2005) maintains:

> They [students] can analyze narratives in terms of form, coherence, or contradiction; how speakers narratively produce self and identity; the politics and/or power relations of the encounter; and how the process of narrative methodology exposes the production of knowledge and undermines universal notions of "truth" or "history." (p. 6)

In the present study, students inspired by the process were called to advocate, mediate, negotiate and broker on behalf of would be clients. These are the manifestations of bodily intelligence. The progression of creating performance art as a pedagogy and research method may make an excellent coupling with community based

participatory action research. This model of research can be defined as collaborative research endeavor between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members that validates multiple sources of knowledge with the goal of creating social action and social change (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003). Anderson's (2002) approach states that:

> The philosophy underlying the model incorporates three diverse service and research needs. First, it recognizes the important role that participatory and community-based social service research plays in community development and problem solving, and assumes that the technical quality of such research is critical to its evolution. Second, the model responds to the increasing research demands that community agencies face as social services are rapidly devolved to communities. Finally, it is premised on a need to engage students in meaningful applied research projects, in order to enhance learning and better prepare students to become community research practitioners. (p. 73)

The tradition has a significant history in social work (Jacobson & Rugeley, 2007) and the approach aligns itself with social work values and ethics. Participatory action research asserts that with the right tools people closely affected by the social issue are best able to understand their problems and address their struggles (Koirala-Azad & Fuentes, 2009-2010).

In appropriate situations students may work with community partners to chronicle and convey their stories to arouse and transform their communities. Capturing narratives is the cornerstone of this work. Students may move beyond simply seeing problems that encompass complex social realities to genuinely seeing the humanity of those they serve whose lives are intricately shaped by their environments. Fraser (2004) expressed that, “With the capacity to recognize people's strengths and engage people in active, meaning-making dialogues, narrative approaches – notably those informed by critical ideas – may help social workers move beyond a strict problem focus to more generally explore social phenomena” (p. 181).

Additionally, through performance, faculty research efforts may be infused with the richness and vigor that often accompanies the opening of the creative process. Spry (2001) says of her work in performed autoethnography, “I find that authorial voice in the autoethnographic texts far more engaging due to its emotional texturing of theory and its reliance upon poetic structures to suggest a live participative embodied researcher” (p. 709). In the present research, I have been given a new sense of purpose as I've poured over old journals and recalled long held memories from my early days of teaching. I've moved from adjunct to tenure track and I am currently in the process of defining my research agenda and what kind of member of the academy I will become. One could say I've come back to my roots.

In this exploration of alternative pedagogy, I invite others to join me in the conversation on how to engage students in embodied learning. These conversations have implications for what will be taught, how and from whose perspective. It is a matter of engagement, emancipation, and creative expression. In the social work activist stance, academic social workers are encouraged to come out of their silos and connect to real world experiences for the betterment of the profession and instruction to students (Saleh, 2012).

This research is subject to the vulnerabilities of autoethnography as personal narrative due to the fact that it relies, in part, on memory and memory can be faulty. Also, I've relied on journals that were written almost ten years ago and the way I made meaning of events at the time is not necessarily how I make meaning of events in retrospection. This raises issues of reliability and validity. Furthermore, my small class sizes of ten to twenty provided limited scope making generalizability highly unlikely. However, “For autoethnographers, validity means that a work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, “Reliability, Generalizability, and Validity”, para. 34). This is what I have done. I've applied the principles of ethical research and

recreated the truth of my experience. Coherence and credibility are established as the writer continuously checks that the written analysis is in keeping with the stories told and the objectives of the research (Fraser, 2004). Finally, I am a trained actor with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in theater. This uniquely positions me to use performance art at a tool in the classroom. Replication of these exercises may prove challenging for others without such training.

Future research on the use of performance art as pedagogy and methodology might attend to how Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), a classification of learning objectives, might be used to better understand the stages of creating embodied knowledge through performance. The taxonomy is divided into three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Such an analysis may yield particularly informative results for educators. Also, greater investigation into the uses of community collaboration and its impact on stakeholders is warranted in addition to the perceived barriers and limitations of such an approach. Finally, given the primacy of the body as a tool for learning, increased understanding of the mechanism of embodied intelligence seems relevant. Merleau-Ponty (1962) viewed the body as directly correlated to the capacity for developing skills. As our skills improve, so does our capacity to act. The body is the vehicle for direct, applied action:

> The body is our general medium for having a world. Sometimes it is restricted to the actions necessary for the conservation of life, and accordingly it posits around us a biological world; at other times, elaborating upon these primary actions and moving from their literal to a figurative meaning, it manifests through them a core of new significance: this is true of motor habits [sic] such as dancing. Sometimes, finally, the meaning aimed at cannot be achieved by the body's natural means; it must then build itself an instrument, and it projects thereby around itself a cultural world (p. 146).

Performance art can be successfully used in social work pedagogy and research methods. Performance art creates an embodied response in a manner not evoked in some traditional forms of teaching and research. These effects are inspiring and emancipatory and may lead to greater involvement in social justice and social change, which is consistent with social work values and ethics. The embodied responses may be a result of increased bodily intelligence. Bodily intelligence improves skillful practice and competence is the ultimate goal of social work education.

Author's Note

The theoretical portions of this paper on the work of Margaret Archer were first presented in my doctoral dissertation to fulfill graduate requirements at the University of Denver in 2010.

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The Resilience of a Community

Kelly Ward, Theresa Hayden, Latasha Richard, Lanna Jennings, Maddie Loney, and Erin Young

Abstract: This article provides two perspectives of what it is like to experience a natural disaster. One from a helping professional who was in the middle of the natural disaster and another from a second helping professional who arrived after the natural disaster to assist in the recovery process. Reflecting on the experience can be both helpful for the healing process as well as beneficial for those who may experience a natural disaster in the future.

Keywords: disaster relief; Hurricane Sandy; emergency; service learning

At the end of October 2012 – while teaching at the School of Social Work at Monmouth University and maintaining a small private practice in New Jersey – I heard the weather report: a perfect storm would hit the Jersey Shore. Well, anyone who knows me will tell you in my next life I plan on coming back as a weather man because they are always wrong and they never lose their jobs! I paid attention to the warnings, bought extra water just in case the public source became contaminated. We brought in the outdoor furniture because we had just eaten dinner outside the night before with a view of the Atlantic Ocean and Sandy Hook National Park.

I stocked up on batteries, signed up for the town emergency number and collected all the flashlights and candles in the house. I even had enough forethought to fill up at the gas station, but only because I was below a quarter of a tank. Then I laughed, hunkered down and waited for the weather men to be wrong yet again. Preemptively, the University cancelled classes for two days and I thought good, I don't have to grade papers tonight and I can watch movies while I keep an eye on the storm that wouldn't materialize.

The Hurricane: One Perspective

Yet that didn't happen. My husband and I watched with horror and wonder as a wall of water enter our town with such force that it took boats that were docked for the winter and whooshed them down the street into someone's living room. We heard the magnanimous whistle of the wind as it took our lattice work and deck railing off of our deck and almost into our neighbor's back door. We felt our house shake from 85 mile per hour winds, and wondered how many roof shingles we would lose. This was scary and fascinating all at the same time. Mother Nature is a force not to be reckoned with. And of course we did all of that without electricity.

The town had declared mandatory evacuations of all those that live in the lower lying areas. That was not us, so we stayed. During high tide and low tide in the next few days the flooding exacerbated the situation. As if it could possibly make things worse; yet it did. We worried for our lower lying neighbors. We worried about how large of an area was impacted. The governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut called for a state of emergency and requested the tri-state area be declared disaster areas; Governor Christie cancelled Halloween for the State of New Jersey. We heard this news through a good old fashioned battery operated transistor radio. The TV and Internet were not options. We had given up land lines years ago and all the cell towers were down. The winds died down, the tides receded and we could finally venture out (on foot, as no one but emergency vehicles were allowed on the roads).

The area around us was cut off since there were live power lines down everywhere. Trees were in people's houses and strewn across four lanes highways. Boats were being used for transportation in the lower area of town because the streets were still flooded. To say I and my neighbors were shocked by the devastation would be to minimize the emotion that was palpitating in the community.

The Jersey Shore was in rescue and recovery mode. The streets were soon filled with National Guard preventing people to enter certain areas. You had to prove residence to gain access to certain streets,

curfews were enacted, shelters were established including at my university. Gasoline lines were monitored by police. They grew to 4-5 hours long for those stations that had generators. Some businesses and houses were no longer there, and numb people started a long and painful clean-up. In the inland areas power was restored more quickly than in the areas near the water. The stores in those areas were constantly busy and there was a run on gasoline powered generators, water, and other items considered to be necessary for long term survival. Electricity was projected to be on in close to three weeks. The university was closed for almost two weeks, and local school districts were closed longer than that. I had the scattered ability to text, but had to charge my phone in my car with the full tank of gas. When the roads were finally opened, a 20 minute ride somewhere took almost an hour because of the detours. Some towns were not to open back to their residences until the week of January 7th, over 3 months after the storm, because it wasn't safe to enter. Power lines and trees stayed down and untouched for almost a month. Not because the tri-state area electric and tree companies weren't working; but there was so much to do. There was a shortage of people power and utility poles. Our county alone lost over 3,000 trees. When you saw an electric company truck or a tree trimming service it was almost always from another state. My eyes still tear to think of the generosity of those men and woman who were working tirelessly 18 -20 hours a day, until we all had power restored. Food in refrigerators went bad. Impromptu dinner parties, cooked on propane stoves or outdoor grills, were convened to eat food before it went bad.

We realized that the Jersey Shore would never be the same. Pictures viewed nationally (that most people in New Jersey could not see) told the tales. We also knew that the disaster was maybe as bad as Katrina when it hit New Orleans. We just didn't know then that in many ways it would be worse. There were no horrible reports about large groups being left behind in some unforgotten area but there were fatalities and decimation that couldn't be taken in with one look of the naked eye. It took more than a dozen times up and down my path to school to see most of the devastation. My town alone had 1400 homes (not people) that were unable to return to their houses because they were structurally unsound or had to be condemned. In the weeks that followed, that number was decreased to only 400 homes that needed to be condemned. But others were told by FEMA they couldn't rebuild unless they were 8 feet above ground. How do you do that to a 200 year old cement building (our post office)? What if you were someone who makes a living as a fisherman, living catch to catch, and now without a boat?

I was overwhelmed as a person and never really "kicked into" social worker mode except to show empathy for my fellow neighbors. I was numb to what was happening. I was frozen in the moment of crisis that couldn't really be understood intellectually or emotionally. I talked with people about the damage and none of us could comprehend the devastation. We were emotionally and physically exhausted from what we saw in our little corner of the world. Without electricity we found ourselves going to sleep extremely early and sleeping 10-12 hours, talking little about what was going on around us. Since I have managed crisis after crisis in my years as a social worker my lack of response was almost as surprising as the overwhelming catastrophe the people of the tri-state area experienced because of Sandy.

This area also survived 9/11. Many in this county could see the twin towers fall and smell it weeks after from their homes. Highlands New Jersey is where many of the rescued folks came in ferries after the twin towers were hit. Middletown NJ (one town over from Highlands) lost more people in the terrorist attacks that day than any other place in the US. But terrorism and natural disaster, while creating similar issues, evoke different feelings. With 9/11 there was fear, but also rage. During 9/11 people were cancelling airplane reservations, setting up bank accounts in neutral countries and talked about moving out of highly populated areas that were considered targets to terrorism. Yet people were willing to enlist in the military and protect the freedom that Americans covet.

During Sandy a sense of community and protection came. People reached out to their neighbors and gave what little they had to anyone that needed it. An awe of Mother Nature and a sense of vulnerability engulfed the air. Before I even had power back at my house I was flocking to towns that had electricity and Wi-Fi spots to check in with

colleagues and students. One of my fellow faculty members had damage that took more than a year to fully find and repair. Fellow students helped those that needed it, neighbors helped neighbors, you could hear a common refrain of “it is just stuff” as people were managing and thankful to be alive.

As I write this I am ashamed that I didn’t jump in to help like my students did. I still don’t know why I didn't just drive to the university and help with those being sheltered. I just didn't think about what was happening beyond my small and heavily impacted community. The crisis in my town was monumental and extremely hard to comprehend. The town was sheltering its' own residents in the high school. I didn't even realize that the university had power or had opened the doors to those that needed shelter. I am not even sure how that news was disseminated. There was no information via e-mail (which was my only form of communication with the world) that the university was accepting families. In retrospect, I want to do something different if I am ever in the middle of a crisis and I hope I can.

I had to meet with my clients using candlelight; with blankets and no heat or water (a town with wells). My area of specialty is addictions and I had to assure that no one relapsed over Sandy. Sitting with people and listening to their perspective of our shared experience deepened our already private and privileged relationship. One teenage client – seeing me for his Adderall addiction – said that the event gave him reason to stay clean, since his parents needed him to help with the clean-up and to care for his grandmother. That level of responsibility motivated him to strive for sobriety.

Another client, a Caucasian male in his 40's did relapse over the event. His business in the financial services industry had been impacted financially and he wasn't sure if he would be able to return to his place of employment. Eventually he did gain sobriety and get another job, but he took a large financial hit.

Finally a client returned after being absent for over two years, because he couldn't cope with his losses and needed a place to talk about his experiences. The group of mental health professionals that I work with increased our clinical supervision time so we had a place for self-care and to watch our secondary trauma since so much of what was happening impacted us personally as well. Collectively, rather than meeting one a month, we increased supervision to twice a month for almost a year after Sandy. We also alerted each other regularly when we were meeting with those particularly hit by Sandy. At the end of the day we would stay in the office to talk with one another about those particular clients and the emotions needed from the clinician to work with those who were challenged after Sandy. Luckily, those in the office were inconvenienced in minor ways with up to two weeks without power or hot water with no permanent damage. It was easy to provide self-care by replenishing refrigerators and taking hot showers when electricity returned.

The university had to get back to the work at hand; but we couldn't always do that since some social work agencies had been washed away or had significant damage and couldn't re-open right away, internships were closed. More than a dozen of our students had lost most if not all their belongings, and some had lost loved ones. We just kept taking it all in and dealing with the adversity life brought us for the semester.

Then there was a dramatic shift. The outside world was checking in on us. Faculty colleagues who lived outside the area started texting. Family members could finally get through via e-mail and text. You were aware that people were concerned. I heard from them about the pictures and videos that we could not see on social media. I didn't know for weeks that the iconic roller coaster in Sea Side had been washed into the ocean. I finally grasped by their descriptions the vastness of the devastation. When others started asking about us, I suddenly had an energy to act, and to use my training and skills to help others. Those inquiries about our well-being and our immediate needs finally knocked me into second gear. I realized I needed to access my network. The rest of the world was intact and could assist! I reached out to family and friends, asking for the help that was needed. I went on the radio show of a niece; I connected another niece's Catholic school with the local church. I asked a social work faculty member from the Midwest to run an underwear and sock drive. Money was requested for cleaning supplies, new underwear and baby supplies. We had multiple communities that were totally decimated. Just in this county, the

towns of Sea Bright, Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, and Union Beach were so damaged that they would need help for months, if not years. These weren't beach towns with million dollar second homes, these were working communities who needed everything...pots...pans...clothes...beds, TVs... everything.

Then an e-mail came to Dean Mama at the School of Social Work at Monmouth University. A stranger, a faculty member with a social work background from University of Louisville wanted to bring a crew of students to the Jersey Shore to help in whatever way they could. I thought how nice! I also thought why didn't I do that after Katrina? The students would come after finals were finished at the University of Louisville. But details would need to be worked out, money raised, housing, room and board and of course what work they could do. I thought, how generous and how easy. Dr. Hayden and I communicated and I told her to go ahead to plan and come on to New Jersey! It turned out I was correct on the first thought - the generosity was legitimate, but I was wrong on the second item, it wasn't easy. Our university, when approached about room and board, appreciated the generosity of the gesture but was worried about liability, putting students with other students while our university still had two weeks of school left, and using university funds in a way that didn't directly benefit our students. Our students who lived off campus were anxious about taking in strangers who they might not like. Faculty, staff and the few students willing to take students were too far away from the targeted area of work. Finally, a housing plan came to fruition, faculty from another discipline, colleagues from my private practice, a soon-to-be MSW graduate and his wife and my house would be the designated housing.

From the beginning of November I made regular attempts to find work for the students. I was leaving messages (voice mail, email and in person) telling everyone I could think of that I had a crew of folks that were coming to work for a week and needed something to do. Housing was arranged but as of 36 hours before their arrival the crew from Louisville had no work! Out of desperation I was asking everyone and anyone, people at grocery stores, people in line to pick up their mail if they had any ideas. A neighbor gave me a number for a friend who was in charge of work crews in a very hard hit town, Sea Bright. A connection happened...logistics almost completed, and with 30 hours to spare before the group from Louisville was to arrive!

Sea Bright is a town of 1,400 people that has streets that flood at high tide every time it rains. It is the town that all newscasters report from for every nor'easter, and it's a town of limited means. This town was badly hit, natural gas lines broke and three feet of sand was in the streets, delaying residents return to assess damage right after the storm. Consequently, by December when the students arrived, mold was setting into the walls and other parts of the houses.

The students arrived late on a Sunday and began work Monday morning with their faculty member and my husband Bob Ward. I must admit I am not much for physical labor, especially what they had on the agenda, but I was jealous. I was not a part of something so tangible to help those in need. Yes, I was still in school, struggling to cram 15 weeks of knowledge into 13. Yes, I was listening to my clients who experienced their own trials and tribulations through the storm and aftermath. Yes, I listened to students who had challenges of finishing their semesters, making up internship hours and dealing with family crisis because of the storm. Yes, I had done some fundraising for my town. And yes, I had 4 strangers living in my house and the responsibility of managing the logistics the whole week. Still, I didn't feel like I did enough. This was my community and it would never be enough.

As it turned out the experience of having the students could not have been better for me, my husband, the town of Sea Bright, and I think also for the great group from Louisville. The devastation seen through their eyes two months later when things had already improved reassured me that the devastation was as bad as it seemed. The fresh eyes and committed energy that came with the group was revitalizing. It provided hope and comfort that others cared and were willing to assist.

Their arrival forged new networks and they were an energizing resource for the hosts and the town in which they served. The stories “our girls” Tia, Tasha, Maddy and Lanna came home with were touching and inspiring. They were not permitted to

be in anyone's home unless the resident was present.

Consequently, they heard the stories of the lives behind the houses they were gutting. Their stories in their words are below. They met the people whose lives they were touching. It changed all of them forever. They went to the library in which most of the books either had water or mold damage. The person coordinating the work for the town had his own story. He had no damage to where he lived but quit his job to help coordinate the effort in the town in which he grew up. Over eighteen months later some of those houses that they gutted remain condemned, with no clear decision if they would be repaired or destroyed.

I realized that despite the fact that I personally only lost electricity and a deck railing I had been impacted as a community member of the Jersey Shore. I had to recognize there were constraints on my ability to help based on responsibilities and circumstances. It had to be enough this time...but next time there is a Katrina or a Sandy or any other disaster I would like to believe I now understand what is needed and will be able to offer my skills and talents. When natural disaster or a terrorist event occurs again I know I can offer help from miles away by collecting needed items and money or traveling and offer manual labor and counseling services. Personal and professional responsibilities may prevent travel, but do not have to prevent other kinds of assistance. Remembering the events of 9/11 and Sandy allows empathy, compassion and understanding as a resilient survivor rather than a curious concerned bystander. That energy and knowledge will come in handy when assisting in other disastrous events.

My life was positively affected by the generosity of Theresa Hayden, our host children and the rest of the Louisville crew. I may not ever get over watching the 12-12-12 fundraising concert with four college girls jumping, dancing and singing at the tops of their lungs in my family room, but I will always remember their generosity!

As we write this narrative, over two years have passed since Sandy. There are about 250 houses in my town that are still empty, with people waiting to hear from insurance companies and FEMA about how much funding they will or will not receive. They live in a closed down Army fort and expected to stay there for 3-5 years, but just recently heard they can only stay a few more months. House lifters have moved into the area. They are an interesting sub-culture. None of them own homes; they just travel from disaster to disaster lifting houses and living out of their trucks. Unfortunately two homeowners lost their houses when they were being lifted, crumbling to the ground when the crews were not careful enough. Re-traumatized again, losing everything for the second time.

I think it is important for everyone to remember that just because the 24 hour news cycle has moved on to the next crisis – the flood in Denver or the tornado in Illinois – the communities impacted won't recover that fast. There are some folks in New Orleans still in temporary FEMA trailers since 1999 and the aftermath of Katrina. As of the end of January 2015, there are still people in New Jersey who have not been able to go back into their homes to even look at the damage from Sandy. There are others who permanently lost their homes, jobs, and maybe even family members.

The United States Congress played politics with emergency funding. Somehow, people move on and some are better for it, but no one ever is the same. As the people move on so does the community. It grows and changes because of every bit of assistance it receives and because the community is resilient. Neighbors helped each other and offered their skill like electrical and plumbing to assist each other. Food was cooked and served to those that worked non-stop to repair what could be repaired and demolish what could not be saved. People walked around in the same clothes for days without judgment or concern of the same because people just continued to move to repair, stabilize, and assess the damage. FEMA has worked with our town to create a ten year plan; their process is quick, community oriented, and effective. Unfortunately although priorities have been named and community members are involved there are not funds secured to assure the projects are completed. Grant writing, lobbying at the state and national level, and fundraising projects are now in the works with no guarantees.

I also want to share with you the perspective of those that came to help. Their perspective as college students coming months after and seeing the devastation was life changing for them and the people they helped. We spent a memorable week together. We talked about everything under the sun. But when they parted our relationships ended, as I understand often happens in disaster work. The relationships are strong, intense, but short lived. I also want to share with you the perspective of those that came to help. Their perspective as college students coming months after and seeing the devastation was also life changing for them and the people they helped. I listened to these students as they changed from thinking primarily about self to thinking about the much larger meaning of life. These students made the connection between individual tragedy and community devastation. After this trip, they really get what we talk about in the classroom.

These 12 students, at the beginning of their careers, will never forget the faces and stories of Hurricane Sandy. They helped the Sandy victims rummage through personal belongings as they wiped off the mold on cherished Christmas ornaments. They talked about carrying a houseful of furniture to the street corner. They cried over coffee with men and women who shared their personal histories wrapped up in objects to now be discarded. They participated as a retail store was re-opened in celebration. They hurt deeply as shelves of books were carried to the dumpster due to the mold and bacteria. These tiny moments have changed the life of each student who has a yearning for understanding the world.

A Distant Perspective

One year after completing my MSSW degree at the University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work, I took the opportunity offered by the local chapter of the American Red Cross to train as a Mental Health Disaster Worker. I like to learn new things. It never occurred to me that I would get to apply that training. Then 9/11 happened. I watched the TV monitors helplessly with horror. That afternoon I was contacted by the American Red Cross to come to New York to assist. Two weeks earlier I had just started my doctoral studies at the University of Louisville, but nevertheless, on the morning of Sept 13th, I was on a plane to New Jersey with several other trained volunteers. Then, on Labor Day weekend 2005, I was mesmerized with disbelief to what I was seeing as a result of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Even though my desire to assist was as strong as the urgency to respond to 9/11, it wasn't possible for me to leave as a volunteer this time.

Again, in October and early November of 2012, I watched the weather forecasts predicting the magnitude of Hurricane Sandy heading toward the East Coast. Once Sandy hit shore, the news reports brought back memories of my own flooding experience. After a heavy downpour in our city several years earlier, the neighborhood sewers backed up and left 5' of sewage in my basement. I knew what it would be like for the people living in these areas to cleanup and recover. I have to say, I felt a little PTSD symptoms as I watched the daily news broadcasts from the Jersey Shore. I remembered the feeling of throwing personal keepsakes in a mountainous pile at the end of my drive. I knew I wanted to help with the recovery in New Jersey in some way.

It was the middle of the fall semester at UofL but I knew I could leave with a group of students in December. My experience with 9/11 taught me the importance of community connections and that I would need a university partner on the East Coast. As an alumni of Kent School of Social Work, I contacted Dean Terry Singer and explained what I wanted to do. Within 2 days I was connected to Dean Robin Mama at Monmouth University. The chair of my department where I held a teaching appointment provided her approval for my “student service project.” I thought I had all I needed to get the ball rolling. I put out some feelers in the classes I was teaching. Student interest was amazing! I extended the invitation to students of social work at the university. More students contacted me than I knew I would be able to manage. I had no money for this project. I had no planning strategy. I had an idea and a willingness to take a group of students to the east coast to work with disaster clean-up.

Student interest was so strong, that they wouldn't let me drop the project. Students began to get donations from family and friends. Dean Singer, and Dr. Deborah Keeling, Chair of the Justice Department, provided some financial support. Kelly

Ward was finding housing for us in New Jersey. The necessary paper work at the university was completed for student field trips. The semester came to an end and all grades were submitted on my part. On the morning of Dec. 9th, twelve students and I pulled out of my driveway headed to New Jersey in a big red van. These students quickly named our transportation "Big Clifford". We were filled with excitement and enthusiasm while at the same time knowing to expect the unexpected.

These students were not paid and were not getting a grade for this service project. They all volunteered for the experience of learning about disaster relief. The week progressed and I knew they were getting so much more for their education. As instructor, I constantly apply the basics of critical thinking in my course work. It was only natural to continue this process with the 12 energetic students on this week long experience. From daily rides in Big Clifford and listening to their conversations, I knew they were meeting this challenge.

The students that arrived were diverse in race, age, and sexual orientation. They had the trust to hop in a van, not knowing anyone in the group, and a teacher to help others. Collectively they were amazed at the relationships they forged with each other while working in the midst of the devastation they saw.

At the end of the first day of work on Monday, students were saying, "TV doesn't show how bad it is here." Their assumptions and beliefs related to natural disasters were already being tested. From their point of view, hurricanes happen and then life goes on. Students began to ask questions of the community individuals who we were helping and of the local leaders. They learned about the concepts of FEMA, wave surges and displacement first-hand, not from a textbook. Students engaged in conversations with locals telling their personal experiences about the realities of natural disasters. My theories about applying critical thinking outside the classroom began to materialize with this student service project.

To sum up the service field trip with students to New Jersey, let me say that this experience reinforced my love of being a teacher and a social worker. I can't explain why I am drawn to teaching, but I am. I can't explain why I am drawn to social work, but I am. I combined my passion for both as I engaged with students and encouraged independent thinking about community disaster relief. Eighteen months later as I reminisce on this trip, I am reminded of the meaning making of life experiences. I think about the importance of taking action instead of waiting for someone else to step up. I know that this service trip was one short week of my life as a person and in the role of faculty leadership. In the big scheme of things, this one short week affected more people than I will ever know.

Student Perspectives: Latasha Richards

In December 2012, I went on a service trip with my university to Sea Bright, New Jersey to help with the damage of Hurricane Sandy. We cleared out debris from homes and tried to salvage any memorable items we could for families displaced by the storm. The destruction of the town was a horrible sight for anyone to bear. Houses were ripped from the foundation and blown across streets. Homes by the boardwalk had collapsed on the ground from the ocean's impact. A town where people raised their families was ultimately unrecognizable.

While my fellow students and I were clearing debris from one particular home, the home's owner showed up. She was an elderly woman who was happy to engage us in conversation about the many accomplishments she had in her life, and how her home used to be an old church that her husband rebuilt and renovated. She then went on to say how her husband passed away the previous year, and her children were grown and raising their own families. As she showed us around the home, I could see how the water damage was so severe that she may not be able to stay in her house. Many of her memorable items were in her basement and needed to be thrown out due to mold. However, as I empathized with her on her losses, she did not appear as distraught as I would have thought. The woman made a statement that stuck with me. She said everything I lost was just "stuff." She said she could not dwell on what she lost, rather continue to appreciate who she has.

Although I was not in a cultural environment completely different from my own, I was in an environment that was destroyed, and would take

years to rebuild both physically and emotionally. It was challenging to watch people cry as they looked at their demolished homes and tried to salvage family memories. It was personally challenging going through people's personal belongings and trying to figure out what they may want to salvage.

From this experience I learned that one should not give too much value to stuff. Instead, in times of devastation, people must hold on to community. For one week I was able to see – and better yet be a part of – a community that came together during a traumatic time. I gained trust from people in the community with my desire to help. I was able to encourage people to stay strong through fellowship. I was able to listen. The trip gave me a stronger insight on what it means to be compassionate, as well as how to build character.

Lana Jennings reflected on her time “post Sandy.” She wrote when signing up for the Hurricane Sandy Relief project.

Lana Jennings Reflects

I never anticipated the work involved or the experience I gained from the trip. I never imagined some of the tasks I would be participating in during my stay, such as ripping out the flooring of homes, or rummaging through sewage to find a woman's jewelry. However, the most challenging task I encountered was emptying out the local library. A building full of not only my favorite childhood books, but also the other relief workers. Going through the books we the relief workers went from focused on work to sitting together paraphrasing some of our favorites. Not only was it personal for us relief workers, but it was sentimental for the community. The history from Sea Bright stood in the Public Library, and in a day we emptied books, maps and other essentials from the library. For me this was a very emotional day. The Sea Bright Librarian watched as we wheeled out books on desk chairs or as they were carried out by fifty gallon black trash bags. Looking back now the reason why I struggled with the library in particular was because I came to the conclusion that Sea Bright as a community was never going to be the same, nor were the other communities impacted by Sandy. Over a year later, occasionally a ‘recent’ news clip will shine light on the impact of Hurricane Sandy. As I watch the same clips, many of the homes we were in, are still in the same shape we left them in. Seeing these homes still in disarray is heart breaking for an outsider. I can't imagine what it is like for a local. Sending my thoughts your way Sea Bright.

Maddie Loney Remembers

We heard over and over, from numerous residents, that they “didn't even know what to say” because they were so thankful for us to be there. Our relationship with the citizens of Sea Bright was exceptionally beautiful because it was symbiotic: we wanted to be there just as much as they needed us to help recreate their community. For future disaster relief volunteers, I would say be willing to do anything, because no task is too small. People are appreciative of your help ripping up floors or smashing cabinets, but also the simple act of cleaning an elderly woman's silver jewelry can bring tears of thankfulness. Sometimes the need will be overwhelming, but remember the reason why you are there: to bring joy and hope to an area that may feel disheartened. Stay positive, and you will be welcomed always.

Erin Young Reflects

Many people told me that after my trip to New Jersey I wouldn't be the same. I wasn't sure what they meant by that, and to be honest, it made me anxious about the trip. However, when I pulled into my driveway Saturday night, it was the same. My brick house stood there waiting. My dog greeted me at the door, dancing around and wagging her tail. Warmth hit me as I walked through my house. It was all the same. But they were right, and now I understand what they meant. My heart is not the same as it was when I climbed in the back of the van. My perception of material things around me is a fresh new perspective that I've had the honor of inheriting first hand.

This is not something that can be altered by reading the newspaper or watching the news about the storm. This was changed when I helped carry out of a home everything a person owned to a curb, and then watched it get picked up and carried away. I peeled mold of items that someone cherished. Some materials things are replaceable; others hold sentimental value and will forever be missed. However, the deepest ache in my heart that I have for victims of Sandy is the emptiness of not having a home. Most people can't return home that live

along the coast. They won't get the “at last I'm home” feeling I got on Saturday night. Home is where you can be completely yourself, and feel safe, away from the world. Unfortunately for so many, they have a long journey ahead before they feel at home again.

Nuff Said: Another Student Concludes

I feel like I've aged five years in one week. I don't mean this in a bad way, but I feel like I have witnessed a new light on what is important in life. I got to work side by side with amazing students. I have never been so proud to attend University of Louisville, as we served Sea Bright, New Jersey. I was completely out of my comfort zone but was never home sick. I think this is because we all became a little Kentucky family as we adventured off into New Jersey. The best part is that none of us knew what we were going to be doing, or where we were staying. Yet many people commented on our smiles every morning. This made me grow up and realize what to value in life. The value of stuff can be molded and destroyed, however if you value people you will feel like you have everything you need.

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An Open Discussion AA Meeting Opens My Mind: A Powerful Group Offers Understanding about Clinical Decisions

Penelope Moore

Abstract: An Open Discussion Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting opens the mind of a social work graduate student to the many ways that AA can assist and support people who are challenged by addictive substances. In writing up a fieldwork experience for a course on addictions, she recalls three psychotherapy clients whom she had referred to AA prior to graduate school. The Open Discussion meeting helps her to understand what these clients found at AA. A description of the meeting is interwoven with observations and narrative concerning the process of gaining new perspective. Psychotherapists of all theoretical perspectives are encouraged to attend an Open AA meeting to listen and learn.

Keywords: Alcoholics Anonymous; addictions; psychotherapy; Al-Anon

I begin by introducing myself and this piece. I am an experienced psychotherapist and I returned to graduate school to become the social worker that I had long wanted to be. From the elective courses I selected one on addictions. It offered me more than I had expected, as there was much about the experience of addiction that I had not grasped previously. During the process of writing up a fieldwork experience, I came closer to understanding why I had made referrals to Alcoholics Anonymous some years ago. This piece includes three examples of referrals to AA and a description of the Open Discussion AA Meeting that I attended.

Three Clinical Examples: Client One

What follows is a description of a telephone call that lasted less than five minutes and has had enduring repercussions.

Some years ago with a high fever, I telephoned J.A. (55 y.o. woman) to cancel her psychotherapy appointment the next day. She was surprised to hear my voice and started to talk with me about her day as if it were commonplace that we speak by telephone. I explained that I was unwell with a fever, that I was unable to meet the next day, and that we would meet the following week as scheduled. The cancellation felt almost unmanageable to J.A. She was shaken up and felt panicked. I thought to understand why J.A. was feeling so unsettled, and I considered that her parents were alcoholics. They were unpredictable and frightening. The trauma of her childhood and teenage years haunts J.A. She had been beaten and endured other unpredictable and terrifying situations. I was acting in an unpredictable manner by cancelling our predictably scheduled appointment, and J.A. responded with panic as if her past were the present.

J.A. is determined not to become an alcoholic. At the time of our telephone call she knew few people who were worried about becoming alcoholics. During this brief call, I remembered that Al-Anon meetings might be helpful to J.A. in this time of interrupted psychotherapy. Over the phone, I suggested that she visit an Al-Anon meeting. She did and heard about the experiences that other people had had with their inebriated parents who had behaved in unpredictable and frightening ways. Since then, J.A. has attended Al-Anon meetings regularly while continuing in psychotherapy.

As J.A.'s curiosity grew she went to some AA meetings. Listening, she began to think that her parents had had their own reasons for becoming alcoholics. She concluded that they had not intended to treat her as they did; by using alcohol they thought they were coping. J.A. wonders how her parents could not have noticed that alcohol did not solve their problems, nor did alcohol assist them to be good enough parents to her. This kind of increased awareness and gaining perspective was unavailable to J.A. previously. Since attending Al-Anon and AA meetings she has gained a profound

understanding of herself and others in her life. Once in a while, she remembers the time when I cancelled that psychotherapy appointment and when she ventured to her first Al-Anon meeting. Much about J.A.'s life has changed since. The “can-do” spirit of the AA community has energized her. For instance she has joined other kinds of groups, made new friends, votes, travels, and is enjoying living while continuing to manage her traumatic experiences.

Client Two

C.B. is a divorced 37 year-old man who takes care of his children during the school week, and works 40 hours from Friday evenings through Sundays in a residential home for adolescents. To me he dismissed his regular alcohol and drug use by explaining how he is “not bothered by it at all.” His theory about an inverse relationship between smoking and drinking “proves [that he is] in control.” When he smokes more, he drinks less. Furthermore, he says that he “only consumes 4 mixed-drinks” when he goes out as compared with the “12 mixed-drinks [that he enjoys] every night” when he stays at home. He perceives that going out to meet up with others is good for him, as his alcohol consumption is lowered.

While the psychotherapy continued for C.B., he continued to talk about his life and his experiences. I knew that he needed to talk with people who know more about addictions than I do. I suggested that C.B. attend an AA meeting to listen to what is going on, and to find others to discuss his control over his substance use. He went to a meeting near his work. It surprised him to find a community of other people who did not turn him away because he continues to drink alcohol.

Being welcomed enabled C.B. to find a place where he was heard and where he could listen to others. He found respectful people with whom to discuss experiences he thought were his alone. He met people who had had their own theories about control over their substance use. C.B. heard examples of some ways that other people had persuaded themselves that they were in control over a substance, and not the other way around. In time C. B. listened to his own theories of control with increasing skepticism. Eventually, he took a different approach to his alcohol use. C.B. would not have been able to reflect upon his experiences and those of others without the open door, the open talk of AA.

Client Three

D.E. is an office worker in her mid-20's who lives with her mother. They enjoy food shopping and going on vacation together. Her five siblings live on their own or with families of their own. D.E. says that she goes to bars and nightclubs for some “non-mother time.” These are opportunities for her to drink alcohol and to use cocaine. She states that she keeps no alcohol at home because she would drink it as soon as she crossed the threshold. She told me that she arranges her use of substances carefully so that she is never at home with substances nor is she alone when she uses substances. Once weekly she goes out to lunch with office-mates and reports drinking four glasses of wine. Also, twice weekly she goes to a local nightclub where she reports drinking four to six beers and using six to ten lines of cocaine each night.

The multiple concerns that D.E. has about herself are interwoven with substance use. She considers her substance use to be a “fact” and that it is an understandable means to manage the stresses and tensions in her life. I suggested that D.E. visit an AA meeting and that we include AA in the psychotherapy. At the AA meeting, D.E. met young women, middle-aged women, and elderly women. She met people who could not keep any alcohol in their apartments because they would drink it immediately. She also met people who used alcohol to negotiate their relationships with their mothers. She was not alone in her dilemmas. She heard about other people who had found alcohol to be a false companion and who had experienced alcohol's grasp as detrimental to friendships. D.E. found AA meetings to attend during her lunch breaks and after work. Her evenings at bars were exciting and she found them to be glamorous. In time, she found people at AA with whom to do things that did not include bars or nightclubs. They created ways to enjoy one another in the present, being alive together.

Through my field experience in the social work course about addictions, I came to understand what these three individuals found in AA and in Al-Anon. Each person had an individualized

description of the place and power of substance use in his or her life. While the two people who used substances were convinced that they were each in control of their substances, during the process of psychotherapy their feelings about the cost and how the substance was not freeing them from stress could be addressed. The therapy could hold each person's ambivalence about facing their own substance use. In AA, they found regular people who talked openly about their lives. These were people who had had the experience of thinking that substances helped them manage and then came to realize that substances were harmful to their lives. Each of the three people was welcomed into AA or Al-Anon. Over time, each person became more herself or himself, as substance use became less of a constant.

Fieldwork Experience: An Open AA Discussion

Upon returning from an Open AA Discussion meeting, I thought, "How lucky could I be?" I had visited a meeting that I would recommend to anyone, certainly to my clients. The gathered group was alive with hope and change; it was active on all levels and open to the process of the group (Yalom, 1975). Attending this meeting deepened my understanding of addiction and how recovery is an ongoing process. I am humbled by the attendees' warmth, honesty, and self-respect. The process of the group contained diverse opinions and conflicts. I was impressed with the life-experience of attendees and with their commitment to the group as a whole. I am reminded how powerful groups are. While healing and hope are necessary every day, being with people who talk about their feelings, who may disagree openly, and who have the strength to maintain a respectful stance help to create a group that is cohesive, safe-making, and ripe for change. Attending this meeting clarified my stereotypes regarding the nature of open AA groups as well as my stereotypes about group development and group process in self-help groups. The following is a description of my fieldwork experience and of my thoughts and impressions.

The group was made up of speakers and non-speakers – all were welcome. Most of the 50 people attending were on lunch-break from work: 20% people of color, 25% women, people between 18-75 years old (my estimate). Workers brought bagged lunches from home. Some men wore T-shirts of electric, plumbing, painting, and contracting companies. Women wore attire for their workplaces.

Preparation for the meeting began early with coffee-making and arranging seats at long tables throughout the room, there were also sofas against the walls. The greeter welcomed attendees. The man who would chair the meeting was called by his first name or "chair". He sat behind a small table on a very small stage; he described the format: he would speak first, then the floor would be open and he would call on individuals who raised hands.

The chair described various experiences he had in his lifetime. He used specific examples to convey how disconnected he had been from people when his focus was on drinking alcohol. He said that when he had lived with his brother, he had paid his rent in alcohol. It took time and effort on his part to realize that this was not good for him. With poignancy, he described his ambivalence about acknowledging his addiction. He struggled to face the difficulties of his addiction and of his life. He was humbled by the experience of being sober for 22 years when his memory of terrible times remained vivid.

Then, the chair called on attendees to speak. The meeting included clear differences of opinion and of experience. Passionate feelings were expressed in words. As the end of the meeting arrived, a card that had been passed through the attendees was presented to the chair in recognition of his 22 years of sobriety and of his strength as a person. All stood and held hands in a circle. Some said the Lord's Prayer, others hummed, and some joined in silence.

My Stereotypes and New Learning

This Open Discussion meeting was vital and passionate. I had expected dry and empty speakers. I had been to AA meetings in other local communities where I had heard life-stories told as lectures without feeling and in a tone that sounded pejorative to me. In this meeting, when the chair told of various incidents and situations from his life, of working towards recovering from alcohol use, his tone was warm, humble, and human. I learned that meetings are different from one another (Caldwell, 1999, p. 6). This was a huge realization for me, and I felt abashed. I should have trusted this to be true.

Indeed, I did not realize that I had assumed that all meetings would be the same because my mind was closed and I did not know it was closed. This is humbling.

At an AA meeting held at a hospital, my impression was that the experience of a "Higher Power" seemed by definition to come from Christianity; I wondered how does AA welcome non-Christians (Washton & Zweben, 2006, p. 260)? While in the open discussion AA meeting, I had the impression that differences are assumed, that each attendee has his or her knowledge and experience of a "Higher Power". There seemed to be no single means to access a spiritual connection if that was what one wanted. The experience of the group as a whole was one of many manifestations of connectedness: the chair explained the sentence "We can" to be an affirmation of the increased strength of the group made up of individuals who wonder "Can I?"

I was surprised by the sounds and the silence within the open discussion AA meeting. Some people came early, others arrived throughout the meeting-time, and some left early. Individuals greeted one another by nod, thumbs-up, hug, handshake, slap on the back, or some spoken words. Some people were rustling and in constant motion, crossing and uncrossing legs, shaking a foot, or shifting positions in a chair. Others were doing jobs and chores such as passing a collection basket or a ticket-basket, or tending to the coffee machines and cleaning up the room. When someone was hungry, that person went to the coffee area and returned with crackers and peanut butter. Others sat silent and still. I listened and expected that the background commotion would be distracting; it was not. I had anticipated that all attention would be focused on the person speaking and that if there were a diversion, that silence and attention would be called for. Not at all. The background sounds and movements were part of the tapestry of this meeting. None of these sounds took away from the group experience or from the particulars of what the speaker was saying: these were the sounds of the group. The many chores and activities in an AA meeting are part of the whole experience; doing these tasks can assist attendees who need to be *doing* things to have something to do, to be welcome, and to know that they have a place (Caldwell, 1999, p. 57).

I had anticipated that the desire of anonymity would dominate as it had in other meetings I visited. Of course, each speaker begins with his or her first name, the group chants the name and a welcome, and the person speaks. A number of people spoke very movingly about how the process of recovering from substance use is an ongoing daily struggle. The pain of the effort was palpable. Sometimes, voices rose muttering encouragement to the person who had spoken. To my surprise, some speakers directed themselves to an earlier speaker by name and commented on the position or on the experience that had been described, sometimes 30 minutes prior. There were disagreements among the attendees: a speaker rose to address particulars from his or her life experience and to draw a different conclusion than an earlier speaker had drawn. These voices were adding and building on themes: that recovery is a process that challenges each person daily no matter how many minutes or how many years of being in recovery have been experienced, that members of this AA group have different ideas and experiences about AA and substance use (Tonigan & Hiller-Sturmhofel, 1994). There is a relationship between AA's anonymity and the power of being known and respected for who one is; anonymity and being known can each contribute to healing.

Theoretical Stereotypes and Curative Factors

I assumed that if the people in a group are always changing, then the group may not get beyond an early phase of development such as seeking commonalities. In the open discussion AA meeting that I attended, the heterogeneity of attendees was clearly voiced in the differences of opinion and in the comings and goings throughout the meeting. Variation was in concert with elements of the "universality" of attendees' experiences (Yalom, 1975, p. 99). How could I have forgotten about the "healing forces [that] are inherent in the group" (p. 428)? While Yalom explains the 11 curative factors of group psychotherapy (p. 3), he emphasizes that there are particular healing qualities of AA groups: instilling and maintaining hope and giving advice, guidance, and information.

I understand Yalom to suggest that some of the factors that contribute to group cohesion can assist in the suppression of addictive behavior; these are qualities that are inherent in AA meetings: reality

testing, altruism, and each individual having responsibility to the larger group (1975, p. 99, p. 3, & p. 431).

If a Client Were Hesitant to Attend an AA Meeting

When working with clients who are hesitant or reluctant to attend an AA meeting, I would take a number of approaches to acknowledge and explore a client's unwillingness. The particulars of our discussion would grow as the client and I hear of the client's experiences, expectations, fears, and hopes. I might anticipate possible topics of discussion; my ears must be open to hear what I do not anticipate. By speaking together with curiosity, we can explore and understand. There is always the possibility for a change of mind. We could speak about what the client imagines an AA meeting would be like, and who would attend: aspects of like-me/not-like-me can be explored. A client's reluctance may be about being rejected, being misunderstood, being not accepted for who the client is; or the client's reluctance may be about being welcomed and feeling unworthy. Does the client feel that her or his concerns are too much for me, the psychotherapist, and so I am suggesting that the client seek assistance elsewhere? What if the client attends a meeting and it is a great experience or it is a terrible experience - how will we talk about what happened in the meeting? What if the referral to AA is not helpful? Each aspect of our talking is a means to understand more about the client – how the client feels, thinks, and behaves – in the present, in the imagination, and in the past.

Value in Attending AA Meetings for Professionals

One way to gather information about the nature of the struggle of substance use is to attend AA meetings. Individuals use one another, the group, and aspects of AA to heal and to keep going. The heterogeneity of AA is useful; it can alter and adapt to what attendees need as they change over time. AA is a remarkable organization. Understanding the controversies about addiction and how to treat addictions takes on an urgency when sitting in a room among substance users in different stages of recovery (Davis & Jansen, 1998, p. 176). By attending AA meetings we can learn about the ongoing suffering and strife that burden people who are recovering from their substance use. The difficulty of reversing the physiological changes of addiction is evident (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2004, p. 1). We can watch group dynamics in action. It is humbling to witness the power of people staying together while they disagree; such groups are a powerful force of hope. We can read about the AA Traditions, but seeing them enacted by people gives the words life and a context. It is important to observe that knowing one another is comforting. As clinicians we gather information by listening and watching, by doing research, and by integrating it all in an ongoing process. Going to AA meetings and talking with attendees offers us direct experience with the power of the group and the particulars of AA that heal. By becoming more informed clinicians, we can offer more to our clients.

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A Day in a Chicago Narcotics Court

James H. Williams

Abstract: The “War on Drugs” is the most important component of the “School to Prison Pipeline.” It has turned the criminal justice system into an almost-industrial apparatus which proceeds without regard to rehabilitation or humanity, for that matter. This soul-deadening process is recounted here by a Social Work participant.

Keywords: drugs; substance abuse; criminal justice; racism; war on drugs; courts; probation

In a noisy, crowded, stuffy hallway, rank with the odors of stale sweat and urine, a group of 11 men stand or slouch disconsolately in a cage of iron bars. Their clothes are rumpled and dirty. They are disheveled and obviously haven't washed their faces for some time. These are prisoners, called “overnighters,” arrested only a few hours ago by the Chicago police. They are awaiting a bond hearing before a judge on drug charges. Standing up at the bars, a line of prisoners (mostly Black and Latino men) are being interviewed by obviously middle-class young men and women (mostly white) with clipboards and pens. These are Pre-Trial Services' officers. They will make a report to the judge regarding whether these men should go free while awaiting trial.

The officers shout their questions, hoping to be heard over the din in the lockup. The prisoners listen hard and intently, staring at the officer's faces, looking for meanings in their expressions. Their brows furrow as they answer the questions they are asked. They know the answers they give could decide whether they go free or are forced to remain in jail.

Branch 72 of Municipal District 1 of the Cook County Circuit's Criminal Court is located on the 4th floor of the courthouse at 26th St. and California Avenue. It is an old building, built in 1927. It is where all people arrested on drug charges on the south side of Chicago are brought for a bond hearing and, later, a preliminary hearing to see if they must stand trial. Here, too is where all persons arrested in drug “sweeps” are brought. These “sweeps” bear a variety of names of a quasi-military character: Operation Risky Business, Operation Iron Wedge and Operation Hammer-Down. It is, after all, a “war” on drugs. Military metaphors cloak most activities in criminal justice these days. One can get away with so much more if there's a war, you know.

They consist of two types of arrests: (1) persons accused of buying drugs from an undercover police officer, or (2) persons accused of selling drugs to an undercover police officer (Kleiman & Smith, 1990.) Over 80 percent of those arrested on drug charges are African-American or Latino (Lusane, 1991). Juveniles, aged 16 and 17, who are accused of drug offenses are brought here as well. They are the “Automatic Transfers” transferred directly to Branch 72 instead of the Juvenile Court.

7:00 AM: a police van pulls into the receiving area at the court. Some men in handcuffs are pulled from the van, and shoved into the general lock-up. “Get your butt in there, you dumb fuck,” yells a deputy sheriff, an African-American male, at a laggard. “We haven't got all day for your sorry ass.” The man, who we will call Stokeley, is also African-American. He wipes sleep from his eyes as he gropes for a place on a hard bench along the wall.

Deputy Sheriffs are drawn from the same socio-economic strata as the prisoners. Not much is required to be a deputy sheriff in the way of credentials. A powerful political patron (interestingly called a “Chinaman” in Cook County) is the best guarantee of a job. Consequently, many African-American employees owe their jobs to John Stroger, powerful boss of Chicago's Eighth Ward. For the same reason, the white Sheriffs tend to be Irish or Italian, placed by Vito Marzullo's organization or, in the case of the Irish, the 11th Ward Democratic organization. “Who's your Chinaman?” is a common greeting for newcomers.

There is a thick streak of grease along the wall, an unbroken line, just a couple of feet above the bench where generations of tired men have rested their heads. The noise in the lockup is increasing and decreasing in waves. Some men try to sleep, while others walk around the cage, their eyes darting from one side to another. What are they afraid of?

8:30 AM: The sheriffs begin to lead the men out, one at a time to stand at a machine. They place their eye against a thing that looks like a telescope. It takes a picture of the retina of their eye. This "eye-dent" is supposed to be superior to finger printing, and a computer quickly searches the files to see if the men have arrest records. After they are "eye-dented," the men are led back into the cage. Their fingerprints were taken electronically at the police station, and a computer generated a Chicago Police "rap sheet," which details arrests and convictions in Chicago only.

Upstairs, on the fourth floor, in Branch 72, a computer printer begins to spit out forms, detailing the information the men have given. The printout shows if there is a "match" with their criminal records, and if there are any current warrants for the men. A clerk from the States Attorney will pick up a copy of this printout in the States Attorney's "War Room," a room full of computer terminals connected to criminal justice agencies all around Illinois, to the FBI and Justice Department in Washington, DC. Re: War Room, yes, the military metaphor, again. It was named that by Asst. States Attorney Jim Piper, who set it up. Piper is the kind of guy who has quotations from Nietzsche on his wall. He left the States' Attorney's office recently to take over computer operations at the Chicago Police. He is now Commander Jim Piper.

He will enter the prisoners' data into these computers to perform a nationwide search for information about them.

Downstairs, on the first floor of the courthouse, Pre-Trial Officer Alysha, enters the Pre-trial Service PTS office, one eye on the clock. She dumps an enormous bag on a counter, shrugs out of her coat, grabs a clipboard--and heads for the snack bar. The snack bar is called the "Gangbanger's Lounge" by the PTS officers. It is on the first floor of the court building and is open to the public; lawyers, their clients, client's families, cops, sheriffs and an occasional judge can be seen there. It is one of the few "legal" places to smoke in the building. With a can of tomato juice in hand, officer Aloysha heads for the fourth floor and branch 72. If it's an unusual day, she will be joined by four other officers, Evdokia, Sveta, Sasha and Boris. A "usual" day means that at least one of the officers will call in sick, or request a personal day, or another reason not to come in.

An employee from the jail cafeteria wheels a cart of coffee and sandwiches to the lockup. The employee is a young Mexican male in his 20s. He is a former inmate of the jail, placed on this job by his pre-trial officer. It pays the minimum wage of $5.25 an hour. The coffee and sandwiches are received with enthusiasm only by those who have never eaten them before. The coffee is weak, heavily laced with a cream-like substance and sugar. The sandwiches are simply two slices of white bread and a slice of bologna. It is called "rainbow" bologna by the prisoners, because it is starting to change color.

About me, a recent MSW-social worker and a doctoral student, not exactly your typical Criminal Justice type. Because of the usual understaffing in Pre Trial, I supervise two units: Branch 72, and the "upscale" Felony Trial Courts Unit. The FTCU officers attempt to achieve release for defendants already incarcerated. For purposes of this study, there are advantages and disadvantages to my perspective. As Supervisor of this unit, I have incredible access to almost everything that goes on. I can wander in and out of every area. I'm on chatting terms with everyone here. I can ask anybody anything and nobody will give it a second thought. In this sense, I'm like part of the furniture, I'm invisible – a fly on the wall. I know the process in and out. Coming up through the ranks – I was a pre-trial officer before, I know something about this world from the eyes of a "rank and filer." The flip side of this coin is that I'm also an authority figure. My job is to nose around in my pre-trial officer's business (professionally, at least). I do regular performance appraisals, "grading" their work. My officers, if they are smart, will always maintain a certain distance, never revealing everything. Prisoners, certainly, have every good reason to distrust me, a bad recommendation from us, means a stretch in jail. (Judges frequently ignore our

recommendations that prisoners be released. In my experience, they have never ignored our recommendation to incarcerate. Oddly enough, the people who seem to relate to me best are old-time Chicago police officers. We share stories about our various aches, pains and geriatric complaints. They show me, proudly, their new toys: guns, bullets and retirement community brochures.

There is yet another caveat that accompanies my version of events: because I've been here so long and seen so much, I probably miss a lot of what's actually going on. By now, I've formed a lot of a priori assumptions that shape the way I view everything that goes on. I've tried, consciously, to struggle against that, to look at things in new ways. The reader must beware that I may not be able to distinguish the forest from the trees. I am probably missing something very important.

Here are some Pre-Trial Services Officers: Aloysha is a young African-American women, a college graduate, who grew up in the Robert Taylor Homes. Married to a Chicago cop. Argues that poverty is no excuse for bad behavior. Evdokia, a young white women, UIC grad, lives in the Western suburbs. Her family is composed of career criminal justice officers. Sveta, young white woman with two young children, college graduate degree in education. She lives in Mt. Greenwood with her husband, a union plumber. Sasha is a young African-American woman, who just returned from maternity leave, her first child. Boris is a new hire. An older white man with a powerful Chinaman, he was sent from downtown with orders to hire him. He is having a hard time learning the ropes, especially the computers. He tends to keep to himself and not have much to do with the other workers. Boris is in school now, and likes to read his textbooks on the job. He complained to Democratic machine officials “Downtown” when I admonished him about reading when he should be working.

The officers assemble at their desk. That's right, one desk for all of them, stuffed into a narrow hallway just outside the courtroom. They have one phone between them. Crowded into the hallway are four shabbier, beat-up desks, used by the States Attorneys. Along the other side of the hallway is a long wooden bench, taken from the courtroom. It is here that police officers waiting to testify are “briefed” by the States Attorneys.

The five States Attorneys are young, not long out of law school. They are white, and have a youthful brashness about them, a sense that they may be on a “mission from God.” Maybe not, but that is my impression. “This job is really no fun,” one confided in me, “it's like shooting fish in a barrel. These people (meaning, of course, the prisoners) are so stupid.”

Two public defenders are assigned to this courtroom. They share a desk in a cubbyhole next to the Judge's chambers, with the Chicago Police's fugitive warrant officers. The public defenders seem older than the states' attorneys. They argue with each other about the union contract. Marina, a public defender, white, 30-something, tells me: “I try really hard to defend these guys, but they are so stupid. I can't wait to transfer out of here.”

Meanwhile, the pre-trial Officers are gathering the arrest reports and “rap sheets” on the eleven men who will have initial bond hearings today. (Today there are no women prisoners, also an unusual occurrence.) Sveta is doing the initial screening today. She scans each arrest report to document all the charges, and the amounts of controlled substance the prisoner is accused of possessing or delivering. The officers know that Judge Y.R. Honor tends to set bond according to the cash value of the drugs. They also know that the dealers will easily post the bond, while their customers probably spent their last dime on product. They screen carefully for a history of violent offenses, well aware that these and drug offenses are often related (Robinson, 1993.)

The reader should know that prisoners, who get cash bonds from the judge, still have a chance to get out on bond. The Sheriff, operating under a Federal Court Order resulting from jail overcrowding, releases many prisoners when they are sent to the jail. This release, the Administrative Mandatory Furlough, the “Sheriff's I-Bond, carries no further conditions. More than 40% of those receiving Sheriff's I-Bonds fail to return to court. Today, all prisoners accused of nonviolent crimes will be released if their bond is less than $75,000. Sveta scans the “rap sheets” looking for past convictions and bond forfeitures. Too many

convictions, too many bond forfeitures can sink chances for a low bond or an I-Bond. Sveta portions out the interviews to her fellow officers- they flip a coin to see who interviews the odd number. Clipboards in hand, they file back to the lockup behind the courtroom.

The lockup is an enormous cage, with bars that extend from floor to ceiling. A toilet sits in the corner, in plain view of all. There is no toilet paper. The noisome din is overpowering and the smell from the men and the toilet is nauseating at first. Right now the Sheriff is bringing 25 new men into the lockup. These men, clothed in jail uniforms, are back for their preliminary hearing. The preliminary hearing is where the judge decides if there is enough evidence to go to trial. The police officers come and testify about the arrest. If the judge decides the state doesn't have a case, he lets the prisoners go. If he decides the state does have a case, he schedules the prisoners to be sent to a trial judge. (Frequently, the states' attorneys go to the Grand Jury when the judge decides they have no case, and get the prisoner directly indicted by the Grand Jury).

The prisoners in their tan jail uniforms are boisterous and animated compared to the "overnighters." They, at least, have had a chance to sleep. They add to the noise and confusion.

The Pre-trial Officers stand at the bars, calling out the names of prisoners. The two public defenders are back there now, also straining to be heard, this is their client conference. No discreet lunches at the Athletic Club, no fees negotiated on napkins, for them.

Boris has located Stokeley, who I mentioned at the start of this account. Boris reads Stokeley his Miranda rights and asks him to sign a statement that he has read this before he is interviewed. "Can you get me out?" Stokeley asks Boris. "I need to get out. I got some business to take care of." "That is strictly up to the Judge," Boris replies, "but it can help if you can answer my questions."

Boris tries to get a current address and phone from Stokeley, because Pre-trial Services sends a letter to each client reminding them of their next court appearance. The night before their court date, they get a phone reminder from Pre-trial Services. Only about 24% of the Pre-trial I-Bonds fail to appear, compared to 40% of those released on Sheriff's I-Bonds. Stokeley is vague about his address. He lives with friends and relatives, staying nowhere in particular for any length of time. Finally, Stokeley gives his mother's address and phone, "she usually knows where to find me," he says.

Stokeley responds to questions. No, he doesn't have a job. Yes, he went to South Shore high school, but he didn't finish. No, he didn't get a GED.

"Have you ever been arrested before," Boris asks? No, says Stokeley, this is his first time. (Note: Stokeley's rap sheet indicates over a dozen arrests, with two convictions. He is currently on pre-trial for possession of a controlled substance and unlawful use of a weapon by a felon.) "What about drugs or alcohol," Boris continues, "have you ever had a problem with those?" "No," answers Stokeley, "I don't ever use drugs." (Note: There are needle tracks clearly visible on both of Stokeley's arms. Some of them are the "deep craters" left by "T's & Blues", a crude synthetic heroin substitute from back during the heroin shortage of the 1970s.)

"Will the judge let me go" Stokeley asks. "I can't really say," Boris replies. "It depends on what kind of mood he's in today."

Note: The judge gives Stokeley a $50,000 bond because of his two prior convictions. With only a $50,000 bond, and a nonviolent charge, Stokeley will get a Sheriff's I-bond, and beat Boris home. With a Pre-trial Service I-Bond, Stokeley would have had to report in to an officer, and undoubtedly make urine drops. With a sheriff's I-Bond, he won't have to do anything--nor will he get a letter or phone call reminding him to come to court.

Stokeley slumps back down on the bench, a look of disgust on his face. I ask Boris what he thinks of Stokeley's chances. "He looks pretty good to me, no prior arrests and no history of drug use," Boris says.

Sveta comes dashing up to me. "This guy I'm interviewing says he has TB. I can't interview him if he's got TB." TB is coming back big time in the jail, they say. It's supposed to be a particularly virulent strain that resists treatment. "We've got to at least get an address and phone," I tell Sveta.

"What if he gets out?" "Well, somebody else will have to do it," she replies. She's right; of course, she doesn't get paid enough to risk TB. Why should she carry it home to her kids? I take the file and head to the bars. I get paid enough to risk TB. Besides, I had it once already when I was a kid.

"How do you know you have TB," I ask Courtland, a young African-American in his 20s. He seems thin to me, and short. He looks more like 17 than 25. "They tole me at the clinic," he said, "at County." "Did they put you on some medication?," I asked. "They gave me a prescription, but I stopped taken it after a while," Courtland replied. "Do you have any other medical problems," I asked. "Mostly asthma. I use an inhaler for that."

Courtland lives with his grandmother in the Robert Taylor Homes. He is not sure where his mother is these days. He says she has a problem with alcohol sometimes. Courtland has no job, and dropped out of DuSable High in his sophomore year. He admits membership in the Gangster Disciples. Courtland has two prior arrests, but no convictions. I call his grandmother's number to confirm the information he has given me. "She's not here," a male voice says, "who is this?" When I tell him, he hangs up.

No matter, Courtland has a small amount of drugs. He'll probably get an I-Bond anyway.

Sasha is interviewing Ivanhoe, a young African-American male, who looks awfully young to me, but he insists that he is 18. Ivanhoe is well-dressed in a leather "8-Ball" starter jacket and immaculate Mikes. He tells Sasha that he doesn't have a phone. "Gee, that is too bad," answers Sasha. "It helps to get an I-Bond if you have a phone." Ivanhoe comes up with a number. According to police records, this is Ivanhoe's first arrest (as an adult.) Because Ivanhoe is only 18, we check the juvenile court records. We find three adjudications (convictions) for drugs. We also discover from the juvenile records that Ivanhoe is only 16. Sasha calls the number Ivanhoe has given us and talks with his mother. She confirms that Ivanhoe is 16.

Since Ivanhoe is charged with simple possession--and it's not on a school ground or on CHA property, he should be tried in juvenile court. "Why did you tell the officers you were 18," I asked him.

"Because you can't get an I-Bond at the Juvenile Court," he said. "They give everybody an I-Bond here." The kid is no dummy. Although the Audy Home, the Juvenile Detention Center, is also overcrowded, there is no Federal Court Order in effect there. Juveniles who receive cash bonds have to come up with the money.

Later, I catch Sveta in the hallway. She looks frazzled. I ask her if she's having a rough day. Not so bad, she replies, but she is worried about reports of a serial rapist on the loose in Mt. Greenwood. "My husband won't even let me go to the mall by myself with the kids anymore," she says. "He says I'm too vulnerable when I got two infants in car seats." She pauses, stares out the greasy window. "I hate being scared." I wonder how she must feel about the prisoners she interviews, day after day. (This week, Sveta turned in her resignation. She is going to stay home with her kids.)

About 10:00 am, Judge Y.R. Honor comes down the hallway. An African-American, is in his 40s, Y.R. Honor has a reputation as a tough judge. "The trouble with you liberals" he once told me "is that you feel sorry for the perpetrators and not the victims. It's true that these defendants are Black and poor. But you forget that their victims are Black and poor also! What about their rights?" Today, the judge has another beef against liberals.

The liberal IVI-IPO which has always endorsed him for election, has given the nod to a gay activist lawyer. "The gays packed the endorsement meeting," he complained. Judge Y.R. Honor is especially involved with juveniles who are brought into his court as adults. He sets strict terms of release; 24-hour curfews-and he makes them come sit in his court every day until they either enroll in school or get a job. Wags around the courthouse call this unhappy group of young men, Judge Y.R. Honor's "choir."

10:15 AM: Judge Y.R. Honor ascends the bench and begins his "call." He begins with the preliminary hearings for the men in the tan jail uniforms. The routine is set. As a man is brought out, a police officer steps forward and testifies that he sold drugs to this man, or bought drugs from this man or saw him drop plastic bags "containing a white, rock-like substance" on the ground. The state's attorney

questions the police officer. The public defender tries to find a hole in the police officer's testimony. The judge rules. About 20% of the cases are thrown out at this point, usually because the police officer is not there to testify.

As these hearings are going on, the Pre-trial Officers complete their files on the interviews that they have completed. They look up additional criminal history in the computer. They begin calling the names the prisoners gave them to see if they can verify any of the information they were given. They draft a report on each prisoner, with a recommendation on bond for each of them. They know that the judge won't call them out for a couple of hours. Evdokia goes over yesterday's court records. She will note the defendants who didn't show up for their preliminary hearing. If she can find a working number in our files, she will call them and suggest that they show up for court before the police come and get them. I drift over to my other office, to see what's cooking there.

Boris calls me on the phone. He has interviewed a Mexican prisoner (who speaks English), but the grandmother he gave as a reference only speaks Spanish. Boris doesn't speak Spanish, what should he do? I tell him the fact that the young man has given a working phone number, and that somebody actually answered the phone bodes well. He should consider the information verified. I don't have any Spanish-speaking officers. It's a sore point with me. We've sent the names of several likely candidates downtown. What downtown sends me are white suburbanites. I should call the grandmother. But my Spanish is not so hot. And over the phone, where I don't get any visual cues? I think not. I prefer to fume to myself about the patronage system.

At 12:45, Judge Y.R. Honor calls the "overnighters." The Pre-trial officers scramble to get into court, grabbing their clipboards, leaving uneaten fragments of sandwiches in their wake.

The overnighters file out of the lockup and into the jury box in the courtroom. They sit solemnly and quietly. Some crane their heads to see if their friends or relatives have come to court to bail them out.

Ivanhoe is called first. The judge reads the arrest report and announces "finding probable cause to detain." He turns to the States Attorney for their presentation. "It seems this young man is 16, your honor," Conan, the States Attorney says. "He lied about his age when they picked him up." Judge Y.R. Honor looks at Ivanhoe through his hooded eyes. "Is this true, son, are you only 16?" "Yes," Ivanhoe states. "Has this information been checked out, Pre-trial" the judge asks? Boris, who's doing the reporting today, tells the judge that his mother says he is only 16. "In that case, son, I'm returning you to the Audy Home. "Let them figure out what to do with you," the judge says. Ivanhoe is escorted back to the lockup, only this time, he is kept in a separate room because he is a juvenile.

When Stokeley is called, he wobbles a bit on the way up front. The judge, reading the arrest report, rules cause to detain. The State recites Stokeley's criminal history, his many arrests and two convictions. They note that he is on l probation and ask permission to file a Violation of probation for picking up another case. Judge Y.R. Honor rules no, they can't file a VOP. He sets a high cash bond, but not high enough that the sheriff won't let Stokeley go on an I-Bond. As the sheriff leads Stokeley from the courtroom, Stokeley asks him if he will get to go home.

Courtland begins coughing as he approaches the bench. He uses his sleeve to cover his mouth. His public defender takes a slight step to the side, avoiding his touch. "Finding probable cause to detain," the judge intones. The States Attorney can find no prior convictions. "The defendant has lived in Cook County all his life, Your Honor, we're asking for a reasonable bond," the Public Defender says.

That's about as much as the P.D. ever says on behalf of their clients "Lived in Cook County all his life." What good do they suppose that does? (At one time, the courts used to worry if defendants would flee the jurisdiction. Now, everyone wishes they would just go away somewhere else; don't come back.)

The judge gives Courtland an I-Bond, telling to report in person to Pre-trial Services twice a month.

Having completed hearings on the overnighters, the judge returns to the remainder of his call. The Pre-trial officers gather their materials and return to the lockup. There, they will give each I-Bond recipient an appointment card telling them when to report to Pretrial, and their next court date. Courtland takes his card without comment as the officer explains his conditions. "Don't forget," Evdokia tells him. "If you don't show up the judge can revoke your bond and put you in jail." Courtland shrugs. The threat of jail doesn't seem to carry much weight with him.

Stokeley is less sanguine about the prospects of jail. "I got business to take care of," he tells Evdokia. "I can't be up in here." He is beginning to perspire, and he is rubbing his arms in jerky little motions. Heroin withdrawal is beginning to set in.

Their "post" interviews completed, the pretrial officers begin to file downstairs. They got out early today, so they'll be able to get lunch. That puts them in a happy mood.

After lunch, they'll begin putting today's files into the computer database. Aloysha, Evdokia and Sveta are accomplished at data-entry. Sasha and Boris struggle to get their files into the computer. The computer program they use, PROMIS (Prosecutors Management Information System,) is clunky and unwieldy, requiring them to memorize long strings of complicated commands. PROMIS was developed by a friend of former Attorney General Edwin Meese, and acquired by the Justice Department.

It has since become a standard program used by criminal justice agencies all over the country. Recently, the makers of PROMIS have sued the Justice Department for software piracy. PROMIS has shown up in the hands of foreign criminal justice agencies, such as South Africa's Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and the former Shah of Iran's SAVAK. But the makers of PROMIS complain that they have received no royalties.

At 3:00 PM, their cases entered into the computer, Sasha faxes a summary up to the post-release supervision office at 1500 N. Halsted. There, today's cases will be assigned to supervising officers.

The officers are relaxed now, and chatting with their colleagues from the two other drug courts in the building, Branch 25 and Branch 57, where an identical process has been going on all day. At 3:30, they grab their coats, sign the sign-out sheet and head out the door.

4:00 PM: a police van pulls into the receiving area at the court. Some men in handcuffs are pulled from the van, and shoved into the general lock-up. "Get your butt in there, you dumb fuck," yells a deputy sheriff, an African-American male, at a laggard. "We haven't got all day for your sorry ass." The prisoner is also African-American. He wipes sleep from his eyes as he gropes for a place on a hard bench along the wall.

Notes on Narrative Methodology

The intent of this narrative was to give some notion of what it was like to be a Pretrial Services Officer, in the first place, and secondarily, what it was like to be around Branch 72 of the Circuit Court of the County of Cook. It is based upon my experience working there, i.e. my personal observations as a participant observer. Other kinds of data were gathered from police arrest reports, rap sheets and FBI data.

What I found was that the task was much more difficult than I anticipated. I kept a reporter's notebook at hand, and scribbled furiously, when I could remember to scribble. Other times I was too busy or too involved in what was going on around me. Only later was I able to sit down and work at recall. I also discovered that I was writing, and rewriting, and rewriting. Now, years later, I reflect retrospectively and seek to portray, for our *Reflections* readers, what I saw, heard, and felt.

This narrative is primarily descriptive and not analytical. I had hoped to spend more time not only showing how things are, and how they should be, but to also indicate what should not be (Callebaut, 1993, p. 99).

My experience suggests a number of ethical problems. What is appropriate consent? Defendants are read their confidentiality rights from a canned legalize paragraph that probably means little to them. After reading the canned form, I interpret it to the defendant in "English." What

kinds of protection can be provided for the privacy of the individuals? Glesne & Peshkin (1992) and Eisner (1991) provided a way of looking at the problem and defining it – but few concrete solutions emerged from their writing. What they did convey was the sense of relativity and situation-specific guidelines to this kind of research. The key aspect of confidentiality is the protection of those being studied, and the duty of the researcher to agonize over this question.

Kotlowitz (1991) and Portelli (1991) provided approaches and examples from the world of journalism and oral history which provided important clues to me. Confidentiality is implied at a minimal level: names have been changed. But certainly any of the major court personnel involved will be able to recognize themselves and/or their colleagues. So, arguing as Plummer (Glesne & Peshkin, 1991, p. 119) do, "Sometimes the researcher must partially deceive his readership." Thus, in some cases, I've further disguised my account, using composite examples of the individuals involved.

In the case of the prisoners, I have actually taken a journalistic step: the prisoners are composites, cobbled together from bits and scraps of actual individuals. "Stokeley, Courtland, and Ivanhoe" do not exist as actual persons. People much like them do exist. The details and the incidents which are described here are true. They actually happened. But not to any one person that can be identified here.

One of my goals in this research was to illuminate areas for intervention by social work. What, if anything, does social work provide in this setting? It is difficult to interest social workers in the criminal justice setting. One reason, a growing complaint, is that social workers have "abandoned" the poor and oppressed, preferring to provide psychotherapy to the middle-class "worried well" (Specht & Courtney, 1994; Ehrenreich, 1985).

Another reason that social workers who do work with the poor and oppressed avoid the criminal justice system is the conflict with traditional social work goals of client self-determination and autonomy (Compton & Galaway, 1989; Germain & Gitterman, 1981.) Hopefully, a little glimmer of light may emerge from this research, showing how social work is needed in this setting, despite obvious problems.

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Putting a Human Face on the Material and Making It Real: Claire's Narrative of Chaos

Claire Bee and Paul Johnson

Abstract: The following narrative describes one of the author's experiences of dealing with a life with “mental illness.” During the course of taking a social welfare policy course, the student approached the teacher about revealing her story. It transpired that by revealing her story, the class was brought to life and a human face was put onto the concepts under discussion.

Keywords: Social work, social welfare policy, mental illness, narrative, pedagogy, Council on Social Work Education, Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

In the Spring of 2011, Claire took a Social Welfare Policy course, with me. In the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Maine, undergraduate students are required to take two social welfare policy classes. The first class is an Introduction to Social Welfare and is also part of the University of Southern Maine's Core Curriculum; and is moreover offered as a social cultural analysis course.

The second course Social Welfare Policy builds on the material covered in Introduction to Social Welfare by examining in greater detail varied policies that impact upon one's well-being. All of the educational objectives of the second welfare policy course are related to the Council on Social Work Educational Policy Core Competences (CSWE).

Over the course of the 15 week semester, the following curriculum content is addressed: historical overview; social work in the public and private social welfare systems; families experiencing financial, emotional and social difficulties; children in difficulty; the education system; problems of youth, crime and violence; the graying of America; health problems; emotional problems and mental illness; veterans; medical, social, and emotional problems in the military; immigration issues; international social problems; natural disasters; terrorism; and random violence.

It is my belief, that the class meets the expectations of the 2008 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards:

> The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work's purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons. (2008, p. 1)

In addition, the course is also grounded in the liberal arts, and in the person and environment construct. Educational Policy B2.2 (Generalist Practice) states (CSWE, 2008):

> Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to

> the impact of context on professional practice. BSW practice incorporates all of the core competencies (pp. 7-8).

The reason that this milieu is so significant is that it provides the structure for the class. This leads into operationalization of these concepts. I adhere to a teaching philosophy that is based on a strengths based perspective. I believe that the students who are in class with me have a vast knowledge and wealth of experience that if positively encouraged can be shared with their peers. One of my responsibilities is to provide a setting for discussion, critical thinking, and support. The students themselves possess a great deal of knowledge, strength, and resiliency.

In other words, at times, I believe educators mistakenly perceive the material as being theoretical and abstract. However, it has been my experience, in teaching at two public urban social work programs, that our students know and have experienced firsthand many of the issues that we hold as tenants of the profession.

Indeed, I would assert that for many who work in the profession, numerous concepts are abstract. As practitioners it is often the case that we have not personally experienced poverty, homelessness, school violence, health problems, emotional problems, or mental illness. Yet, for many of our students these concepts are not abstract but real and personal.

Regarding my teaching philosophy, there are several key concepts which I utilize in my teaching. First, there is Malcolm Knowles' (1980) concept of andragogy. The underlying premise of this philosophy is that I view my students as adult learners and therefore utilize different, more sophisticated learning approaches than the traditional pedagogical approach based on the premise of dependency. Andragogy embraces the following five assumptions:

1. Self-concept: As a person matures his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.

2. Experience: As a person matures he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.

3. Readiness to learn. As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.

4. Orientation to learning. As a person matures, his /her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application; and accordingly, his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.

5. Motivation to learn: As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal.

Hence, guided by these five principles, I believe that the students I engage with in my respective courses are highly motivated, have a great deal of knowledge and experience to share with their peers, and are looking at issues from a problem centered orientation. This leads to the second teaching philosophy which I incorporate into all of my teaching. As an instructor, I reject the classical pedagogy model, which is based on a hierarchical philosophy that I believe disempowers students by, among other things, assuming that students and can only acquire knowledge, not produce it.

This pedagogical approach is referred to by Freire (1970) as “banking education.” I engage students in a contextual practice in which all are willing to participate, take risks, make connections, and enter into discourse to see what will work both theoretically and practically. In other words, I believe students have a responsibility to participate in class discussions and for sharing their extensive knowledge and experiences. They are not passive participants, but engaged learners. There is the assumption on my part that the class is a partnership, which is challenging, creative, and dynamic.

Incorporating a multicultural pedagogy I refuse to assume ahead of time that I have the appropriate knowledge, language, or skills; instead, I engage students in a contextual practice in which he or she is willing to risk making connections, drawing lines, mapping articulations between different domains,

discourses, and practice, to see what will work, both theoretically and practically. In his book Border Crossings, Giroux (2005, p. 21) posits that culture is a foundation for pedagogical and political issues and thus must be central to schools' functions in the shaping of particular identities, values, and histories by producing and legitimating specific cultural narratives and resources: “Border pedagogy points to the need for conditions that allow students to write, speak, and listen in a language in which meaning becomes multiaccentual and dispersed and resists permanent closure. This is a language in which one speaks with rather than exclusively for others.”

Indeed, the aforementioned was the case with Claire. We had discussed in class many of the issues that face individuals who suffer with emotional problems and mental illness. It had been a wonderful class. We had discussed how mental health issues seem to be dominated by a medical philosophy. A number of students referred to *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (Fadiman, 1997), in which a Hmong family is forced to comply to the medical and cultural manners of the United States. Again, as the instructor of the class, I was delighted that the students were relating the material to other classes they had taken in the Social Work Program.

Following the class, Claire e-mailed me and stated that she would like to present to the class a paper she had written on mental illness. She also informed me that she had experienced mental illness first hand. I wrote back to Claire at first expressing my concern that I didn't want Claire to put herself in a position where she would be revealing too much about her own life.

However, Claire assured me that she wanted to do this. Claire stated that while the theoretical material we had covered the previous week had addressed the conceptual issues, she believed that by telling her story she would be able to bring this material to life, and it would have far more meaning and significance by putting a human face on it.

At the beginning of every class I write on the board what we are going to cover each week. In fact, this became part of the ritual and routine of the class. Indeed, the students would often tease me before and after doing this. In some ways, it is our “ice breaker” and gets everyone, I like to think, focused on the class. I stated that not only would I be presenting material today but Claire would also be speaking to the class. We proceeded through our course content for the day, and it came time for Claire to speak.

Chaos

I don't remember an exact moment when I realized I had a mental illness. The knowing came over the years, seeping in like a pea soup fog. When I was a teenager I had erratic mood swings and I was often depressed. But aren't all teenagers moody? And my home life was horrendous. In my twenties, I chalked up my disorganized thoughts to my artistic nature and to the variety of recreational drugs I was using. When I was in my thirties, the negative symptoms moved into my life like an on-coming train and by my forties my life was a virtual train wreck. At the age of forty-five, I'd lost my children, my marriage, my home and my job. For the next several years, I wallowed in the symptoms, not knowing how to cope with my illness or how to escape it.

Along the way psychiatrists gave my illness a name – bipolar disorder with psychotic features, a psychosis otherwise known as manic depression. My life was a constant, repeating cycle of very miserable lows and agitated highs. When I was depressed, I could not tackle the simplest of tasks. I dreaded everything: using the phone, answering the door, opening mail, being in crowds, taking a shower, or changing my clothes. On the rare occasions when I found the courage to leave the house, I kept my eyes downcast, afraid of meeting the eyes of a stranger. Most times I could not manage to lift my head off the pillow in the morning. I slept in bed all day and lay awake through the night, feeling flattened and defeated. For me, life was a series of hurdles that I had been tripping over for decades, with no end in sight.

Sometimes I screwed up enough courage to attempt something that I dreaded. I would point out the purpose to myself, like a mother telling a child, “This is good for you. Believe me.” If I tried to conquer the worst of my fears and I succeeded, in spite of everything, in finishing what I had set out to do, I had no feeling of accomplishment. All it

would do was depress me more; it made me conscious of the number of times each day that I had to steal myself for something. All of my life consisted of doing things that I dreaded. It was never easier the next time.

When I was depressed, I saw my life in a series of flashes. Like changing patterns in a kaleidoscope, they were handed to me at unexpected times, introduced in a neutral voice: “Here is where you are now – hopeless. Here is where you have been – worthless. Take a look." Between flashes, I'd sink into darkness. I'd drift in a daze, floating off into numbness again. Some say that hell is fire and brimstone. It's not. It is nothingness.

My mania wasn't the euphoric state that the word suggests. My manic cycles were riddled with agitation, insomnia, restlessness, lack of concentration, paranoia and rage. It was during these cycles that I most often blew up my life. Mania for me meant racing thoughts. While others have described racing thoughts as streaming thoughts or a “slide show thrown up into the air,” my racing thoughts were like six or more CDs stacked on top of one another, all playing in my brain at various rapid speeds and different volumes.

When I was manic and someone spoke to me, it took an enormous amount of energy to slow my thoughts down and choose an appropriate response. Sometimes I chose incorrectly. It was during these times that I was most concerned that others would see through my façade and glimpse at the chaos that was inside my head.

In early 1998, I began having auditory hallucinations. The voices were benign: telling me to tie my shoes, ordering me to answer an imaginary doorbell, and demanding that I respond as they called out my name. The chorus in my head said only one thing to me, though – “You really are *crazy*!" I calmly decided to kill myself.

On the appointed evening, at dusk, I slipped into a steaming bath and, unceremoniously, slit my wrist. I bled out fast, the water turning an inky indigo. My only thought was, “My blood is blue.”

A sudden change in plans brought my roommate home to find me with barely a pulse. I loved him like a son; he hasn't spoken to me since. My days at Maine Medical Center were a blur. I was involuntarily transferred to Jackson Brook, a private psychiatric hospital in South Portland, where I quietly took-up an uncooperative attitude. I isolated myself in my room, refused medication and ate only when threatened with force feeding. I could cut my wrist with a razor blade, but I couldn't face a tube shoved down my nose. I would wait them out. Eventually they would have to release me and I would complete my mission.

Three words saved my life: “You selfish bitch!” My daughter spat the words at me over the phone with such venom that they reeled me back on my heels. For days I wore the admonishment around my heart like a wet wool coat. My child was right. She was absolutely *right*! I had not given my kids a nanosecond of thought. They had already been through so much. It's miserable growing-up with an undiagnosed, mentally ill parent. I know, because I did. My girls and their friends thought I was fun when I was manic, but usually I was unavailable, drowning in my own despair. I had abandoned them as children and as teenagers; I had tried to leave them behind for good. I was selfish *and* a coward. The hospital professionals claimed they could help me, and I owed it to my children to let them try. I got out of bed, took a deep breath and prepared myself to wage war.

The first battle was medication; for the most part, trial and error. Some medications resulted in psychotic breaks, others meant my symptoms worsened; but I was a dutiful lab rat. I saw a different psychiatrist every weekday, and each brought something new to the table. Finally the right combination of psychotropics was put together and, one month to the day of first taking the drug cocktail, a miracle occurred.

I woke before dawn feeling rested and alert. I curled up by the window and watched the sunrise, musing, “This is a new day.” No voices in my head commented on the canary-colored orb rising in the sky. As I watched new light filter through the panes, my thoughts came slowly, one-at-a-time. There was order. There was calm. I supposed, with amazement, “This is what it must feel like to be normal!”

I brought my new brain to group therapy on the ward. We were a tossed salad: paranoid schizophrenia and bipolar psychosis, borderline personality disorder and clinical depression, social anxiety and panic disorders. We met on common ground – we were all nice people and all were in pain. Of the hundreds of patients I saw, only one was violent – a better average than is found in the general population. Some had virtually given up, checking-in to the hospital as many as thirty times in one year, whenever the struggle became too much. I vowed never to return.

That was thirteen years ago. The road to normalcy has been peppered with twists, rocks, and roadblocks. I have existed on Social Security Disability Insurance, a meager six hundred dollars per month. I haven't enjoyed living with my hand constantly extended, palm up. All the drugs have had side effects: dizziness, blurred vision, loss of balance, weight gain, high blood pressure, arrhythmias, short-term memory loss and tremors. Additional medications must be taken to counteract them. The mind proved mysterious. Medications suddenly stopped working for no apparent reasons; brands and amounts required regular monitoring and tweaking. If I forgot a dosage or ran out of a drug, it would take weeks, sometimes months, to recover. I learned quickly that my cocktail alone was not enough. I had to make use of every weapon in the arsenal.

Knowledge *was* power. I read everything I could put my hands on pertaining to my disorder. I learned that bipolar disorder is a chemical imbalance, emerging when neurotransmitters in the brain give-up too much in specific compounds to receptors, not leaving enough along the pathways to regulate normal moods and cognitive process. My illness was a series of short circuits, out of my control. I found that manic depression has a genetic component, explaining why my mother had it and why four of my seven surviving siblings also have it. The disease is progressive; the longer is goes untreated, the more difficult it is to restrain. Control was the most I could hope for – there was no cure.

Medical convention said that the shortest path to recovery would be medication integrated with talk therapy and behavior modification. I continually attended weekly, one-hour individual therapy sessions and two-hour skills building groups, I reviewed medications with my psychiatrist once every eight-to-ten weeks. I learned how to identify emanating symptoms and discovered means to cope. Today I am in college at the University of Southern Maine, hoping to become a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). Mental health professionals call this step in the process part of “reintegration.” School has proved to be challenging. I am handling critical, analytical thinking; but am finding rote memorization difficult. I'm working to find the right triggers with the help of my therapist, an LCSW. The hustle of the crowds can sometimes make me a tad nervous, and time management hasn't exactly been my forte over the last several years – so I've learned to stay extremely organized. All in all, I'm greatly enjoying myself, and I expect to be participating at graduation and going on to graduate school.

I'm driven by the common person's goals. I want to enjoy my life and I want it to have a purpose. I'm bone weary of living in poverty and I'd like to help put my children through college. However, like anyone who has been to the edge and returned, I feel a responsibility to give back. I disclose my illness whenever I can, risking comments like, “Funny, you don't look crazy.” What does a “crazy” person look like, anyway?

I am mentally ill, but I'm one of the lucky ones. Our prisons and streets are full of the likes of me. I am not a hero, and I'm certainly no poster child for mental illness. I'm just playing the hand that was dealt me, hoping the next draw is a lucky card. I wake every morning and thank the powers that be for what I have: I walk and talk and breathe on my own; I have two beautiful daughters that love me; there is a roof over my head and; when I have time to grocery shop, I have food in the 'fridge; I have a car; and my brain, that for so many years tormented me, is allowing me to learn again. I have absorbed an invaluable lesson in my life, one that I can only hope to pass on to my daughters through leading by example. There is no shame in falling down. The shame is in staying down.

Reaction of the Class

I had glanced up at class regularly while reading Chaos; but now that I was finished, I was afraid to look up. There was complete silence. Were they

stunned? Were they shocked? Were they maybe even disgusted? Then the entire class burst into applause, as they rose to their feet. I blew out a long, slow breath. Paul said, in his charming British accent, "Well, I can't compete with that," and threw his hands into the air. We all laughed. Then they came, single file, to the front of the classroom. I received a bouquet of hugs and thank yous for sharing my story.

Beth said, "I know you're going to change the view of people who look through a stereotypical lens. And I think you're going to empower others in similar situations."

"You mean other people living with mental illness?" I asked.

"Uh huh," Beth said.

I smiled widely. "That would be fantastic, if I could."

One classmate told me, "You put a human face on the material." Another, that "You made this real for me."

Patrice grasped both my hands and locked her eyes with mine. "That is one of the most inspirational and emotional life stories I have ever heard!" I think I began to tear up. "I was thinking while you were talking that this was a story I might read about in the textbooks. But you were right there in front of me. This was real life."

Melissa hung back for the opportunity to talk to me at length. "You know," Melissa started, "You are always smiling and so outgoing. I never would have guessed that you struggle with a mental illness!"

"'Funny, you don't look crazy?' Right Melissa?" And we both smiled.

"Well, when you said you wanted to share your life story, I was caught off guard. I didn't know what to expect. But when you began reading my throat closed and tears filled my eyes. I was so focused on your story. The way you told it was astonishing. I could not believe that the story you were reading was *your* life story. All this time I knew you, Claire; and I had no idea! It could be anybody you know, huh?"

"Oh, yes." I answered, thrilled at Melissa's reaction. "Mental illness doesn't discriminate."

Melissa gave me a farewell hug, and was the last student to leave the classroom. I swung my legs up onto Paul's desk. "I'm just going to sit here a minute. Reflect a little."

"Right," Paul said as he moved toward the door. He stopped at the threshold and turned toward me and said, "Thank you, Claire. That was bloody brilliant."

Claire's Reaction

My intent in presenting Chaos to the class was threefold. I wished to put a very personal face on the concept of mental illness. I wanted to help bring the CSWE core competencies to life. And I wanted my classmates to understand that people with mental illness can be full participants in our communities.

I specifically wanted to present Chaos in our classroom because we were reading about the behaviors and ideations that we label as mental illness in our culture, and what we were reading was most likely authored by people who have no direct knowledge of the experience. I wrote Chaos because I wholeheartedly believe that what mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, more unashamed conversation about illnesses that affect individuals and their families. It is my hope that the act of bearing witness to my narrative remedies some of the distortion, stigma, and shame around the experience of managing a life impacted by mental illness.

I was overjoyed (albeit relieved) with the reactions of my classmates – in their responses there was light, openness, and honest exchange. Their remarks then, and their emails since, reflect that they received Chaos in the spirit in which it was presented. I am optimistic that my narrative helped us along the road to understanding and constructive dialogue.

An unexpected benefit came out of my classroom experience. Beth's words kept resonating in my

head: “I think you're going to empower others in similar situations.” I decided to give a copy of Chaos to my therapist, Judy; and give her permission to use it any way she saw fit. She has since told me, “Claire, you have no idea how many lives you touched. Clients read it in my office and sit there sobbing. ‘That's my husband! That's exactly how he is!’ Suddenly they're not alone. They're not the only one. And there's hope.”

Paul's Reaction

In addition, as the teacher of the class, I would say that Claire transformed the class. From that moment on, the material was no longer abstract, but real. Indeed, I believe this was further illustrated in the student's final papers and group presentations. One group of students wrote and presented about contemporary Gay, Lesbian, Transgender policy issues, another about contemporary Mental Health policy issues, another about Veterans and the difficulty many are experiencing in obtaining services. Another group wrote and presented about contemporary immigration policy issues, another about contemporary foster care issues. There was richness in and a real connection to the material. As the instructor of the class, I was delighted that the students had taken over the class; they were the ones driving the whole process.

Conclusion

While I would not propose or advocate that in each class students disclose personal information about themselves, what Claire did was extremely courageous. However, I also believe that she gave this matter a great deal of thought and consideration before presenting her narrative. As for the explanations of why she felt able to do so, one is that she had already been in many classes with her peers; secondly, she believed that her story would enhance the learning in the class. The presentation was not done to shock or disturb, but rather for us to learn and understand.

For me, and I believe for everyone who was in the class that day, Claire's story was told with compassion, honesty, and hope. The challenge for us was to let go of our preconceived notions and the stereotypes that impede our thinking. Rather to operationalize the competencies that are being articulated in the EPAS standards: apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice; advance human rights and social economic justice; apply critical thinking; apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment; and engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being. These are not just concepts but are real and they are part of everyday life. What Claire did was make them real and meaningful. In addition, Claire put into practice, the concepts and beliefs of Freire, Giroux and Knowles, that indeed the real power and source of knowledge comes from the students themselves.

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The Rhinoceros: A Women's Studies Finale

Christina Geerts and Carol L. Langer

Abstract: A student describes her experience in one of the first courses she takes in college, an introduction to women's studies. The course setting was a Colorado regional comprehensive university with a student population of 5,000. This introductory course is a survey course, and as such, covers many areas of oppression and discrimination. The student tells her story alongside the instructor's narrative as they move together through the course, getting to know each other better. The student relates her personal experience of difference and strength. The instructor relates her surprise at the final project chosen by the student and shares a thoughtful reminder of being non-judgmental.

Keywords: women's studies; oppression; discrimination

She sat in the front row of the women's studies class. The course was an undergraduate introductory course, and as such, was a survey of readings in substantive areas such as race, gender identity and expression, work and wealth, etc. Twenty-four of her peers ranging in age from 76 to 18 scattered across the rest of the room. There were only two males in the class. The 76-year-old was a woman with a master's degree who had a stroke with accompanying facial paralysis. The paralysis caused great difficulties in understanding her speech, and the drooling that occurred because of her inability to close her mouth also could have been off-putting for students. However, this elegant woman directly addressed her physical issues; in doing so, she put the students at ease, and they felt they could then embrace her. She was a remarkable woman.

The two males in the class came from different life experiences. One was a Hispanic father and grandfather in his 50s. The other was a 21-year-old typical college student. They were not silent, not even on the first day of class. They participated fully in each and every activity and discussion. They did not agree with each other because one considered himself to be a social conservative and the other considered himself to be a social radical. Neither of these students had a particular core of female students who agreed with the stated position. Neither male wanted such a group, either. The group developed as people maintained their individual perspectives, reserving the right to speak to various sides of the issues. The instructor had not taught this particular course for eight years and was highly cognizant of the nature of courses such as this. They can be lightning rods for the explosive thoughts and feelings that students share. The student who is the subject of this story was unassuming, had blonde curly hair, and nearly always had a smile on her face. She always came a little early, as if she did not want to miss anything. The instructor also arrived a bit early in order to be available to students. That way, the course was being taught necessitated the development of relationships among students and with the instructor.

Christina's Story

As a high school senior, I did not know what to expect going into college. So I picked a major that I was comfortable with, art. As the summer came to an end, I decided to change my major to nursing because I knew I would always have a job in the healthcare system and I wanted to work with children who have cancer. At that time, I was enrolled in my first women's studies class; and I was skeptical because I thought it was going to be a course on just women and their history. By the end of the semester, I felt I had learned more about myself and the world around me.

Instructor

It is true that this particular class make-up somehow gelled in the way that few classes do. Even though there was no mandatory attendance policy, absenteeism was rare. We built a trust early on, and this allowed us to tackle the thorniest of issues. On our first day, most of the one and one-half hours was filled with ice-breaker activities. People needed to

get to know each other quickly because they were going to be working in small groups throughout the course, and they were going to be discussing controversial, consciousness-raising material. The activity that I used to learn people's names is a favorite of mine. I asked students, “If you were a jelly bean, what flavor and color would you be and why?”

Other examples of this exercise are: buffet items, ice cream flavors, rivers, mountains, movie stars, and just about anything else that comes in different shapes and sizes. Ironically, students do learn each other's first names very quickly, but the last names are often replaced by the item they chose, such as Susie Paper (as in paper or plastic). I began the class in a large group and then broke down into a series of small groups for the first two weeks. We continued with the readings, and I distributed some paperwork that accompanied the readings but made the content personal. An example of the paperwork asks the student to describe one time they experienced some sort of discrimination. No one was forced to participate, but everyone was encouraged to discuss the content with which they felt comfortable.

At first, there was silence with perhaps one person talking. Before long, I heard laughter coming from nearly every group. I rotated people around the room so that they began to know everyone. She rotated through the small group formations just as other students, and I noticed her participating.

There were several times where I asked her to physically move her chair to more of a “belonging” position in the group. Taking a diversity walk helped to solidify some of the similarities among the students, and after this walk, people seemed to feel more free to tackle some tough issues in interpersonal dialogues. A diversity walk utilizes movement among various groups of “same” and “different.”

Several examples are: (1) you have experienced grief or loss in your life; (2) you work part-time; and (3) you own your own vehicle. Through moving from group to group as students physically answer each question, they are able to place themselves with those with similar experiences and those with different experiences. The day that I did this activity resulted in three small groups staying after class to exchange contact information and to learn more about each other.

Christina's Story

I have always been a conservative person when I am introduced to a new environment. The first day in class, meeting everyone was a little nerve wracking, but by the end, I felt more comfortable in my new college environment. As the semester went on, we got into small and large groups. I felt this really helped us all connect as individuals and as a class. I really enjoyed the material that was presented; I knew most of the issues we discussed like racism, sexism, and so on, went on in the world. Also, many of the issues that were discussed really hit close to home for the majority of the students in the class. There were a few topics that were presented like disability, and how women of color experience the most discrimination. For me, these topics were really new because in my generation these two topics are not very prominent in my education or society. As I grew up, I became knowledgeable about all the organizations for people with disabilities and how they helped. So I was very shocked to hear that perfectly healthy people had something against those who are disadvantaged.

Every day that the class was in session, I arrived an hour early to start my day. I did this so I could relax and prepare for what the day was going to bring. As people trickled in one by one, I got to talk to and get to know them. One day when class was canceled, a few students showed up and some stayed and talked to one another. I was one of them. We talked about everyday things, our family life, shared pictures, and when we parted for the rest of our classes of the day, I felt like part of something bigger than just another class. The instructor was also one of my favorite people in the course; she came up with activities and movies for us to elaborate on and discuss. She was also non-judgmental, unlike other teachers from local schools. I believe that she has a lot of life experience about many of the topics we discussed, which gave her an advantage when it came to teaching us.

Instructor

Her demeanor never changed. She never looked upset, frustrated, angry, sad, or anything other than her soft, smiling, crinkly, blue-eyed self. In short,

her expression never changed. She was hard to read for that reason. And there were occasions when I wanted to be able to read people and gauge the level of tension in the room. She did not react when someone asked why we talk so disparagingly about "female mutilation" when we do not even mention male circumcision—is that not mutilation, too? Others did; she didn't. When a peer suggested that all whites are racist, even if they try not to be, classmates were about to strangle him; she sat and smiled. Having taught this course for many years, but not having taught it within the past eight years or so, my experience was that eventually, all students experience the overpowering need to speak up. Nearly everyone in the class was taking deep breaths, waving hands in the air to be noticed, and/or physically turning away from a person or subject that was a sensitive topic. She had no readable facial expressions or other nonverbal communication indicating stimulation; she appeared to be neutral about topics that had others up in arms.

Since the content of this course is controversial, I required journals so that I could respond privately to things that students might not have wanted to address in class and to make sure that people were keeping up with the reading. A typical journal entry might include commentary about a website video that a student stumbled across, "The Southern Avenger." A student might have responded that she agreed that the focus in the United States was no longer on race (racism), but was instead on social class (classism). My response would typically be challenging; "Are you sure you agree? He tried to take the focus off "white" by talking about the elite. Who are the elites? Who has the power?"

Other comments I made included, "Speak up more in class. I love your energy!" Her journals were usually straight-forward. "I didn't know this, or I can't believe this is still happening, or I disagree with the author." I issued the same sort of challenges to "dig deeper" or "what would happen if…" to her as to other students. However, her journals continued to be on the same level of response, just barely past the surface observations. I began to think that she might be overwhelmed with what she was learning because so much of the content seemed to be new information to her. I never had an indication of the depth that was about to emerge.

One of the readings was about ableism. In her journal, she disclosed her own disability. She wrote an entire page about the diagnosis and how it has affected her life. The disability is not one that is clearly visible. Instead, people would not know unless she divulged this information. In my responses to her, I said that I was glad the reading had so resonated with her. The journals then assumed their usual tone. Through the rest of the course, no other entry demonstrated such engagement with the content. I would say that her entries were "safe."

Christina's Story

As we followed the subject of disabilities and discrimination against them, I thought about sharing some of the disabilities I have encountered in my family. I know it is wrong to be afraid of or hate someone for something they could not control. So in my journal, I finally came out of my shell and talked about me and what disability I have. I am a severe asthmatic and a little overweight, due to not being able to play sports or even participate in a physical education class. This has caused many upsetting factors in my life because I wanted to do some sports in middle and high school. I finally was able to fill the hole that had grown inside me with other non-physical activities, such as Art Honor Society, the LINK Crew, and the Drama Club. In these clubs, I found myself and what I was good at doing. I realized that there are more opportunities than just the "popular" choices. Even though this is not a visible disability, I still do not like people to know about it because they do not understand; and they think that it is automatically fixable with more exercise or medication. This is why I want to be a nurse, to help heal, and let people know that there are people out there who do understand what they are going through themselves or with a family member.

As it came closer to having to pick a project to show what we had gained from the class, I really wanted to do something that showed me as a person and how I viewed people after I took this class. As I thought about it, I wanted to draw a mosaic to represent the people in the world. I chose to draw a rhinoceros because that is one of the animals in the world that is going extinct and deserves more credit for being a strong but beautiful animal. With its build, strength, and endurance, it reminded me of

the human race and how we as individuals have overcome so many different obstacles in our lives. The inside of the rhino was made up of many different flowers and plants to show the world as a whole, but there are all kinds of different flowers. These were to represent humans of all races, people with disabilities, females, males, different social classes, and all the other different aspects of lives all over globe. I like that it shows different shapes, sizes, and colors within the rhino. I feel that it shows how strong the human race is as a whole, like a rhinoceros. After I presented my picture, I felt that the students in the class understood me and realized that I did have an opinion about things we had discussed. They were intrigued by what I had created, and this made me feel like they understood the real meaning of the collage. I also had a feeling of pride because not all the students knew what I was about or what I was able to do as a student.

Instructor

I might have been misled by such journaling and have thought that she was an average student, except for the final activity. The assignment was to do an action or advocacy project. Students are encouraged to write poems, produce art works, join a march, contribute to a cause, write an organization, etc. One student became involved with the Hispanic effort to challenge the City Council's decision-making regarding activities for children and youth in one section of town. Another student participated in the Gay Rights Parade in New York City. The place kicker for the football team wrote two poems that probably deserved publication. A young immigrant from Africa wrote a profound poem she named, “The Scar,” describing her experiences in the United States with racism—the glances, the distance, and all the ways she had been made to feel invisible.

Christina was among the first to volunteer to present her activity to the class. I was stunned by her activity because it was not what I would have predicted. She held up a picture, a really big picture, of a rhinoceros. On closer inspection, you could see that there were flowers and leaves that made up the mosaic of the animal. There were roses and chrysanthemums, palms and lilies. Christina had carefully crafted the rhinoceros with a sea of colors, reds, pinks, greens, yellows, purples, blues, and oranges. It was an incredibly beautiful rhinoceros. The prose that accompanied the picture spoke of difference and beauty, of the need for space and acceptance, and how in our own unique ways, we all contribute so much to the whole. She put the entire semester's readings together with her carefully-chosen and carefully-drawn figures. She had absorbed so much more than her in-class responses or her journal entries disclosed.
Her classmates appeared momentarily stunned, too. After a moment of silence, they gave Christina a standing ovation. They engaged in dialogue, too, regarding the beauty of the beast and the perfection in having chosen a rhinoceros—one of the toughest, “don't mess with me” animals around. “Just like women,” they said. She had been barely visible for most of the semester, but her visibility now skyrocketed! She blushed and smiled the biggest smile I have ever seen. I am convinced that the young woman who entered that class and the one who left are not entirely the same person.

Christina's Story

At the end of this class, as a freshman in college in my first semester, I feel it has given me a better understanding of what to expect in the world and how some people can behave toward one another. As for me, I learned that I should speak out more and show my true self, so people will not be so shocked when I do show my real abilities. I also learned that people are all different and come from different backgrounds, so we should give everyone a chance, even if it is uncomfortable at first.

Instructor

I hope that Christina has learned a bit more about herself and will be open to new adventures as her collegiate career progresses. This class was one of the first she took, and I am sure she did not know what to expect. This class was an introductory course, and one of the emphases was developing relationships. She now has a better idea of what to expect. As for me, I have had to re-learn something that I was not aware I had forgotten. I had assumed that what she showed was what she was willing to show, and was only that with which she was comfortable. Those things may be true. But I had grown so used to her ordinariness that I had also assumed that what she gave was all that there was to give. I was so wrong! Having taught for nearly 26 years in post-secondary settings and preferring experiential learning, I had somehow convinced

myself that I had heard or seen it all. Ironically, I still believe that within every group of students resides a “key” to heightening experience and learning. I have spent some time trying to understand why I thought that I was not able to find the key to Christina, and the reasons continue to be her lack of in-depth response. She certainly chose the last moment possible to reveal how much she had grown across the semester. I have also spent some time wondering if I should have prodded her more or should have had private conversations with her. I have ultimately decided that the journals were the private conversations, and I apparently did not have to prod her more. I believe that she received various messages from this course. She learned that racism, ageism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, and classism still exist. She learned that she might be subjected to one of the “isms” and needed to be able to recognize it if it appeared. Christina learned that she is a beautiful, gifted, powerful, young woman who will make a difference in the world, first, because she knows how discrimination feels and second, because she will no longer be silent. She will speak up and confront that which needs confronting.

I have not had Christina in any other courses, but I have continued to be in touch with a number of students from that class. It was an exceptional experience for the students and for me, and I am deeply grateful for the reminders that came to me because of the profound interactions in the class.

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Weeping for Philomena: Reflections of an Adoption Administrator

Larry D. Watson

Abstract: The author, a former adoption administrator, reflects on the movie, Philomena, the story of a birthmother's fifty year search for her son taken from her in Ireland and placed for adoption in the United States. Social Justice Issues related to adoption and the author's evolving views on adoption practice are explored Birthmother and Birthfather rights are discussed, as are issues of sealed adoption records and issues of intercountry adoption. Recommendations for adoption practice and adoption professionals are presented.

Keywords: adoption; child welfare; historical reflections; open adoption; social administration; birthfathers; birthmothers

I recently saw the movie, *Philomena* (Frears, 2012), based on Martin Sixsmith's book *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* (2009). I wept. The official homepage for the movie describes the film as follows:

> Philomena is the true story of one mother's search for her lost son. Falling pregnant as a teenager in Ireland in 1952, Philomena was sent to the convent of Roscrea to be looked after as a "fallen woman." When her baby was only a toddler, he was taken away by the nuns for adoption in America. Philomena spent the next fifty years searching for him in vain. Then she met Martin Sixsmith, a world-weary political journalist who happened to be intrigued by her story. Together they set off for America on a journey that would not only reveal the extraordinary story of Philomena's son, but also create an unexpectedly close bond between them.
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> The film is a compelling narrative of human love and loss and ultimately celebrates life. It is both funny and sad and concerns two very different people, at different stages of their lives, who help each other and show that there is laughter even in the darkest places. The book The Lost Child of Philomena Lee was published in 2009. It acted as a catalyst for thousands of adopted Irish children and their 'shamed' mothers to come forward to tell their stories. Many are still searching for their lost families (Philomena, 2012).

I suspect that many people in the theater had tears in their eyes by the end of the movie, but my emotion came from a different place than that of many of my fellow movie goers that day. My emotions came from my experiences as a social worker, a former adoption administrator, and now a social work educator. At the end of the film, Philomena discovers that her son is dead. In one of the final scenes, she goes to visit the grave of her son who was taken from her so long ago. It took me back to the most difficult day I have experienced in a forty plus year career as a social worker.

I was the administrator of an adoption agency that had been in existence for over 100 years by the time I became its Executive Director. At the time, over 5000 children had been adopted through the agency. Over the years, the agency's adoption practice had moved to more openness, and part of our post adoption services was to facilitate reunions between birthparents and the children they had placed for adoption.

One day, the social worker responsible for post-adoption search and reunion cases appeared at my office door. From the look on her face, I knew this was not going to be good news. As we sat at my conference table, she began to tell me about one of her cases. She had been contacted by a woman who had placed her child for adoption through our agency twenty-five years ago. I will call her Suzan. After much agonizing, Suzan had decided that she would contact our agency in hopes of having a reunion with her child. When the social worker went into the ancient stack of adoption records, she discovered a terrible truth. The child had been

placed for adoption but had died at eight months old. Obviously, Suzan was never given this information. I felt sick.

We had to make a decision about how to tell her this terrible news that had been withheld from her for so long. We decided that I would go to Suzan's home and tell her the truth about her son. The only thing I had to give her was a small black and white photograph of the baby she had thought about for the last twenty-five years. The little picture was one of those that had an ink line border suitable for putting into the family scrap book. This picture had been buried in our files along with the secret of his death for over two decades. I would give the picture to his mother. Dreading hearing her voice, I called and asked if I could come to her home and meet with her. We agreed upon a time that I could come to see her.

My wife accompanied me as I drove the long distance to keep the appointment that I was dreading so much. We had set the appointment for 12 noon. As we pulled up in front of the small, well-kept frame house, we waited for Suzan to arrive. She had scheduled the appointment so she could come home on her lunch hour to meet with me. As she pulled into her driveway, I got out of my car to greet her. As my wife waited in the car, I sat down with Suzan in her living room.

We started with the pleasantries. Her work, how long I had been at the agency – small talk. I learned that she had never married and never had another child. The decision to search had come slowly to her. She said she had never wanted to cause any discomfort for the family or to disturb the stability of her son's family. The time had come. I had to tell her.

I told her that her son was placed for adoption on the fifth day after his birth. The home visit records indicated that he was a healthy and happy baby but, at eight months old, died in his sleep. Crib death was the official cause of death. I handed her the tattered black and white photo of the most precious thing in her life and watched as the tears rolled down her cheeks. She did not sob but silently absorbed what I had told her. Once she could speak, she told me that she knew what I was coming to tell her. “The President of the agency does not come to tell you good news,” she said. Of course, she was right about that. I told her that she had a perfect right to be angry with the agency and that I was so sorry for her loss and the fact that she had never been told of the death of her child until now.

Like Philomena, in the movie, she was not angry. I was. How could our agency with such a long history of service and compassion be so callous as not to tell a woman that her child had died? How could members of our profession based on principles of social justice not do what seems to be the only ethical course of action. The only charitable explanation is that it was a different time and place, a place of adoption secrecy, and they thought they were doing the kindest thing to keep this terrible news from her, in the belief that she would never find out the truth. I had to remind myself that when this adoption was completed, it was an era of closed adoption in an environment built on a fantasy view of adoption.

My Journey in Adoption Practice

My own view of adoption evolved over time. When I first became involved in adoption practice, secrecy was the norm. All of us involved in adoption practices went to great lengths to be sure that birthparents and adoptive parents were unknown to one another and that the child would have no details of their birth story or their birth families. There was something about secrecy in adoption that kept gnawing at me. Where else in social work, or any helping profession, did we believe that secrets were a good thing? Adoption practice seemed to be the outlier. I did not see it as clearly then as now, but over time, I came to believe that the root of my problem with adoption practice was that it was based on secrecy and what I came to call the fantasy myth of adoption.

The change was slow. Adoption workers from other agencies began to share stories of “de-identified” letters being shared between adoptive families and birth families. Some were going as far as to facilitating meetings between birthparents and potential adoptive parents. Of course, names were not shared as it was thought to be important to maintain secrecy.

The final push toward openness occurred when my staff and I attended an informational meeting

presented by the Open Adoption Center of California. The Executive Director, Dr. Bruce Rappaport, talked about the factors at work in keeping adoption secret and his belief that adoptions should be open. In his definition, that meant that birthparents and adoptive parents were fully known to each other and, in fact, that the birthparents had the right to choose the adoptive parents for their child. Furthermore, he advocated that there be ongoing relationships between the adoptive parents, birthparents and the adopted child. Radical stuff! I was all in. I told my staff that we were going to change our model of practice to that presented by Dr. Rappaport. It was not a hard transition for the staff. They were on the same path as I in believing that there was a need for more openness in the adoption process.

It was not as easy for the board of directors. Many of the board members were adoptive parents, and the idea of open adoption was seen as a direct threat to their experiences with adoption in a very personal way. There was some strong opposition, and one board member resigned in protest. But in the end, the majority of the board saw the justice implications of a new way to think about adoption practice. I am proud that we were the first traditional adoption agency in the area to make the transition to a fully open adoption model of practice.

Closed Adoption and a Fantasy View of Adoption

A great deal has changed in adoption practice over the past several years. In many adoption agencies, secrecy is a part of their past as they have, also, moved to open adoption practice where the birthparents, adoptive parents and adopted children are all known to one another. There were several predominant themes of the closed adoption era during which remarkable measures were instituted to keep the involved parties in a state of 'not knowing' (Watson & Granvold, 2008). For many years, I was a part of that system to keep the parties to adoption in a state of 'not knowing.' While adoption practice has changed, a veil of secrecy still exists is some adoption practice today. For change to occur in adoption practice, it has been necessary to challenge the fantasy myth of adoption. The fantasy view of adoption promotes the concept that all parties are abundantly happy. The young, beautiful couple adopts a beautiful baby who grows up happy and well adjusted. The birthparents go on with their lives and put the unfortunate unplanned pregnancy behind them. The adopted person considers the adoptive parents to be the 'real' parents and never has a desire to seek out his or her birthparents.

The adoption experience is much different from the mythical fantasy view. For every couple overwhelmed with joy upon the arrival of a new baby, there is a birthmother, sometimes birthfather, birth grandparents and extended family grieving over the loss of a child. For many, it is a grief experience that can only be compared to the grief associated with the death of a loved one. Children adopted as infants often grieve for the loss of their birth families throughout childhood and as adults. Likewise, many adoptive parents who have endured years of infertility treatment and repeated disappointments in trying to achieve pregnancy grieve the loss of their dream of having a biological child (Watson & Granvold, 2008).

Since our agency was associated with a religious denomination, I would often invite local ministers in to perform a dedication ceremony on the day that the child was placed with the adoptive family. In the closed adoption days, this was a matter of me, or the adoption staff, presenting the child to the adoptive parents. Once the change was made to open adoption, the ceremonies took on a much different flavor since it was the birthparents, not the adoption staff, presenting the child to the new parents. After one of the placement ceremonies, the minister was visibly shaken. "How could so much joy and so much sadness exist in the same space?" he said. His comments highlighted my belief that one of the things that open adoption does is trust the parties of the adoption with the reality of adoption and its associated grief and joy.

The motives undergirding the adoption myth were protective and based on the belief that it is best for all concerned that adoption procedures be closed now and forever. In this system of closed adoption, it was thought that birthparents could experience closure and generate a new beginning. Adoptive children could experience family life just as children born into families and adoptive parents could parent as if the child had been born to them.

Of course, this was not reality. Our agency operated

a maternity home and in the deepest days of secrecy (and shame) young women left their homes and came to the maternity home to hide their pregnancy and place their baby for adoption. Many birthmothers from that era have said that they were told, "Now go home and never think of this again. Get on with your life as if nothing happened." I would often speak at Churches around the state, and it was a common occurrence for a middle age woman to come up to me and tell me that she placed a child for adoption through our agency. One day as I stood at the back of the Church greeting the worshipers as they left, a woman in her 50s approached me to say that she had placed her child through us over 30 years ago. As she looked into my eyes, she said. "I have thought about that child every day of my life since then." I believe this is more likely the experience of birthmothers. Despite the admonition to do so, they cannot forget this significant event in their life and the baby they placed with another family.

Another conceptualization inherent in the propagation of the adoption myth was that the parties involved were flawed (Rappaport, 1992). As a consequence, these flawed parties needed protection from one another. The adoptive parents were seen as flawed because of their infertility. These 'barren' people were in need of the protection of an elaborate adoption system, where they could be studied and evaluated for their worthiness to have a child while being shielded from the emotional costs of adoptions. It was as if adoptive parents who had endured fertility should not be subjected to the reality of birthparent pain. Birthparents were considered flawed due to their 'immoral behavior' of pre-marital sex or their incapacity to care for a child economically or emotionally. Even the children of adoption were viewed as flawed due to their being labeled illegitimate (Watson & Granvold, 2009).

Not only did constituent parties promote the myth, professionals promulgated it. The task of the adoption system and adoption workers was first and foremost to protect the adoptive parents and the adopted child from the birthparents (Rappaport, 1992). To do less would have been an acknowledgement that there is not only great joy in adoption but also great pain, grief, and loss. Social Workers and attorneys played major roles as keepers of the myth. Through a system of closed adoption, social workers created and maintained policies and practices based on secrecy and denial. In closed adoptions, most decisions were made by the professionals, not by the adoptive or birthparents. Power and decision making control were retained by the professionals. All information about the adoptive triad was held private and confidential, and contact between adoptive parties was disallowed before, during, and after the adoption (Rappaport, 1992). Adoption practice developed as a way to protect the 'flawed parties' in adoption from one another.

After the transition to open adoption, there was a joke that we didn't get flowers and cookies anymore. In the days of secrecy, it was very common for adoptive parents to send small tokens of their appreciation to the staff after their adoption was completed. It was as if, we, the adoption workers, had given them their child. In open adoption, the gratitude of adoptive parents was redirected to its proper place: the birthparents who had given them the child they had dreamed of for so long.

The fantasy view of adoption was maintained, not only by adoption practice but also by laws mandating that adoption records be sealed. In this system, birthparents were expected to legally relinquish their parental rights to the adoption agency. Agency professionals would then place the child with a couple deemed by the agency to be sound citizens, potentially capable parents, and a good match for the child. The agency maintained adoptive parent anonymity from the birthparents and safeguarded records that would reveal birthparent identity. This anonymity insured that birthparents would remain unidentified, unseen, and, most importantly, uninvolved. Adoptive couples typically had great loyalty to the agency from which they had received the child, not to the anonymous and unseen birthparents (Watson & Granvold, 2009).

In most states within the United States even the adopted person's birth certificate validates the fantasy. When the adoption was legally finalized, the original birth certificate was sealed by the court and a new birth certificate was issued with the adoptive parents listed as the parents. The fantasy had become, at a minimum, a *paper reality.* Subsequently, court records were sealed and agency

adoption records filed away along with the identities of the child and the birthparents.

Challenges to Secrecy and the Myth

For many who work in the field of adoption, including myself, the fantasy view of adoption could not be maintained. The pain and grief is all too real. Any illusions that I had about adoption were dispelled by the birthmother who told me that thought about their child every day. At one point in the film, Philomena says that she has thought about her son every day for over 50 years. She was expressing the view of thousands of birthmothers who have placed their children for adoption and many that expressed that same sentiment to me.

Another milestone in my evolving thinking about adoption practice occurred when I was listening to a debate between two adult adoptees about open records. One of the debaters took the position that the records should be sealed and that the secrecy of adoption was a good thing for all of the parties involved. The other debater who was on the side of openness and of open records looked into the audience and said, “who are you as social workers to keep my identity and my information from me?” I thought it a fair question. She was asking the question that other adult adoptees had started to ask in many different ways. It was this incident that made me question the validity of secrecy as the bedrock of adoption practice. Indeed, who did we think we were to keep people's life information from them? Who were we to protect people from the real emotions of their adoption experiences?

In the late 1970s and early 1980s adult adoptees began to speak out publicly regarding the impact of the adoption system on their lives. At the same time, many women and some men who had relinquished their children for adoption began to speak out against a system they had come to see as oppressive and unjust. These constituencies would no longer remain silent, and both adoptees and birthparents became more aggressive in seeking out one another. Birthparents also began to speak out and to organize themselves into advocacy groups. Adult adoptees and birthparents began to search for one another in record numbers.

The popular media has been a major influence in changing the social construct of adult adoptees and birthparents. Search and reunion stories of adoptees and their birth relatives are common themes often featured in books, newspapers, magazines, daytime television dramas and talk shows. Movies in popular release also have been built on an adoption search and reunion story line. The adoption theme, particularly the theme of searching for birthparents, has emerged as a compelling human-interest story and has inspired myriad novels, plays and movies (Wegar, 1997). Philomena is the latest in this tradition.

In the early 1970s, the effort to reform sealed records laws and agency practices was spurred by two influential autobiographical accounts of the psychological effects of the sealed records policy: Florence Fisher's (1975) *The Search for Anna Fisher* and Betty Jean Lifton's (1975) *Twice Born: Memories of an Adopted Daughter.* The movement to open sealed adoption records continues on today. Alabama, Alaska, Oregon, Kansas, New Hampshire Maine and Rhode Island are the only U.S. states where adult adoptees have unrestricted access to their own original birth records (Bastard Nation, 2014, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2007). The legislature in New Jersey is currently considering an open records bill.

The social construct of those seeking their birth information has changed over time. Seeking to find one's birthparents or offspring was often perceived as symptomatic of underlying pathology (Wegar, 1997). *The Adoption Triangle* (Sorosky, Baran & Pannor,1979), written by a psychiatrist and two social workers, concluded that “taking a child from one set of parents and placing him/her with another set, who pretend that the child is born to them, disrupts a basic natural process. The need to be connected with one's biological and historical past is an integral part of one's identity formation” (p. 67). In a study of the effects of open adoption, Siegel (2003) emphasized those proponents of open adoption stress that knowledge of one's genealogy, ethnic heritage, and medical background are crucial to the adoptee's well-being both emotionally and physically (Campbell, Silverman, & Patti, 1991; Curtis, 1986; Silber & Martinez Dorner, 1990). In clinical and popular literature, the desire to search is no longer perceived as unreasonable or as symptomatic of underlying pathology. Today, a lack of interest in one's biological origins is often viewed

as a sign of repression (Wegar, 1997).

The Look of Secrecy

I am very proud of in my work as an adoption administrator and that I was one of a team of professionals that transformed our agency from a system of closed adoption to a system of open adoption. Even many years after we had made the transition to an open adoption model, I was often surprised at the vestiges of secrecy that pervaded our environment. The agency was established in 1895 by the madam of a famous brothel in San Antonio, Texas. The founder, Mrs. Volino, was converted to Christianity during a revival and shortly after her conversion gave her house, the former brothel, to the Church as a refuge for young women wanting to leave a life of prostitution. Apparently, it was a short step from being a shelter for prostitutes to being a home for unwed mothers and then to becoming an adoption agency to place the children of unwed mothers.

In the late 1960s, the agency moved from Mrs. Volino's house to its current location on a 20-acre campus. Even years after moving to an open adoption practice, there were still remnants of the age of secrecy. Often the loud speaker throughout the campus would blast the announcement, "attention residents – there are visitors on campus from Lubbock" (or any town). After several years of enduring this annoyance, I thought to ask some of the senior members of the staff why we did this. The answer was that it was to alert the women in the facility that there might be people on campus from their home town and that, if that were the case; they were to go and hide in their rooms until the visitors had left campus. Young women in residence were also confined to their quarters when there was an adoption ceremony taking place on campus. It was of paramount importance to protect the identity of the adopting parents. Secrecy and shame were closely related concepts.

Another incident was indicative of the lengths to which the staff would go in days past to maintain complete secrecy. The architecture of the main building was such that there was a side entrance to the adoption program area. Just outside the side door there was a parking space with a sign that said, "Reserved for the Director of Adoptions." One day I teasingly said to the Director of Adoptions, "So why is it that the Director of Adoptions has a reserved parking spot while I, as the Executive Director, do not have a reserved parking spot?" The answer was that it was not, in fact, his reserved spot but in earlier days, new adoptive parents were told to park in that spot so they could be near the door on adoption placement day and could get out of the building and off the property quickly. In fact, for many years they were told to cover the license plates on their car (perhaps with a corn chip bag), to avoid being identified.

Where is the Birthfather?

Where was the birthfather in Philomena's story? She speaks of him, but there is no mention that he had any connection to his child. This is not surprising, especially fifty years ago when Philomena's child was born. Even today, birthfathers are often viewed in negative terms. Stakeholders in the adoption process, including social workers, sometimes see birthfathers as a "nuisance to be avoided and seek to minimize or eliminate the participation of the birthfather in the adoption decision and process" (Finley, 2002, p. 2). Too often birthfathers are the "forgotten fathers" of the adoption process (Clapter, 2001). An example of this negative view of birthfathers is evidenced in the following statement on an adoption agency website. The Lifetime Adoption Center website (n.d.), characterized birthfathers as follows.

Birthfathers who stand in the way of what is best for the child, be it adoption or being a true father, are nothing more than "sperm donors." They just want to have a good time, and then when a woman becomes pregnant and tries to do what is right in her mind by choosing adopting, he puts up a road block. A woman in this position is fearful and often faced with a birthfather that is simply not going to cooperate. Most of these men are not working, have a history of abuse or substance abuse and have no intention of supporting the child. They want to know the "kid" is there if they want to see "it" someday, maybe someday, often never. They see kids from different women as trophies, validating they are able to produce, not realizing it takes so much more than sperm to be a Father and Dad to a child.

Mason (1995) stated that "the birthfather continues to be the least represented, least considered and least

heard in adoption literature, conferences and advocacy efforts" (p. 29, cited in Freundlick, 2001, p. 87). The consensus seems to be that birthfathers are uninvolved and unconcerned about planning for their children. Research, however, indicates that multiple factors determine the level of birthfathers' involvement in planning for their children. Deykni (1988) found that just over 50% of birthfathers did not participate in the decision making for their child and that 64% had no contact with the child prior to the adoptive placement. The sample for this study was birthfathers identified through post-adoption support and advocacy groups. The factors found to be associated with an absence of birthfather involvement were pressures from their families, a poor relationship with the birthmother, financial issues, and the attitudes of adoption agencies (Fruendlick, 2001, p. 89).

In *Out of the Shadows: Birthfathers' Stories*, Mason (1995) stated that perceptions of birthfathers have been influenced by several myths. A common popular belief is that birthfathers are not as connected to their children as are birthmothers. Mason's interviews revealed not an absence of connection but a feeling of uncertainty regarding their role. Birthfathers also expressed the belief that biologically, they had fewer rights to the child than the mother. The second major belief she identified was the belief that birthfathers are uniformly unaccountable, irresponsible, and absent during and after the pregnancy. Her findings were that birthfathers had ongoing thoughts and concerns about their children. She found that to some extent a lack of involvement was associated with the practice of adoption agencies to discourage birthfathers' involvement (Watson & Cobb, 2012).

In recent years, there has been legislation to limit the rights of birthfathers in planning for their children. The movement to establish putative father registries is done under the guise of protecting birthfather rights.

A less charitable view suggests that (Franklin, 2009):

> Putative father registries are clever little devices designed by state legislatures to avoid notifying single fathers when their children are about to be adopted. That way, adoptions proceed more smoothly without the inconvenience of a father asserting his parental rights. Basically, a single man must file a form with the state claiming paternity of any child he believes may be his. He has to do so within a certain time frame, usually within 30 days of the child's birth. Failure to do so waives his right to notice of an adoption or the right to contest same (p. 3374).

An Intercountry Adoption

Philomena is a story of the intercountry adoption. The child, born in Ireland to Philomena, is adopted by an American family. She wonders if he has any knowledge of his Irish heritage. In the story, she sees a picture of her son wearing an Irish lapel pin on his suit jacket. She learns that her son had always been proud of his Irish heritage and, in fact, requested that he be buried in Ireland. This scene highlights the importance of preserving an adopted child's birth culture. Some critics claim that children adopted internationally are denied their rights because intercountry adoption fails to protect the child's right to a nationality, to know and be cared for by his or her parents, and to preserve his or her identity (Smolin, 2007).

Intercountry adoption is a big part of the environment of adoption practice in the United States today. Scholars stress the importance of the Second World War in taking U.S. adoption in the new direction of intercountry placements. After 1945, denominations, including Lutherans, Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, and others formed organizations including the League for Orphan Victims in Europe (LOVE) and the American Joint Committee for Assisting Japanese-American Orphans. International adoption grew slowly until the 1990s, and then it increased rapidly in many western countries. Placements peaked worldwide in about 2004 and have since declined due to changes in international and domestic law and to political controversy in some countries (Watson & Cobb, 2012; Selman, 2012)

Lessons from Philomena

Adam Pertman (2014), Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute reflects on the movie in his blog column *Big Lessons that Transcend the Movie: There Are Philomenas All*

Around Us and states that Philomena is more than a glimpse in the past. There are thousands of women (and men) who have lived the life of Philomena after placing their children in closed adoption arrangements. It is sad but true when Pertman says, "Perhaps most unsettling, both because some of the stigmas remain and because adoption policy and practice have not yet progressed sufficiently, more Philomenas are being created every day." He goes on to list several "takeaways" from the film. The film makes the powerful point that "shaming or coercing parents into parting with their children or, worse, removing their children without consent, inflicts profound and lasting psychic wounds." Adoption decisions should be informed decisions. "Women and men who consider adoption for their children should be able to understand all of their options beforehand, so that they make genuinely informed decisions and should receive pre- and post-placement counseling and support. Adopted people have the right to know from where and from whom they came."

Conclusions

As adoption professionals, as social workers and social work educators, we must do more than weep for Philomena and the thousands like her and her son. We must resolve to continue on the path to combat the fantasy view of adoption and the myths that persist around adoption and adoption practice. In short, we must take seriously our obligation to promote social justice. The following principles from the code of ethics are of particular import when considering social workers' ethical responsibilities (NASW, 2008):

> Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Social workers practicing in the area of adoption have a tremendous responsibility to provide the best possible services to their clients. Few areas of social work involve relationships as complex of those relationships among the parties in the adoption triad.

Weeping is not enough. We must promote openness and transparency in adoption practice. We should join the fight with adult adoptees to open their birth records and we should be as concerned with birthfathers' rights as we are for birthmothers' rights. In the area of intercountry adoption, we should advocate for children to know and value the cultures of their birth countries and to assure that birthparents in other countries are not exploited but are protected in making informed and voluntary decisions for their children. Our first obligation should be to provide the support that birth families need, both in the US and abroad, to stay together and when that is not possible, we should do all we can to assure that social justice is the guiding principle in adoption practice.

Suzan had only one final request from our agency. Like Philomena, she wanted to visit the grave of her son. One of our adoption workers stood with her as she said goodbye to her son for the second and final time. Like Philomena, she showed us poise and grace in the face of the injustice that I believe our agency had inflicted upon her.

My reflection is the story of my evolving view of adoption within the context of changing adoption policy and practice. I am an adoption advocate. I believe that it is the best and wonderful option for many children and for many birthparents. It is a joy for the thousands of families that have built their family through adoption. I also believe that it must be done with the best interest of all the parties of the adoption in mind and that social justice, not secrecy, must be our founding principle. Weep with me for Philomena and Suzan, but work for justice so others will not suffer the injustices that they and others have suffered.

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How University-Community Partnerships Transformed a School of Social Work Extension Site into a Center for Career-Long Learning

Marilyn S. Paul

Abstract: This article presents the author's experience developing partnerships and programs through use of basic macro and micro social work skills taught in foundation practice curriculum. Emphasis is on collaboration, creating a shared vision and goal, and attending to the parallel process.

Keywords: veterans; military social work; university-community partnership; continuing education

The repeating question during the series of interviews for the Clinical Assistant Professor position was, “How will you bring new knowledge to our Center?” The Center was the school's extension site located 90 miles from its suburban main campus, and serving a rural community. The only explicit criteria for the position were, “extensive practical experience in their field, and assignments that may include a clinical and supervisory role of students” (AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2009-2014, p. 16). There was no clear road map for answering this question, and I must admit, I was initially stumped.

How might the clinical faculty in a school of social work bring forth new knowledge if not via scholarly research, as is the case for tenured faculty? What did this interview question mean, and how would I answer it? After reflecting on the question, I finally responded, “I will seek to create partnerships and programs with community agencies.” I sighed with relief, having answered the question, however as I scanned the reactions of the interviewers it seemed as though they were looking for more. I paused and then continued by summarizing programs I had created through community partnerships as a hospital social worker ten years back. I emphasized that the programs were based on collaboration with neighboring hospitals, and a multitude of health care providers, i.e., physicians, nurses, psychologists and other allied health care workers. I spoke of filling gaps in service but also of offering educational components for the lay community and the professionals who serve them. This part of the interview process was easy, for I was speaking about being a clinical social worker, eager and able to work collaboratively with individuals, groups, organizations and communities, assessing needs, and intervening to address them. To my interviewers, I announced, “I will draw on this skill to bring new knowledge to the Center in my clinical faculty position.” To myself I wondered how. It appeared that the interviewers were pleased with my answer though, because I was hired.

Three years have now passed, and the rural extension site where I work has been transformed into a university center for career-long learning, with regular continuing education conferences, two post-graduate certificate programs and more anticipated for the future. By reflecting back at the processes that facilitated this transformation, I hope to provide useful information on university-community agency partnerships that may help other schools of social work create, expand, or improve their centers for career-long learning, and also provide information that may be applicable to research and field partnerships. First though, as is the case in all good social work practice, it is important to consider the social and political contexts of the time.

In Fall 2010, as I began my clinical faculty position, the political climate in this final year of President Obama's first administration was fraught with disappointment from liberals who had hoped for expanded social welfare and anger from conservatives who sought further reductions in social welfare. Polarization was severe and about the only thing agreed upon was that US involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had gone on for too long and needed to end. The two parties however, had not yet agreed on when or how. In the meantime, by the beginning of that same year, more

than 2 million military members had served one or more combat deployments, and more than 1 million of these Veterans had already left the military. In addition, these two wars resulted in unprecedented deployments of National Guard and other reserve component personnel (CSWE, 2010). Just about every community in the country was now affected as they saw their young men and women deploy, leaving families behind, and later returning home, only to face the often excruciating challenges of reintegration.

As I began the semester of teaching and advising, articles on the wars, Veteran deployments, military families, returning Veterans, Veteran suicides, PTSD, and Veteran homelessness were appearing daily in the news. I felt a burning desire to know more about Veterans and military populations and was relieved to learn that I was assigned as advisor and faculty field liaison for the students placed at our local Veterans Administration (VA) hospital. I would be making VA field visits, meeting VA field instructors and reviewing VA-based process recordings.

My first VA field visit in October 2010, was also my first time in a VA hospital. While I had spent the first part of my social work career as a hospital social worker, there was something fundamentally different about being in a VA hospital that was even a bit daunting. I was knowledgeable of social work in health care, and, though I had rarely thought about it, both my father and father-in-law were war Veterans. Yet admittedly, I was a novice in this setting. As I listened to my student and her field instructor, I began to understand that for the war Veteran, military culture is often the primary cultural identity, superseding all else, and thus requiring culture-specific engagement, assessment and intervention skills. I was fascinated by the innovative work being done at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. I was eager to learn more, and hungry to build cultural competence in military populations into my practice curriculum.

Suddenly my personal and professional lives collided as I shamefully admitted to the twosome beside me that for the past fifty plus years my life, I had dismissed my father's seemingly curious hyper-orderly behaviors and attitudes as simply “obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)”, never even minimally appreciating that they may better be explained by his years as a naval officer in WWII. This collision of the personal and professional created the “aha” moment when the little bell rang inside my head and I knew for sure that the first of my partnerships and programs, those which I claimed during my interviews would bring new knowledge to the Center, would be oriented toward Veterans. Fortunately, the field instructor in my presence was likewise enthusiastic to teach military cultural competence, and to attract competent social workers to the VA. Indeed, we saw that we could be a team, so we ended the meeting holding each other's business cards, and in effect, holding the seeds for a partnership and future program.

Kirst-Ashman & Hull (2012) outline the steps needed to successfully create programs within organizations and communities. The steps, including educating, persuading, confronting, budgeting, negotiating, mediating, influencing, and collaborating are framed within the generalist intervention model, i.e. engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, termination and follow-up. These are the processes we teach our social work students in their foundation year, and are the very same procedures that were used to create our “Veterans collaborative”, which ultimately paved the way for our Center's transformation.

However, I am convinced that the most important variable in the transformative process that has taken place at our Center, or specifically, that which created the rich soil in which the seeds for our Veterans partnership were planted and grew, is about real relationships, beginning within our school of social work and larger university, and extending to our agency partners (O'Neill, 2002).

The first step in cultivating the idea for our Veterans collaborative partnership, gaining buy-in from my Center Director, Dean, Associate Dean, and those to whom they report, was achieved by seeking to understand each of their individual university and school of social work objectives. The steps of educating, persuading, confronting, budgeting, negotiating, mediating, and influencing would only be appropriate to utilize if the proposed partnership and program made sense to them. Use of empathy and tuning in (to self as well as other), and

willingness to modify ideas (Shulman, 2012) facilitated the initial buy-in process.

With hopeful elation, I approached my Center Director with my idea for a Veterans collaborative partnership. "Well", she responded, "it's a good idea, but if you're looking to create a program, it's not going to be easy. We don't really have much space and we don't have a budget." She further indicated the extensive demands on her time. I heard her hesitancy as concern about engaging in something that may never come to fruition. "I can do it!" I said, emphasizing the grunt work. "I will take care of all of the organizing. I just need your support and your knowledge of the community to help *us* gather a core group of people for the collaborative." This brought her onboard.

Reflecting back, I am for the first time able to appreciate that my fervent organizing skills were either inherited or learned from my father. It has given me pleasure to realize the large part he played in this process. Next step was to gain support from the "mother ship," i.e., the Associate Dean and Dean. By presenting them with a plethora of news articles on Veterans, and on emerging military practice tracks in a few schools of social work I provided the evidence needed for creating a Veteran's collaborative, which led to a "thumbs up." While I had the green light to go forward, I realized I would need to be in the driver's seat. If this was a big charge, which it was, I didn't think about it at the time. Rather, I suspect I heard my father's famous words, "quitters never win and winners never quit." This was the motto he lived by, and one I later learned is common in the military.

In Spring, 2011, my Center Director and I convened a brainstorming session. At the table were: the field instructor from the VA and one of his colleagues, three of our adjunct faculty who were VA or vet center social workers, a senior faculty colleague whose research includes Veterans, a colleague from a neighboring college who researches Veterans, and representatives from the two professional social work organizations from our Center's local community.

Together, in a genuinely cooperative style, the idea for a full day collaborative Fall, 2011 Conference on Social Work Practice With Veterans Through The Lifespan was conceived. While I gladly take credit for organizing the collaborative and overseeing the meetings, in my view, shared leadership emerged based on the expertise of the collaborative partners. The two faculty with research expertise provided important background knowledge. Those from the VA and vet centers took charge in the planning of the conference presentations. Those representing professional organizations shared their experiences in event planning.

As I can best recall, I think there were times when each of us educated, persuaded, confronted, budgeted, negotiated, mediated, and influenced, always respectfully, and sometimes humorously. After months of planning, at last it was the very night before the conference, and a few of us who lived far from the Center stayed at a local hotel. I remember arriving there late, after teaching my evening 8:00 – 10:00 PM class, and finding my faculty colleague, with whom I was sharing a room, sitting in a chair blowing up balloons, which apparently someone in the collaborative decided would be helpful for the signage at the site of the event, and which I admit, I found funny. I was exhausted, anxious and excited, and, the next thing I remember is awakening the next morning at 6:00 AM to a room full of red, white and blue balloons and a lot of laughter. Apparently, my colleague did not have as full and as restful a night's sleep as I did, and thankfully, she didn't hold it against me.

The goal and initiative of the conference was to provide basic knowledge on military social work practice and Veteran resources to the local social work community, and also gauge social work interest in a more in-depth and thorough military curriculum. The full day conference was planned, executed to a sell-out crowd, and evaluated. One month after the conference, the Veterans collaborative met, reviewed the evaluations and de-briefed the conference and the processes that led to it, and completed the steps of the generalist intervention model from engagement through evaluation. However, it was not time for termination, for re-energized as we were by the fervent evaluations, we were even more fully committed to an ongoing initiative, and thus onward we marched toward planning a Fall 2012 conference on Clinical Social Work Practice With Military Families. With equal success in 2012, and attendee

evaluations seeking an even more in-depth military curriculum, the collaborative faced the reality of advancing to the next step, a post-graduate certificate program in military social work.

However, when my Center Director outwardly acknowledged that a post-graduate certificate program, housed within our school of social work would potentially bring an end to the now well-established Veterans collaborative, the group took pause. I don't think there was a single person there who wasn't in favor of moving forward for the "greater good." Yet the imagined loss of a collective that had worked so well together for nearly two years was troublesome. There ensued a period of struggle, which required some modification of ideas, but landed us in a place of resolution.

Our post-graduate certificate program launched in Fall 2013 and included a collaborative conference in Spring 2014 entitled Healing the Military and Veteran Community through Advancing Traditional and Innovative Mental Health Treatment; a requirement for the post-graduate students who contributed to its design, and open to the larger social work community. While the planning of the post-graduate certificate program has brought forth new members to the collaborative, those from the original group returned to help plan the spring conference. We have grown in number, and we are a proud group. As I reflect back, I believe that our Veterans programs came to fruition because the assessment and planning always maintained a keen awareness of the different, though intersecting goals and objectives of the members of the collaborative.

Concerns arose, sometimes about budgeting, other times about promotion, which challenged members to self-reflect with the intention of gaining a deeper understanding of each of our own objectives and goals, as well as those of the organization we represent, and those of each colleague. This tuning in to self and other is the most basic of social work skills that we teach to our foundation students.

As well the more advanced use of self requires tuning in to transferences and countertransferences, and that which is evoked in each of us personally. There was a lot of that for me and in the end, gaining cultural competence in military social work practice has had great meaning for me, both professionally and personally.

Most recently, I had a Veteran in my classroom whose need to be logged on to the internet may have been something I previously would not have tolerated in the classroom. However, through working with my collaborative partners, and attending the conferences I organized, I came to understand that the stimulation of the internet can provide a sense of calm for a Veteran who suffers symptoms of post-traumatic stress. This young man was a good student, did not distract the others, and functioned best with more chaos than my classroom offered. On a personal level, when my father died in March 2013 we gave him military honors. My father would never have asked for this, but I know he would have appreciated it. And, as was typical in the orderly style in which he always lived, I found his World War II discharge papers, required by the funeral home, filed in his desk drawer under "N" for Navy.

While we are now moving forward, using the same basic model to address a gap in knowledge of LGBTQ practice (especially important in the aftermath of the recent overturning of the Defense of Marriage Act, DOMA), we are reminded that the building of partnerships is always dependent on the building of relationships which, to be successful (clinically or in collaborative partnerships) depend on advanced use of self, empathy, warmth and genuineness, along with tuning in and listening with a third ear. By utilizing these social work skills and the macro practice processes outlined above, our Center has also launched a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) post-graduate certificate program and hopes to create more continuing education conferences and post-graduate programs consistent with the social and political climate, and that meet the needs of our community of social workers.

In my experience, the model that essentially facilitated the transformation of a school of social work extension site into a university center for career-long learning is essentially the same practice model taught to social work students in the foundation year. Thus, not only can we empirically test the program development model we are teaching, but we also have opportunities to model

skills for students who wish to serve as graduate assistants, volunteers, and simply observers, enhancing classroom teaching via the parallel process. But, as I come to the end of my reflections, I add a disclaimer. What I have put forth is only my interpretation of a process, and within the hermeneutic tradition, it is entirely possible that others, including my collaborative partners, may view the process in a fundamentally different light.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to extend gratitude to her colleagues and collaborative partners: Eileen Chadwick, Dr. Diann Cameron Kelly (Adelphi University School of Social Work), Dr. Cheryl Whitley, Dr. Elizabeth Quinn (Marist College), Dr. David Gitelson, Mary Mantilla, Dr. Tom Quinn, Glenn Gilbert, Jennifer Audette (US Dept. of Veterans Affairs), Laura Eastman Follis, Amy Horn Oclatis (NASW – NYS – Hudson Valley Division), Gloria Robbins, Rosemary Cohen (NYSSCSW Mid-Hudson Chapter), and Tina Atherall (Hope for the Warriors), without whom these programs and this article would never have come to fruition! And special thanks to Dean Andy Safyer, Associate Dean Peter Chernack, and Audrey Freshman (Adelphi University School of Social Work) for believing in our group and providing the necessary support from home base!

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