REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

Special Issue:
Interconnections of Micro and Macro Practice:
Sharing Experiences of the Real World

Darlyne Bailey and Melissa Emmerson, Co-Editors

Cover Art by Robin Richesson

Volume 24, Number 1 Winter 2018

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PUBLISHED BY CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Cathleen A. Lewandowski, Ph.D., Director; Michael A. Dover, Ph.D., Publisher
Publishing Partners: University of Georgia School of Social Work; Howard University School of Social Work; California State University School of Social Work; Monmouth University School of Social Work

Current Issue Cover Art: Robin Richesson

ISSN - 1080-0220. Published April 12, 2018 using Open Journal Systems software. Hosted at Public Knowledge Project. Indexed in Social Work Abstracts and Social Services Abstracts. Full text available in EBSCOhost SocIndex and Proquest Research Library.

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Special Issue Submissions (continued)

Friends of Reflections

Reflections from the Editors: From Conception to Birth

Darlyne Bailey and Melissa Emmerson

Abstract: This serves as the introduction to the special issue on micro and macro practice of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*.

Keywords: The Special Commission, ACOSA, Richard Pieper, Sr., social work practice, macro matters, social justice

When the *Reflections* team contacted us, they asked if we might be interested in pulling together a special section focusing on macro practice. With Darlyne's role as co-chair of the national Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work, this request was a wonderful opportunity! Moreover, we had just begun working on an invited article for the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers Summer 2016 newsletter. With a dedication to our profession's commitment to social justice, the thinking that went into that article, "The Horse and the Herd: Steadying the Shift Between Micro and Macro Direct Social Work Practice" (The Pennsylvania Social Worker, 2016), and Darlyne's work on the "Special Commission" (as it has lovingly come to be known), together formed the context for what you are about to read. Thanks to the outpouring of submissions, what had originally been designated as a section of a *Reflections* issue grew into its own special issue.

The Special Commission, sponsored by the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), was formed in 2013 in response to the original 2012 Rothman Report. This report was a seminal piece in which Jack Rothman provided evidence to affirm the growing concerns regarding the place of macro practice in professional social work education and, therefore, practice. According to Rothman (2013), our profession's ability to address individual problems on a community and societal level has been "truncated." Thus, the work of the Special Commission remains rooted in the belief that "macro matters"—that social justice can only be completely attained when all are considered (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and their communities) through our direct practice with each and when we address the policies that impact them all.

Like you, members of the Special Commission—currently 30 commissioners, 100 investor schools and programs, and 320 allies—know that examples of injustice abound throughout the history of our country. While seemingly well-intended, the impact of national and state legislation that has ignored the interconnection and interdependence that exists among individuals and between them and the systems created to support them, has oftentimes been tragic. Examples would include: the consequences experienced by the people and their unprepared communities following deinstitutionalization and the closing of mental hospitals in the 1970s; the resultant race to the bottom from No Child Left Behind; the less-than-adequate, and even harmful, provisions for hurricane survivors and residents of communities largely comprised of women and people of color by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as well as state and social service entities; and the damage to us all from the continued realities of inequitable healthcare and a retributive (as opposed to restorative) justice system. These and

countless other examples are infamously well-known.

The good news is that the awareness of the need to move from espousing to enacting our profession's person-in-environment perspective is increasing, and not only among those of us whose base of service is in the social sector. We have kindred colleagues in for-profit and governmental institutions as well.

Listening to part of a recent conversation about this special issue with entrepreneurial businessman Richard 'Dick' Pieper, Sr. reminds us of this fact. Founded as Pieper Electric in 1947 by his father, Dick assumed the leadership of now PPC Partners, Inc. in 1961. With its branches and franchises in eight states across our country, communities who employ the services of PPC and its employees company-wide are very familiar with the Noble Experiment. This ambitious proposal in 1990 contended that the best leadership that a company could provide would be in "hiring and developing exceptional human beings who could do a better job than you, giving without expectations, receiving without expectations" (History of PPC Holdings Employee Ownership, p. 1). This ethos laid the foundation for this company to legally become employee owned in 2001. The Noble Experiment remains an integral part of the PPC culture, guiding its internal and external operations.

Dick is now the Non-Executive Chairman of PPC Partners, Inc. When asked what he does, Dick told us:

> What I do from your macro sense is I grow oak trees. And unbeknownst to me, people say I now have a whole forest. More specifically, I work with people to develop their human capacity. In my words, to be all that the Lord would have hoped them to be, or is available to them, to make this a better world. (R. Pieper, personal communication, September 9, 2016)

When asked why he does this, Dick quickly responded:

> It's a great place to be. I would say that 80-90% of the population in the world wants to be helpful for their fellow man. They just don't have examples of how to do it. The systems, the governments, all reflect Newtonian thinkers. Today's world has run way past that kind of thinking and that kind of education. But that's how most people are still programmed. Looking at life from that perspective is kind of crazy, complicated, and dysfunctional. And that's what we see in our society. If the leaders—formal and informal—could think in quantum, they would connect it all up. You wouldn't see it as a professional life, and a personal life, or a community life. You would say, "They have a life." (R. Pieper, personal communication, September 9, 2016)

Dick didn't stop there. He went on to tell us:

> Unfortunately, the system itself thinks exactly in terms of what you describe this [special issue] to be in response to, even saying that "Social workers do this, society does that." Newtonian thinkers believe that they can do anything and solve anything: Give us enough

> money, enough staff, we'll figure it out, when in actuality, every person is unique and the relationship of every person to where they are, where they live, the kind of air they breathe, the people they walk by during the day, who move up and down their street, who live in the apartment next to them are all unique. To think that you can organize this all in boxes is setting people up, and many of them lose. We're talking about a system that supports the people, enabling success or enabling failure. (Pieper, personal communication, September 9, 2016)

With social work colleagues and others like Dick in mind, our proposed call for submissions was both broad and focused, inviting "...narrative expositions and reflections from social work educators, practitioners, and others whose experiences have led to a deepened understanding of the need to attend to both the micro and macro aspects of our real world." Although not exactly what *Reflections* had in mind when we spoke, we went ahead and sent our proposal to Mike Dover, the editor and "chief cook and bottle washer" for this journal. His response was energizing and a relief. He wrote:

> I must say, I was expecting a proposal for a, shall I say, more narrowly focused "Macro Matters" approach, calling for narratives on community organizing or social administration per se. But I am actually very pleased, as the issues you have raised are among those least developed in the social work literature. How better to examine them than via narrative and reflection? (M. Dover, personal communication, May 12, 2016)

With an abundance of enthusiasm and permission to reach out to those kindred spirits who may not identify as social workers, but whose lives—personal and professional—reflect the core values of our profession, our special issue was born.

Birth

As shared earlier, in response to this call for proposals, we received numerous manuscripts from colleagues both within and outside of our profession. Manuscripts that were outside of the focus of this call were forwarded to the *Reflections* editor for possible inclusion in a 'general section' of the journal. Following the *Reflections* protocol, all submissions determined appropriate for this special issue then underwent blind peer reviews by two separate reviewers. Thanks to Mari Lynn Alschuler, Gary M. Bess, Shane Ryan Brady, Michael Dover, Jane Gorman, Monica Leisey, Beth Lewis, Kim Lorber, Florence Ellen Netting, Kelly K. Reinsmith-Jones, Alankaar Sharma, Marian Swindell, Lara Vanderhoof, and Victoria Winbush for serving as wonderfully thoughtful reviewers. Extra special thanks go to Lillian Wichinsky, who immediately accepted our invitation to be one of the two reviewers for all of the submissions we received. Amidst challenges that come with relocating to another state and joining another academic community, Lillie remained committed to providing reviews that were thorough and timely!

We also sought out and formally interviewed a dear colleague and friend, Frances Hesselbein, who is not a social worker by profession but, again, whose life well-aligns with our social work values. Collectively, the articles and this interview in this special issue reflect a range of individuals' perspectives and, more importantly, the different pathways that they have taken to

recognize the differences between micro-direct and macro-direct practice and the connections between them. Unlike the ordering of articles in most journals, we decided to share these with you in alpha-order using our colleagues' last names. While that starts us off with the Hesselbein interview by Darlyne, once we did this we thought it worked!

As we read these manuscripts, a series of juxtaposing themes emerged. To name just a few: both personal and professional transitions in moving from "either-or" to "both-and" perspectives in understanding the micro-macro relationship; transitions that were both smooth and clumsy and that occurred earlier or later in one's life; intuitive appreciations as well as explicit articulations of the realization that the real world actually bridges the academic micro-macro divide; and, as in the case of three of our authors, a deepened understanding of micro and macro connections through working with individuals and with animals. The existence of this call led several to recognize for the first time the dynamic interplay between 'micro and macro' in multiple areas of their lives; for others this opportunity in the *Reflections* journal affirmed long-held beliefs that were central to their personal lives and to their professional teaching and research.

Not surprisingly, our own work over the months of putting together this special issue mirrored some of these themes. Both of us have the roots of our professional education in micro/clinical social work. While Melissa chose that as her primary professional identity, Darlyne's doctoral education and unanticipated, yet greatly appreciated, leadership positions quickly propelled her into embracing a more macro professional identity. Our ying and yang—different yet interdependent—foci have always enriched our working relationship and, we believe, enhanced the quality of our final products. That said, for this special issue we will let you be the judge.

We hope that by the time you finish reading this issue, you will agree that the services provided by our profession are most effective and complete only when we work from an appreciation of the interconnectedness of micro- and macro-direct practice. Such an understanding is required to best address the needs of both ends of our professional client system—from individuals to communities—as well as the policies and procedures that are informed by and shape the lives of them all. In short, we trust that at the conclusion of this special issue you, too, will start to see micro and macro connections everywhere. We hope that you enjoy reading this special issue of *Reflections* as much as we did in bringing it to you. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Spending Time with Frances Hesselbein

Darlyne Bailey

Abstract: The following represents interviews with Frances Hesselbein in September and December of 2016.

Keywords: leadership, Peter Drucker, Girl Scouts, Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute

"Leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do."
Frances Hesselbein

Frances Hesselbein is the President and CEO of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Forum, positions she has held (both, one, or the other) for over 30 years. The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Forum was first known as the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management and then the Leader to Leader Institute. The journal by that same name—Leader to Leader—is an award-winning journal. In 1998 Frances was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Clinton. Darlyne has had the incredible privilege of knowing Frances and conducted interviews with her on September 9, 2016 and December 19, 2016. While we could tell you why we were eager to share her thoughts for this issue of *Reflections*, we trust that the reasons will be most clear when you hear from Frances herself:

Darlyne: Good morning, dear Frances, and thank you again for taking the time to speak with us and our readers of this most special issue of *Reflections*. Let's begin. Please tell us what you do, why you do what you do, and the fundamental values and beliefs undergirding your service/work.

Frances: I have the honor and excitement of working with The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Forum, which began as the Peter Drucker Leadership Institute. We had Peter Drucker for 12 years before his passing in November of 2005. However, Peter Drucker is still alive within the Institute, with our board and staff. For us, leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do. It is the quality and character of the leader that determines the performance and result of the work: mission-focused, values-based, and demographic driven. We manage for the mission, we manage for innovation, we manage for diversity. The mission is why we do what we do, and that never changes. What we do and how we do it change, but the *why* never does.

Darlyne: What has been your perception of social work?

Frances: When I hear social work, I think that out there are these organizations, these remarkable people who are trying to serve. They really believe as I do that to serve is to live. Whenever there is a need, and there are massive needs all over the country, they (social workers) choose a need they want to respond to and always they are mission-focused, value-based, and demographics driven.

Darlyne: We are intending to show our readers the relationship between the individual and organizations, bridging what we call micro and macro practice, because in academia we separate them. In most of our schools and programs, we teach our students how to work with individuals and families, or we teach our students how to work with organizations and policies. It is rare that beyond our foundational courses we teach our students how to address the needs of both ends of our client system—everyone we serve. The point of this special issue is to show that there shouldn't be this divide. Frances, has there been a time where you only worked with individuals and families and not organizations?

Frances: Hmm...No. Long ago in the basement of the Presbyterian Church were the members of Girl Scout Troop 17. There were 30 girls, 10 years old, and most of their fathers worked in the nearby coal mines, steel mills, etc. They were the most remarkable 10-year-olds, and an aggressive woman Girl Scout neighborhood chairman kept trying to get me to take the Girl Scout troop. I would reply that, "I know nothing about little girls…I am a mother of an 8-year-old boy." One day the woman said they would have to disband the troop because the leader was going to Australia to become a missionary. She told me that they will have to say goodbye to the 30 10-year-old Girl Scouts. So I agreed to take the troop for six weeks until they could find a new leader. Troop 17 and I stayed together until all the girls graduated from high school and these girls sold more cookies than anyone had ever heard of.

The girls raised all that money, and they then had to plan what they wanted to do with it. They said, "We already have the plan. We're going to New York City on the train (Pennsylvania Railroad). What we want to do is visit the Museum of Natural History to see the dinosaurs." They described the other museums and where they wanted to go. One wanted to ride the subway, another the ferry. Exciting how they had already planned how they would use the money!

Later I became the CEO of the Girl Scouts Council. One day, I got a call from the Girl Scouts of USA saying: We want you to come to talk to us about the National Executive Director-CEO job which apparently had been open for several months.

Darlyne: And that segues perfectly into the second part of our question: How did you move from Troop 17 to work with larger organizations?

Frances: In this call from the New York National Headquarters of the Girl Scouts they said that I had done some wonderfully innovative things, and they asked me to come to NY and talk to them about the national CEO job. I told my husband John (who was a journalist) about the call and he said, "I'm driving you to NY. You have to speak with them." He was also a film maker and always wanted to live in NY. And then he said "Good manners would indicate that you at least speak with them"—that was my final encouragement!

So I went to the New York Girl Scout national headquarters and sat down with 6 lovely people, the search committee. They observed that I was not asking questions as if I wanted the job. I was being nice and polite. One said, "Frances, if you were in this job, what would you do?" Well, here's the largest organization for girls and women in the whole world, and I would never take the job, but I could be honest about how I saw the future. So I spoke about transformation:

throwing out the old handbooks filled with camping and cooking and having some great authors write new handbooks, heavy on math, science, and technology. I was very positive about the organization and its future.

Darlyne: Why did you pick that (math, science, and technology) Frances?

Frances: Because it wasn't happening for girls and women, and here was the opportunity to open new doors to a wider world. So I described for them the total transformation of the organization. I said I would also speak with friends at the Harvard Business School and ask them to design a five-day leadership training session for our local Girl Scout executive directors. They would have the Harvard Business School experience. We also would find new authors to develop contemporary handbooks for girls.

Darlyne: What was that year?

Frances: I began in 1976 and was there for over 13 years, for 5,000 days. Because in the job interview I had described the total transformation, they had bought it and it became theirs. And we then began getting prizes for multicultural materials for girls and young women.

Darlyne: As was the case with math, science, and technology, it was very much ahead of your time to even talk about multiculturalism, Frances! What gave you that drive?

Frances: My experience in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. I lived there and I was the first woman in the USA to chair a United Way campaign, and people said, "What? A woman? They (women) had never been involved before, and we will have to ask Bethlehem Steel Co." But how did I begin with reaching out to people? John and I were the first White people in our city to become members of the NAACP. We each paid our ten dollar membership. Our action surprised some people, but many followed us. And then John had a call from the Governor of Pennsylvania who said, "I want you to be my representative for equal opportunity, and I want you to carry my message." And the first thing John was called to do was to visit a barber who refused to cut Black people's hair. The barber said, "I can't cut their hair. I don't have the tools." "Well, you'll have to buy the tools," said John. Then Father Saylor, John's partner in this Governor's initiative, said to John, "I'm sorry [but] your management team must also reflect diversity." Father Saylor then called on the steel company, to discuss the challenge of having eight senior managers, same position, all White. And then that changed! It was very inspiring in those days when equal rights was not a very popular concept. I always loved to see these two young men doing what the governor wanted them to do.

Within the Girl Scouts, we had a similar, yet our own wonderful, battle cry. We asked, "When they, [anyone outside] look at us, can they find themselves?" The answer has to be the same for our [own] management team, the board, and in our films and journals, as it is out in the field: "Yes." Very soon we had a diverse team, for thirteen years.

Darlyne: So far in your life you've always focused on the individual in the context of the community. You've never just looked at an individual and not also looked at the context.

And yet, you've never ignored the individual. You've always bridged what we would call the micro-macro divide. Why have you done this?

Frances: You have to have respect. It all begins with respect for all people and their communities. We must reach out not just to everyone who looks like us or who thinks the way we think. We must work with and right across their remarkable community, and we make sure that when they look at us, they can find themselves.

In girl scouting, we threw out the old handbooks and we found four remarkable authors and artists who were going to do this for us. I said to them, "Remember, when any girl or young woman opens her own handbook she must be able to find herself". They asked, "Did you say any?" I responded, "I should have said *every*." If I'm 7 years old and I'm an Eskimo Brownie, when I open my handbook, I can find myself.

They caught on fire! The new handbooks had the most powerful illustrations of girls of all races, and we started getting prizes for best multicultural resources. It was fun. And there was no push-back.

Darlyne: You left Troop 17 and Johnstown, PA to work with Girl Scouts of the USA and then Peter Drucker. Can you tell us the story of how Peter Drucker got you involved in the Peter Drucker Leadership Institute. How did he approach you when he asked you to work with him and how long ago did this happen?

Frances: 1990. Two friends and I met Peter Drucker. I had just left the Girl Scouts the day before, and two girls came to talk about what I am going to do. They also asked me, "How do we move Peter Drucker across the country and around the world?" So we met together, discussed it, and decided to organize a new Peter Drucker Leadership Institute. I thought I had agreed to be the chairman, but when we brought our idea to Peter, he said, "You will not be the chair, you will be the CEO and run it, or it won't work." So, I found myself the President and CEO of the smallest organization in the world. That was 30 years ago. To the staff, in our minds, we are still the Peter Drucker Leadership Institute even though it now bears my name.

Darlyne: Let's fast forward to now: What are you doing now? What are you doing with your time, Frances, and why?

Frances: Today the needs are greater than ever before for leaders. The challenges are greater. So, since 2012 I have traveled, spoken, and developed our global webinars. Recently, I spoke in a global webinar with 400 women in 40 countries and it was called, "Leaders of the Future, Women in Action." On this webinar there were also 80 young men in China and Hong Kong who had just received their MBAs. They developed 15 questions for something they called, "Leadership Development by Cell Phone." It was theirs. I held my cell phone in my office. They were all in China and Hong Kong, holding their cell phones.

Their 15 questions were all profound. I had them in front of me. My friend, Henry To would speak into his cell phone—"Ms. Hesselbein, question #1…"—and I would hold my cell phone in

front of my face and would respond. After question #5, I hear this [other] young man's voice without a trace of accent. He lived, grew up, and was born in Hong Kong or China. His English was flawless. "Mrs. Hesselbein, would you mind amplifying that last answer? We want to know more about this." I said, "Of course I can." So after 43 minutes, a [another] lovely young man's voice came on—flawless English. "In two minutes, our 45 minutes with you will be over. Would it be possible for you to give us 45 more minutes?" I said, "Of course I can." And we continued with their profound questions for 45 more minutes.

We never ever charge for our webinars. We want the poorest leaders in the poorest countries to join us; we check to see if anyone else has signed on. We have had all of these big corporations. We have had IBM, General Electric (GE), General Motors (GM), some large universities, etc. We didn't realize when we opened it up that people [were] hungry for leadership adventures in learning, so that's one of the things we provide.

Right now I am raising 4 x $65,000 for a quarterly global webinar. Of course it will be open to everyone, and there will never be a fee. For our first one, a webinar for women, I received an email from the poorest, smallest African country. "Dear Lady Hesselbein: We are not women. We are men who are leaders, and we are so hungry for your message. Even though we are not ladies, may we please register?" I emailed them three minutes later and invited them to register, welcomed them and said, "You are very welcome." There is no fee, and gentleman, if you know other leaders who are men in Africa, tell them how welcome they would be, and there is no fee." So we had a marvelous webinar for women and included all these men who wanted to be part of it.

Darlyne: Frances, what's the secret sauce to you opening your eyes everyday and having these kinds of conversations, like this one with us today?

Frances: "To serve is to live," is my battle cry. Every day when we get up, it's a great day, it's a gift. And we think, how can I make a difference? What can I do that would help someone? What can we do in our small organization? Where can we be so that tonight when we ask ourselves, "Did I do anything that made a difference today?" we hope we can say, "You bet I did!" We always make sure we use the language of the future, not the language of the past.

Conclusion

Now some of you may ask, why Frances? And the researchers among us would say that she is part of a convenience sample. Yes, I have served with Frances on her boards, but I'm also on other boards, serving with other people: So why her? Frances is one of the most tenacious activists for individual leadership development, particularly for women, that I know. As Peter Drucker is known to have said "The early militant feminists declared that God was a woman. It didn't surprise me one bit because there was my 4th grade teacher and there was Frances Hesselbein."

Even with this, never once have I heard Frances talk only about the individual. Frances always looks at the individual as well as the systems with which that person is connected—families,

organizations, and communities. While that requires a 'wide angle lens' for Frances, I have never heard her refer to what she does as *work*.

In short, Frances Hesselbein is an exemplar for how to best bridge our micro-macro divide, embodying our professional values, and living her life, her personal mission, right out loud! Melissa and I wanted to give our *Reflections* readers the opportunity to hear even a little from this truly incredible woman, a leader herself, a living legend.

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Macro Practice in a Micro World: The Story of Youth Futures

Barrett Albert Troy Bonella

Abstract: The dichotomy of micro and macro practice is one that many social work students struggle with, especially when so many social workers just want to become therapists. My own experience in moving between the two worlds involved skepticism towards macro practice while training to be a therapist, then moving on to the world of academia where macro practice seemed to gain more value, then working in macro practice for a few years, and then trying to convince other students of the value of macro practice once returning to academia. One semester, a talented student taught me that macro practice was still alive and well in social work, and that macro was not just a part of the social work identity, but a fundamental part of what social workers do every day. She did this by creating a homeless youth shelter with the help of her cohort during one fateful fall semester.

Keywords: macro practice, program building, *Reflections*, teaching, teamwork

Let's be honest. Social work has evolved into a clinical profession despite our infancy in community practice. Year after year I teach students who want to be clinicians more than anything. The cry of "I want to help people" usually means "I want to sit in a nice chair and have clients pay me to help solve their problems." Despite all the rhetoric used to emphasize the importance of policy work, research, and macro practice, most social workers simply aren't interested. At least, I know I wasn't. Perhaps I'm projecting my own experience onto my colleagues who studied with me, but I saw going into the field of social work as a shortcut to becoming a therapist and I believe they did too. In any case, I had always intended to become clinician. The University of Utah provided me with an opportunity to study the arts and ways of the social worker as a master's student. Fortunately, I was pretty good at the whole social work thing. My practicum supervisors loved me, I loved my professors, and I loved what I was learning. I loved most of what I was learning anyway.

One of my first classes in the MSW program was referred to as Policy. I really didn't see the point of it other than it gave me a small overview of what the profession entailed. Honestly, I don't remember much from that class other than it required a really difficult paper at the end called a PRINCE policy analysis. I had already gained my undergraduate degree and I just assumed this class just another one of those unpleasant hoops you have to jump through to get a degree. I felt the course didn't provide a takeaway for becoming a therapist. To be sure, I don't blame the professor. She was a talented and knowledgeable person who had done a great deal of work in policy.

My second semester I had to take another class that also seemed totally unnecessary. My cohort and I cynically referred to it as macro practice. The coursework wasn't particularly difficult, but the class required us to go find a systemic injustice and try to solve it. I remember thinking to myself, "Man, another one of these hoops! When will they end?" The other classes like micro practice, mezzo practice, and human behavior in the social environment all seemed so practical compared to this!

Something did happen at the end of macro that softened my heart a little bit, however. One set of students set up a classroom environment simulation for at-risk adolescents for their final presentation. While each presenting student spoke, the audience of students had to sit calmly, quietly, feet on the floor, hands still on their desks, no talking to peers, no looking anywhere but forward, and no crossing their legs. Students gave five minute presentations. Between shifting from one student to the next presenter in the group, all of the students listening were either punished or rewarded for how well we did. We were mostly punished. It was an incredibly difficult task, but a remarkably effective presentation. We all learned from our peers that holding still really sucks, and if we had a mental illness, were teenagers, and had to do that, I know at least I could imagine my symptoms getting worse. I started, albeit slowly, to see the light. Systems could make people worse.

I guessed I would have to start paying a little more attention to macro practice and systems. Too bad that class was over. Looking back on the class, I remember vividly that one presentation from my peers, Mahan and Lipman, et. al.'s movie *Holding Ground*, (1996) (an excellent video for macro practice classes), and some guy named Alinsky. My own project was a lamentably forgettable one focused on trying to get movie theaters to offer more diabetic friendly food. All we learned is that movie theaters get most of their money from concessions, and they would consider changes if the demand was high enough.

Still, I didn't see macro practice as essential to being a therapist. At best, I only saw it as part of the identity of a social worker, but not necessarily a part of the work they actually did. Macro practice was still something other people did—non-clinicians. I went full speed ahead imagining myself as the guy in the comfy chair getting paid to help solve other people's, and I got pretty good at it.

Now, my reflections on being a therapist can wait for another time, but let's just say I found in the field that full-time therapy, while mostly seeing clients, felt like I was mainly doing paperwork. The hours of time spent with clients would zoom by, while the paperwork would just drag on and on. Within a year of graduating from my master of social work program, I decided I needed to go back and get a Ph.D. to further my career. Mostly, it stemmed from the idea of being able to mentor new social work students, something I came to find as somewhat more rewarding than work with clients. I would later discover that supervising was a form of macro practice, and one that built nicely on the skills of micro practice. Little did I know it, but I was starting to gravitate away from micro practice and into macro.

Moving into Macro

In my Ph.D. program, I started to embrace the idea that social workers need to work on social systems to improve people's lives. The social environment people lived in was much more impactful than many of the micro level interventions we threw at them. I still loved micro practice. In fact, I continued working as a therapist throughout my time as a social worker, and even to this day. The time I spent working with addicted clients, homeless veterans, and immigrants on a micro level helped me build the skills necessary for macro practice, but it also reinforced the idea that systems mattered more in the long run than my one-hour sessions or two-

hour groups. The time I dedicated to the clinic declined as I focused more and more on macro level work. My Ph.D. program allowed for such a focus.

Research became a huge part of what I learned as a Ph.D. student, but what I really loved to do was teach. I signed up to teach as many classes as I could. The two classes that made themselves available for most regular rotations turned out to be a bachelor's level macro practice class and advanced research in mental health for master's students. For anyone who has ever taught before, you know that nothing teaches you more about a topic than having to teach about it.

Teaching macro practice served me well. I had a chance to redefine it for myself. I began to realize that almost any work I did outside of seeing individual clients or meeting in group therapy sessions counted as macro practice! Every staff meeting I attended was an opportunity to engage in macro practice. Every time I collaborated on a grant, or talked programing to my supervisor, or represented social work in the public was macro practice! My clinical directors, people I respected who still saw clients were actually macro practitioners. By teaching the class, I saw all the ins and outs of how macro practice framed micro practice in greater detail, and I was able to arrange the class in a way that made sense for me given my experience as a clinician. I began to see the value of the approach and grasped the concepts better than I did in my master's program (again, not to fault the teacher, but more about my attitude towards the class serving as a major hindrance). How it served me best, though, is it allowed me to conceptualize information about agencies, personnel management, organizational structure, funding sources, and community integration well enough to take on a clinical director position that had opened up after I'd finished my doctoral course work and was working on my dissertation.

This particular clinical directorship opportunity allowed me to take on macro practice in all of its most basic definitions and to flex my new skills. I got to work with policy, had to do a lot of research to evaluate my programs, supervise students, focus on community needs, and even do a little community organizing. Plus, I developed a great love for refugees and immigrants, the primary group of clients I served. I even did some therapy here and there, but this is where I really jumped into the deep end of macro practice. And, wow, was it deep! After a year or two, swimming in the deep end became very difficult.

One fateful Saturday evening, I received some terrible news. I noticed on Facebook a number of my former students were posting comments like, "I can't believe it!" and "Oh, I'm so sorry," on another former student's wall. I learned that one of my former students, Joel, had died in an accident. I was crushed. I'd had clients die before, and while it's always sad to lose a client, grieving a client seemed infinitely more doable than the loss of this former student. Joel had just received his clinical license, was working with children in the local mental health authority, and had been married for less than a year. I still feel that same sense of sorrow just writing about it. I taught this student's little brother as well, and saw him and Joel's young widow at the viewing. I remember waiting in line to see them and just thinking to myself, "What am I doing with my life?"

Looking back, I don't recall exactly what my thinking process was, but I do remember the situation I was in. I had pushed my little macro program to grow too quickly and I was burning

out faster than I could put out fires. When I had started my clinical director job a year or so earlier, I had two therapists, a full-time and part-time case manager, and a part-time billing specialist. By the time Joel died, I had seven full-time therapists, a clinical coordinator, three case managers, a contracted psychologist, a part-time practice nurse practitioner, two full-time billing specialists, and was well under way to starting a community center complete with a program supervisor, three after school teachers, and a handful of interns and volunteers. I'd pushed the program to grow by applying for lots of grants, increasing the number of grants funding the program from three to over ten. My own naiveté and blind ambition pushed the program growth too quickly to be manageable. The work became overwhelming and my family was paying the price. I remember at Joel's viewing that I decided it was time to get back into teaching. As much as I still loved refugees and macro work, I decided I was no good to either if the stress killed me, and I would have little to no respect for myself if I let my job get in the way of keeping my family. Whatever self-care I was doing, it wasn't enough (or had been thoroughly overwhelmed by lack of sufficient planning), and the loss of my student helped me realize I needed to make another career change, one that social work graciously offers.

I was fortunate that a small state university with a bachelor's level social work program, only 40 minutes from where I lived, had an opening the following fall for a tenure-track position. I'd finished my PhD by then and they were looking for someone who could teach macro practice, policy, and research. I hadn't taught policy yet, but I was willing, and I knew that with sufficient preparation, I could easily do so. I was hired and began teaching the next year.

Returning to Academia

Once at my new university, I realized I was in a rather precarious position: I was assigned to teach the very classes students in social work programs didn't want to take. I decided I needed to see this for what it was—a challenge. I embraced my task and lovingly called the group of macro courses I teach the "social work gauntlet." Since all students had to take a policy course, a research course, and macro practice, they'd all have to go through the gauntlet before they got their degrees.

Granted, the program I was in, like most schools of social work I've experienced, leaned toward micro practice. When I started, most of the faculty had an outside part time job as a therapist or emergency department worker. For that matter, I did too. Most students also identified with the desire to become therapists eventually. All my students asked the same questions I did when I was in graduate school: "How is this going to make me a better therapist?"; "What is the point of learning how to work with communities if I'm going to work with individuals?"; and "Can't I just hope my work with individuals can have a ripple effect on communities?" This attitude of questioning was nowhere more apparent than in my macro practice class.

I feel like I need to mention one macro student who helped me out a great deal during that difficult first semester: Arianna. Arianna befriended me right before classes started and helped guide me through the ins and outs of students and the proclivities of the cohort I was teaching that first semester. Despite how helpful she was, macro was by far the most difficult class I taught that semester, at least for me. Students were disengaged, bored, and spent a lot of time

sitting in the back of the classroom on Pinterest. The class only had about fifteen students in a classroom set up for forty, making the classroom feel empty, even when all the students were present. That emptiness seemed to only heighten the sense of isolation when teaching. Whenever I asked a question, Arianna was the only one who ever answered. It felt incredibly lonely.

I'd inherited from the previous teacher's syllabus a final project that required students to identify a systemic problem using Kirst-Ashman's and Hull's (2011) PREPARE model, and then to fashion a kind of treatment plan using their IMAGINE model. They had to then follow through with their plan and create some sort of macro level change in an organization or community. If I recall correctly, everyone in that class did a fundraiser—lamentably forgettable fundraisers. The only exception was Arianna who applied for and received a grant to provide a kind of respite movie experience for families with children on the autism spectrum. That was the only project I felt I could be proud of in that class. That first semester of macro was full of disappointment, frustration, and a fair amount of bad reviews. I knew the class would need some sort of change to make it work.

During the semester, I recalled that Kirst-Ashman and Hull refer to a character named Saul Alinsky in one of their chapters. He appeared to be a controversial figure that might make the class a little more exciting. In fact, I vaguely recalled his name from when I took macro practice myself. I made it a point to do some more research on Alinsky. I went to our library and picked up a worn 1971 edition of Alinsky's book *Rules for Radicals* (if you haven't read this book, you no longer have any excuses not to). I read it between fall and spring semester and was enthralled. His take on community organizing and macro practice was creative, aggressive, results-oriented, and practical in terms of how targets are selected and tackled. I talked to my chair and asked if I could make it part of the required reading. He liked the idea and gave me the go-ahead.

Reading an original text like Alinsky's book had some interesting effects on students. Some loved him, some hated him, but everyone had an opinion and was engaged when it came to his readings. Playing up the controversy of Alinsky was fun personally, but it also had the strange effect of making me want more from my students. The first semester teaching Alinsky, students still mostly did fundraisers for their class projects. Worse than that, most of them did half-hearted projects. I recall the last night of that class was one of the worst in my career. Students came up for presentations, were burned out, and gave lackluster presentations. It seemed like even though they'd all read *Rules for Radicals*, none of them had actually embraced the fact that given great opportunities and hard work, they could accomplish wonderful things. Most of them had great chances to make social changes and ended up squandering them.

I was furious. I was somewhat disappointed in my students, but more than that, I recognized they were burnt out. On top of the class I was teaching, these poor bachelors students were also writing capstones and doing their first semester of practicum placement. I decided for the following year when teaching macro practice, I was going make some serious changes. All small scale (<$1000) fundraisers would be banned. Such projects filled a very small and unending need that all agencies have for money and rarely make real sustainable changes that benefit clients or change systems. Self-care was also to become an integral part of the macro practice class. After all, I'd nearly burnt out doing macro practice myself, so who was I to expect any less

of my students? They would all have to demonstrate a fair amount of self-care throughout the semester so they wouldn't end up like that very frustrating second class.

A Student with a Dream

In fall semester of 2014, my macro practice class had a new set of rules and expectations. No fundraisers unless they were large scale or built into annual events. Projects must have accomplished something tangible. Students were to read Saul Alinsky and find ways to challenge their horizons of what is possible and how to look outside of their micro paradigm to change the world. Fortunately, I'd had a year to try to prime all the students through my policy and research courses on the value of macro practice. Now, it was time to put it into action and see what my students were actually capable of.

Well, I was in luck. That fall, a bright and talented non-traditional student with a dream entered my classroom, forever changing what I believed to be possible in a classroom. Her name was Kristen, and she had some experience working in an agency that gave out referrals and information about social services over the phone. One thing she'd noticed when talking on the phone to her clients was there were no homeless shelters for teens in our community, a fact that left her bothered because there were so many homeless teens and parents calling for just such a referral. Her decision to study social work was guided by the idea that she would need to fill this important gap in services in our community, and she was determined to make sure that need was met.

Before Kristen walked into our class, she had done a fair share of work to prepare for such a task. She and her partner purchased an old house in the community that they would one day turn into the shelter. She learned the reason there were no homeless shelters was because state policy did not allow for them, meaning any place that knowingly provided shelter for homeless youth had to contact their parents right away or turn them over to child protective services within 72 hours, or risk being charged with harboring a delinquent youth. What did Kristen do? She worked with one of our adjunct faculty, a local congressperson, a community policy advocate, and the state office to get the policy changed so that shelters for homeless youth could actually exist.

As you might be able to tell, Kristen was already bound for macro practice greatness. She had, however, also approached my class for help before taking it herself. She asked students from my summer macro course to try to fundraise for her shelter, but by then I was really dead-set against fundraisers, and the original plan was likely to bring only tens of dollars as opposed to the thousands that she needed. Kristen decided that to push the program forward, she'd have to take her idea to the class herself when she finally took it.

I vividly remember the night she pitched her idea. We were discussing what came to their minds when they heard the term macro practice, as well as what kinds of projects they could do to address community problems. I got a lot of typical answers like fundraisers. They were all told if they did a fundraiser, it had to be on a relatively massive scale or it had to become an annual event since the need for money would never really go away. Then, Kristen raised her hand. "I

want to start a homeless shelter for teenagers. Would that be an acceptable project?" I was a little floored. I stammered for a second and said, "Yes. That's macro practice embodied. Such a task is huge, though. Probably a bit unrealistic to take on in one semester." She then explained to me that she'd done a lot of the prep work for the project, had asked for fundraising help in the past, and was now ready to try out something big.

The students who heard about her project were eager to help. They even offered the idea that they should all work on this project together as a class. I reminded them groups had to be limited in size to three people (a policy I have for all my classes, otherwise someone invariably ends up slacking and getting a good grade on the coattails of their peers). We continued to brainstorm for potential solutions when suddenly Kristen offered the idea of having multiple groups of three team up to take on different tasks of setting up the shelter. Reminded of Alinsky and his principles of power, "Power goes to two poles: to those who've got the money and those who've got the people" (Alinsky, 1971, p. 127), I decided this group of groups would be an excellent way to push such a big project forward. It also mimicked how macro practice invariably ends up working—teams of teams. For that matter, the students were excited to see that they could contribute to a real macro project, even if they did not have to come up with the idea. I gave them the go ahead, excited to see what they could accomplish.

Kristen, it turns out, was quite the leader. Eighty percent of the class joined her and her cause, and she was able to delineate major tasks each group could start on. One group worked on a grant offered by the school to students working in the community. A second group worked on putting together a policy manual for the agency. Another group worked on putting together an annual poetry slam fundraiser. A fourth group did a series of fundraising events in front of a local Walmart for several weekends. Kristen helped manage the other groups as well as apply for a much larger grant from the university to get the shelter commercially ready.

I think in order to show the progression of the program, it would be best to look at each student's progress individually. The project that I imagined would have the least impact turned out to have one of the biggest. Over the course of several weekends, a small group of my macro practice students (who further recruited some of my Introduction to Social Work class students), hung out in front of a Walmart collecting money from any of the customers coming and going that wanted to donate. They were collecting in-kind items as well, so if customers didn't want to give them cash, they could buy items the shelter needed from a provided wish list. It was a surprising success. After four weeks in front of Walmart asking for collections, they had raised over $10,000! On top of that, they'd garnished enough attention that the local media caught wind of what they were doing and did an article on Kristen and her project.

It wasn't long after the local media picked up the story that larger newspapers started to pay attention. It was one of those feel-good articles—students working on their own to create a program that met community needs - plus it was the first dedicated homeless shelter for teens in our state. Before we knew it, Kristen had calls coming in from local business people dying for a piece of the action (and healthy tax deductions). She was inundated with donations from individuals and organizations looking to support the program. My student had become a local celebrity, and even the university couldn't ignore it.

That kind of publicity helped significantly. Kristen had the opportunity to apply for a large university grant that would help make the building she owned get up to code so the organization could open sooner. The funding committee was often reluctant to fund such projects since they usually supported program initiatives and not material support. In fact, one of the biggest issues they faced was who was going to own the materials purchased with the grant? I remember going to the funding committee meeting with my student and advocating for her and her program. She did most of the talking. I just stepped in as a new faculty member in full support of Kristen and the program she was setting up. I have to think in the end, she actually got the grant because the committee was afraid of being on the wrong side of history. Still, there was another $18,600+ in the coffers for the agency to get started, and to this day, it is the largest grant the committee has ever given for a single project.

One of Kristen's close friends headed up another grant proposal that would help organizations become certified as safe harbors for homeless youth, where they could get a quick bite to eat and then be referred to the homeless shelter. Such training programs already existed and this program was set up to bring out a group to train the trainers that would then certify agencies that would become the safe harbors for kids. That program was quite the learning experience for my students because once they had the grant, they had to convince the people that would be providing the training to come out to our state, find out how to board them, recruit people to be trained, find a place to host the training, and cover basic logistics for everyone. For students who had never taken on such projects before, it was a massive learning experience. Still, they got their grant and added another $3000 of value to the cause.

Another group had the less-than-glamorous job of writing up the organization's policy manual. I'm sure this group felt a little jealous that everyone else working to get the shelter opened was starting to get some really tangible results, as well as a fair share of media attention. This group received none of that attention. On top of that, they felt lost because Kristen was too busy dealing with incoming calls to dedicate a lot of time to them. They came to me, frustrated and looking for guidance. I was able to remind them that policies exist primarily to solve social problems, so they would have to think about what kinds of social problems the agency would likely encounter as they hosted homeless teens. They thought for a second and said, "Well, they'd better not have drugs or sex in the shelter, right?" Exactly. They thought a little longer and said, "I think we can handle this then." I encouraged them to look at policies other homeless shelters and youth residential programs had to help flesh out their policy manual and familiarize themselves with the format of policy language. Their contribution ended up becoming a major part of the agency's employee manual, which in turn saved Kristen significant time, leading to the agency being able to open sooner.

Finally, one group put together a poetry slam to raise awareness and funds for the new shelter, which would be named Youth Futures. It attracted some of the best poets from the state to come together and support the program, and it gathered a fair amount of media attention. I took my policy class to the slam, and I even shared one of my own idealistic poems from my time as an undergraduate student. From there, the poets went up and did their magic. Everyone in attendance was quite moved by their words and expressions, leading to my rather large policy class to take notice of the problem the community was facing as well as raise their own

awareness of their ability to make changes in the community. This particular project did not raise much in terms of funds; if I recall correctly, it was less than $150. But still, the awareness raised brought further attention to the community need and the program designed to meet that need.

In the end, the projects and publicity raised over $250,000 over the course of one semester. The homeless shelter opened its doors the following spring and has been running successfully ever since. Kristen and I did multiple presentations on her accomplishments and what made it work, and she was awarded the distinguished graduate from our college upon graduation where she shared the story of her work at commencement. Now, a couple of years later, Kristen still sends representatives of her agency to me at the beginning of each semester to ask if more students want to get involved. Usually, at least a couple of them do.

The impact this ambitious student has had on social work students in my program would be difficult to measure. Before working with Kristen, macro practice was seen as just another hoop to jump through. Students still come to my class with the same idea. “I want to be one of those social workers sitting in a comfy chair getting paid to help solve other people’s problems.” Now, with Kristen’s example and the prompts of Saul Alinsky, students know they must do great things for the community when they take my class, and prepare themselves accordingly.

As for me, I’ve learned that macro practice is essential for micro practice to exist. I think of all of the homeless teens out there in my community and how they might never get the individual services they need if it weren’t for the fact that Kristen took up the challenge as a macro practitioner. The same is true in every agency for which I’ve worked. Macro practice creates the context that allows for micro practice to even exist. Now when students come to me with the same questions I had as a social work student about macro practice, I can point them to Kristen’s example and say, “Because your ability to sit in a comfy chair and help solve individual’s problems is contingent on believing a change can be done within the context of macro practice.” My hope is that my students walk away with that idea, because I certainly have.

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Realigning Macro and Micro Social Work After Tragedy

Yvette Savwoir Bradford

Abstract: To fulfill its institutional mission while engaging and retaining committed staff, social service organizations must create an optimal balance of micro and macro social work. This became more obvious while helping my organization recover after a devastating event that threatened its very existence. With its diverse array of programs, Agency X, where I directed quality improvement, faced a daunting challenge. Agency survival required restructuring policies, practices, and direct services. Despite its history of innovative and effective programs, and its reputation for enhancing lives as well as systems, the agency was forced to face public scrutiny and declining employee trust. The following narrative describes the aftermath and recovery for this organization through a realignment of macro and micro social work.

Keywords: macro social work, mezzo social work, micro social work, outcomes, quality improvement, realignment, trauma

Introduction

It was a busy time for Agency X. We were selected to provide a new early intervention program for families who could avoid foster care. We were excited to offer an alternative to higher levels of care for many of the families in the child welfare system. Sadly, a low birth weight infant died while the family was in this new program. The incident received broad news coverage, causing a serious blow to our reputation. Our social workers were deflated, and the entire agency mourned the fatality. Although the agency was devastated by the sudden loss for a family under our care, we were also concerned with the possible impact on the organization.

As the external investigation proceeded, we wanted to conduct our own examination of all the factors that could have contributed to, or prevented the death. Upon examination, we discovered that the mother of the family had mental health issues that had not been shared with our agency. Further, this family was not appropriate for the less intensive services. Key questions remained. How did this referral slip through the system? What might we have done differently? Recognizing potential threats for children in similar situations was our highest priority. The leadership team (executive director, quality improvement director, and program directors) focused on improving support for the micro and mezzo social workers and enhancing relationships with social workers at all levels. We developed a comprehensive plan to restore internal and external confidence, which included intensifying risk management, improving communication and trust, and realigning relationships between micro social workers (working with individuals, families, communities, and small groups), mezzo social workers (managing a group of related Agency X services), and macro social workers (determining and executing institutional, structural and cultural dynamics).

Misinformation and Tragedy

For one family referred to Agency X, the risk level was inadequately assessed by the county

referral agency and underestimated by everyone involved, including public health nurses, homeless services and other care providers. The family, deemed to be a low-to-moderate risk, included a mother and her six children living in a homeless shelter where residents received regular health visits. The youngest was two months old and had complex health issues related to the lack of prenatal care and low birthweight. Based on the information available about this family, the intervention called for an uncomplicated service plan. A new case manager and a new supervisor did not anticipate, nor were they aware of, the medical fragility and complex circumstances surrounding this family. Public health and homeless services were also involved with this family, and it appeared that there was a general failure to ascertain the risk level.

Dealing with Trauma and Stress

The family's tragic loss was felt by everyone in Agency X from the executive director to administrative assistants, and with extreme secondary trauma for all the micro direct-care social workers and supervisors. In spite of passing state and county child welfare inspections, as well as accreditation reviews with only minor citations, this incident still happened to a child and family under our care. We were forced to simultaneously consider all possible contributing causes, especially how the health care system, social services and homeless services let this family fall through the cracks. Formal investigations would decide blame, but we wanted to go beyond critical regulatory and workforce issues to improve the system. We needed to quickly determine lessons from this case while also restoring workers' confidence and ensuring the safety of all children and families to whom we were responsible.

Discussions with my supervisor focused on finding root causes and developing prevention strategies. He asked "Why didn't we see this coming and how do we prevent it from happening again?" My responsibilities extended across all levels of social work, and I would be designated to lead the agency's difficult recovery and staff healing process. With the low morale affecting the micro social workers and their supervisors, I suggested they would be the logical starting point for our improvement plans. I was convinced this was an opportunity for listening to all perspectives and encouraging participation by the social workers who were closest to the service recipients. Intensive analysis, while important, needed to be combined with the social workers' firsthand knowledge and compassion for the individuals, children and families we served.

Trust toward macro staff was identified as a weak area according to Human Resources surveys taken before the incident. In the aftermath, trust declined further. Communication between micro social workers and their supervisors needed to include honest assessment and open discussion of social workers' feelings about what is going on with clients, as well as with the social workers themselves. Gaps in knowledge or fears and doubts about personal and client safety needed to be explored in supervision. However, it could only happen in an atmosphere of trust.

We were also concerned about staff engagement being below where we wanted it to be in the Human Resources survey. This became even more important in the post-incident environment. Engaged employees would be committed to the values and goals of the agency. Through their performance, they would demonstrate concern for successful organizational outcomes and goals that would be essential to moving Agency X forward. Frontline social workers and their

supervisors needed to feel valued, empowered and connected to the mission of the agency. Engagement would insure their active participation in decision-making that would contribute to improving outcomes.

Rebuilding Relationships

We decided to analyze and reassess everything—recruitment, training and professional development; burnout and retention; caseload size and risk level; quality of management and supervision; client intake, discharge, and outcomes; trust between line staff and management; and policies and procedures. With every step in this process, we encouraged the full participation of all levels of staff, especially micro social workers and their supervisors. It was imperative that we consider their perspective on how micro social work and macro social work were out of alignment and ensure ongoing collaboration and inclusion.

It was apparent that our micro social workers were experiencing secondary trauma, and their supervisors needed heightened support to avoid burnout. Trauma-informed care was an intervention that worked well with survivors of violence or trauma in some of our other programs. We wanted to provide healing tools for social workers who help the victims and themselves with getting beyond the impact of trauma. Through my consultation with trauma care providers, I developed a version of trauma-informed care using reflective supervision—regular collaborative reflection between micro social workers and their supervisors/mezzo social workers. Macro social workers also embraced reflective supervision to build and reinforce trust. All levels of social workers were empowered by participation in reflective supervision.

Recognizing "Red Flags"

Our internal review of the incident found that micro social workers and their supervisors' evaluation of risk was often different. Judging safety needed to be both objective and subjective. The leadership team decided that we would develop the tools for capturing the data we needed for making judgments about risk. My response was a 360-degree quality program and service review, an intensive examination of a program that included: comparisons of social workers' and supervisors' risk assessment for their entire caseload; comprehensive analysis of incidents; interviews with social workers and supervisors; case record reviews; personnel record inspections; and contract compliance. We produced a report that included successes, procedures for identifying and managing potential risks, and corrective actions. Progress was closely monitored by the leadership team and supervisors. This helped toward realigning micro and macro social work.

The 360 review reinforced the need for policy and procedure refinement. High caseloads, complex clients, and less supervisory time are characteristics of social service providers that would not be easily resolved. With the 360 review information, supervisors were more judicious in assigning cases to the social worker who could best accomplish the desired outcomes. Also, supervisors had more insight for balancing the workload and reducing stressors.

Minimal support for record keeping frustrated social workers and their supervisors. Missing or

insufficient paperwork raised concerns about not having essential information that could be required for a critical decision. Tight budgets limited the administrative support that could have lightened the paperwork burden for micro social workers. Given the importance of documentation, we had to allocate sufficient resources to maintain accurate and timely case records and stay within budget. Issuing laptops and cell phones gave social workers greater flexibility for accessing vital client information, updating records, and submitting critical reports in a more timely way for the required action. Visits with clients proved to be more productive.

Changing the System and Culture

With input from staff at every level, Agency X added to and restructured policies and procedures. We implemented new procedures for social workers who worked with families with children under three years old. Expanded training and professional development on this and other new or revised policies and procedures boosted social workers' confidence and alleviated supervisors of some one-on-one training that they typically provided. Training also created momentum for implementing best practices to achieve program goals and optimize outcomes.

The 360 review gave supervisors information they used to match the most appropriate social worker for the desired client outcomes. Micro social workers had more effective tools for risk assessment and decision making on safety. Supervisors were supported by program managers in approving the service plan whenever the level of risk exceeded the benchmarks we established. Social workers and supervisors were working with more individuals and families with untreated trauma, and we required trauma training to help them recognize it and refer them to appropriate providers.

Conclusion

The realignment of micro and macro social work required Agency X to be strategic in its effort to recover. The incident was a wake-up call for this social service organization and was the impetus for necessary realignment of micro and macro social work in all of the agency's programs, not just child welfare. With improved communication, there was better understanding of strengths, needs, risks, and potential resolution of problems. Restoring internal and external confidence, intensifying risk management practices, improving communication and trust, and realigning and strengthening relationships between micro and macro social workers were the ultimate goals.

Besides a service delivery model that includes input from macro, mezzo, and micro social workers, successful realignment demands commitment, trust, humility, appropriate access to micro and macro information, collaboration, accountability and a high level of quality improvement.

As Agency X realigned macro and micro social work, we minimized tensions that resulted from previous distrust between macro and micro social workers. Macro and micro social workers gained each other's respect and confidence. Applying quality improvement strategies to measure and manage the alignment between micro and macro social work adds value and mutual

accountability to the effort. Successful outcomes for the service population and the organization are dependent on the realignment of macro and micro relationships and interaction. Realignment to improve macro-micro relationships and interaction is possible, efficient, and protective for staff, organizations and service recipients.

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The Politicizing Influence of Caregiving: Making the Micro and Macro Connection in Older Adult Health

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Abstract: I consider the "case" of my mother's health and social challenges as representative of the urgent need for macro policy changes to support maximal functioning in our increasing older adult population. The "case and cause" gap in social work practice is highlighted. The failure of the medical model to adopt a whole-person approach to healthcare is demonstrated as serving to exacerbate the critical need for comprehensive preventive and ameliorative health and social policies.

Keywords: case and cause, micro and macro social work practice, social work reform

"The personal is political" slogan of the feminist movement of the 60s suddenly came to mind as I began to write this narrative of caring. My mother's journey from acute illness and emergency surgery to recovery politicized me personally and professionally in a way that I could not have anticipated. Through my parallel journey of providing care for my mother, I was surprised to discover and enlightened about the world of vulnerable older adults. Some of the gaping holes in care and services that are allowed to litter their paths are now visible to me. Gaps in services and access to care block many older adults from maintaining maximal health and wellness and most certainly contribute to health decline in our older adult population. I have come to believe that prevention resources are as vital for thriving in older adulthood as developmental resources are to thriving in infancy and childhood. My caregiving and related advocacy experiences underscore the need for comprehensive policies to address preventive and ameliorative supports for our increasing older adult population here in the U.S. For my profession of social work, this translates to operationalizing the long-standing commitment to the person-in-environment perspective by increasing the capacity of social workers to indelibly link "case and cause" in all the work we do. This can be accomplished in healthcare and related settings by employing a model such as the Consumer Advocacy and Navigational Model (cleverly resulting in the acronym CAN) formulated by Jansson (2011). The CAN model involves identifying, on a case-by-case basis, whenever any of "seven problems commonly encountered by healthcare consumers" (Jansson, p. 2) exist and then applying the CAN framework to deliver both case advocacy and policy advocacy.

This is a story in process, one whose end will not be written here. It illustrates the interconnections of one vulnerable life and macro policies that ignore some of those vulnerabilities. This story serves to underscore the social work profession's need to discover and operationalize means to make "case and cause" inseparable in practice. Indelibly linking "case and cause" is what the social work profession has long espoused but thus far has been unable to fully achieve. The current state of practice is such that "case and cause" most often run on parallel tracks and operate as practice distractions to one another within the profession. This failure to bridge the micro and macro and apply the integrated whole to our daily practice inhibits social work from accomplishing its mission as stated in the Preamble of the NASW

Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017).

This story is not a "case" in the traditional case study sense (i.e., it is not drawn from my social work practice; it is from my personal life). Here I relate experiences with my mother's recent illness and care and the issues raised. The story reveals her experiences with some of the problems Jansson (2011) identified among his seven. My mother's experiences with healthcare delivery systems serve to illustrate and underscore the gravity and urgency of both professional practice reform and policy change. This is a story about the caregiving relationship between my mother and me. The spirit of it, however, also illuminates the indelible connections between micro and macro social work practice. This story does not have a "resolution." Just as my mother's journey continues and the related macro health and social issues remain unresolved, so, too, do social work's unresolved micro-macro practice dilemmas persist. The specifics of my mother's illness and recovery and ongoing health and social challenges underscore the urgency with which social work ought to vigorously pursue workable, effective solutions to integrating "case and cause" throughout our work. I use the term "urgent" not because my mother is the subject here, but because her story is like so many others, except that it is less dire than many.

My mother, at 93, is now mostly healthy. She is a first generation Italian-American, born and raised in the U.S. after both her parents immigrated from Sicily. She became a registered nurse as a young woman, toward the end of the Second World War, married my father and practiced briefly while he was in graduate school, then had six children with him and helped raise them as a stay-at-home mother. Later, in her 60s, she began working long hours in a seasonal family business that required her to drive over 20 miles each way, seven days a week, where she performed a variety of administrative and service-related job responsibilities until she was 89. She and several of my siblings then helped care for my father until he died at age 93, about six months before the onset of her acute health crisis.

I became actively involved in supporting my mother and advocating for her when her increasing vulnerability became evident. More than two years ago, she had an acute health crisis which drew me into an intense caregiving and advocacy role in her life. It started the day I learned she was facing a health crisis and left work to fly to the hospital where she was being cared for. Her journey, mine as primary support, and our family's encompasses the ensuing nine months, during which the doctors and ancillary healthcare personnel (e.g., nurses, physicians assistants, hospice workers), with few exceptions other than her specialist and home health nurse, mostly prepared us for her demise. My involvement included being by her side, often providing direct care, during several hospitalizations and at her home over a nine month period of acute illness and rehabilitation. When she eventually stabilized and was clearly beginning to get stronger, my mother came to live with my husband and me, necessitating a move 250 miles away and across state lines from the communities where she had lived her whole life.

I tell my mother we are a team. She kindly and generously gives me credit for her recovery, but I know that from the beginning we have been in this together, along with substantial support, mostly from my siblings, but also from others. I was able to stay by my mother's side pretty much 24/7 during the nine months of her illness and recovery, which I point out so as to give credence to the first-hand details of her story.

My presence with her was made possible because of my direct supervisor's commitment to accommodating employees' family needs and because my husband was supportive and tolerant of my absence during those many months of my mother's protracted illness. Toward the middle of those nine months of my mother's intense illness and care, I did need to return briefly to my work in another state so I could finish up a job that had spanned 15 years. Over the previous two years I had already shifted to part-time so that I could spend more time with my husband who had taken a job several hours away. Before my mother became ill, I had arranged to quit the job so that I could embrace a life transition that was clearly presenting itself. That acceptance of transition allowed for serendipity. It created an opening in my life that enabled me to stay by my mother's side when the need arose during the critical periods of her illness and recovery processes, and has extended into the present, now that she is stable. Predictably, of course, the question of whether I have "retired" sometimes surfaces these days. My response that "I am in transition" reflects both my current state of professional development and my concrete status in the work world. As reflected partially through this piece, I find myself most powerfully drawn to musing about my profession and expressing myself through writing and activism on behalf of social work. I have settled into a life-style that for now fits my current need to meet my caregiving, professional, personal and family/social commitments. Throughout each 24-hour day in which my mother's care is necessarily prioritized, I am also reading and thinking about various social work issues, writing most productively in the early mornings, attending to my caregiving responsibilities in a semi-structured way consistent with my mother's stable and largely functional current health status, and improvising most everything else.

My mother's personal circumstances (i.e., health insurance, access to quality care, financial resources and family support) have proved adequate to support her eventual recovery, despite some systemic and institutional deficiencies. Consistent with the strengths orientation in social work, I discovered during her illness that one of the blessings of siblings is that each of us brings our own talents to family crises of this kind. Identifying and drawing from each of our unique talents and skills and applying them to my mother's particular needs has allowed for a smooth recovery period for my mother and the maintenance of good relations among the six of us. We could have adopted instead a model that defined "equal contributions" to her care as "the same" (i.e., "I've spent x amount of time caring for our mother. Now it's your turn to do the same."). I believe, however, that the resulting efforts would have been less targeted to my mother's needs, more frustrating for each of us, and might have engendered a climate of animosity among us, undoubtably despite efforts among us to avoid rancor of any kind.

My siblings and I have been able to bring considerable resources to bear on my mother's particular situation over those many months and now on her continuing care. In the process, however, I also discovered critical unaddressed needs in comprehensive social and health policies that left me shocked and chagrined. These include inadequate public health education for older adults and their families, non-existent to inadequate education of older adult patients and their families by primary care and gerontology medical professionals, and complicated and nonsensical insurance policies that effectively inhibit and even block adequate preventive health practices and recovery. My mother's care was negatively influenced by several of the seven problems Jansson (2011, p. 2) identified as emblematic of navigating the U.S. health system. In my mother's case, these problems definitely include challenges financing her care which has

clearly sometimes not met widely accepted standards and failure to receive needed preventive services. If she had not had the buffering influence of my siblings and me, a case could be made she would have further benefitted from more attention by some medical professionals to their cultural competence (i.e., the influence of her status as a child of the Depression on her reluctance to incur expenses, in this case medical) and to her mental health needs, given that, in the latter case, some cognitive decline contributed to challenging her ability to navigate the complexities of simultaneous experiences with multiple systems of care while also weakened by illness.

I will use the example of the need to address my mother's obvious hearing loss. Over the years, my siblings and I encouraged her many times to get her hearing tested, but she always minimized the extent of her hearing loss and thus rationalized that she really didn't need to get it corrected. Her rationalization is explained, I believe, by a combination of her status as a child of the Depression and thus frugal and (probably related) her own determination to soldier on, even in the face of ameliorative remedies that would ease her burden. As a child of immigrants and of the Depression, she is no stranger to determination. She eventually agreed to a hearing test while recovering from her acute illness, probably because over those previous many months of medical treatment, she had come to accept her growing vulnerability and a role reversal. Increasingly, my siblings and I helped her make (or made for her) critical decisions necessitated by some cognitive decline and the challenges of negotiating simultaneously interfacing multiple systems of healthcare. Throughout and continuing to the present, she has remained in the role of emotionally caring and connected mother. My mother began, with the recovery phase of her illness, to loosen her steadfast resistance to medical care that is anything but absolutely necessary. She has been willing to increasingly trust that my efforts encouraging her to accept care beyond those previous acute needs might actually have merit. She has continued skeptical and concerned about money, but has somewhat reluctantly given herself over to my encouragement to follow through.

Once my mother was recovering and came to live with us, we found our way to the ("specialist") audiologist (i.e., higher co-pay than a primary care visit). The audiologist's testing confirmed that my mother was in need of hearing aids and, in the process of delivering the results of the hearing evaluation, the audiologist delivered critical information that was both sad and enraging. My mother's hearing loss, she said, is of the type that had progressed over many years. Because it went uncorrected too long, her brain permanently lost the ability to distinguish certain consonant sounds. (Because I was in the exam room as my mother was tested, I was able to experience first-hand some of the sound-distinguishing challenges. For example, she might hear "cat" as "cab.") This permanent loss of the ability to distinguish those consonants would extend even to whatever correction hearing aids might have otherwise offered. The audiologist further explained that my mother's experience of understanding oral communication, even with hearing aids, could be likened to trying to read from a text where some of the letters were left out of words; the reader has to figure out what is missing. Of course, there is a critical difference between reading (where one can take time to figure things out from context) and verbal communication. In the latter, while the hearer is working a puzzle to identify from context the right consonants to identify the speaker's intended words, the speaker has gone on with the conversation! The sadness I felt on hearing the results of this evaluation is obvious and

understandable: my mother had moderate to severe hearing loss that was only partially able to be corrected with hearing aids. Even with appropriate hearing aids, she would have to struggle to understand conversation. The enraging part was that, despite having for many years been under the care of a primary care physician with specialty training in geriatrics, the risk of uncorrected hearing loss was never explained to her or to any of us (and I suspect has not been explained to any of his other patients). Had this prospect been explained, the now permanent and uncorrectable might have been prevented. My mother's doctor had been remiss in not helping prevent the extent of her hearing loss. Additionally, my mother's situation highlighted a critical need for public health education to prevent others from suffering the same fate. Over time, I have also learned from the audiologist that wearing hearing aids can also contribute to stability of balance. So my mother wearing her hearing aids from the time she gets up until retiring for the night may also be critical to preventing other health problems, including further cognitive decline (Walling, 2012). Again, this seems like important public health information to which every older person and their families ought to have access.

Moving from health to financial aspects of my mother's care casts light on another dilemma she and millions of other older adults (really, people of all ages) face. The audiology consultation and evaluation are paid for by her insurance, minus a co-pay that is in excess of the co-pay for her primary care physician (i.e., referral to an audiologist is considered a co-pay for a "specialist."). Hearing evaluations are critical for all of us as we age, as my mother's situation illustrates. Yes, administering a hearing evaluation requires specialized training, but assigning a co-pay in excess of that for a primary care visit (in my mother's case, more than twice as much) creates a barrier to care, especially for older adults on fixed incomes. In addition to this and other barriers to preventing health decline that I have referred to here, news delivered by the audiologist that hearing aids are not routinely covered by insurance only added insult to injury, so to speak. I was incredulous, really. It turns out there is no federal mandate requiring that insurance cover hearing aids. It is left to each state to duke it out with insurance companies and, therefore, only a handful have passed legislation requiring insurance to cover hearing aids. In my mother's case, her hearing aids cost $3,000, and this was only because she was able to use one of my deceased father's hearing aids, which could be re-programmed for her. I set out to learn the story behind the continuing lack of mandate for insurance coverage of hearing aids in the state where my mother lived. An audiologist there told me that the state professional organization for audiologists had repeatedly over many years advocated in the state legislature for coverage, but their efforts continued to fail year after year. It seems obvious to me that it would strain the resources of each state professional organization to have to advocate (let alone repeatedly over many years) for this legislative change; better, a concerted effort by the national association and its allies to effect policy change on the national level. For my part, meanwhile, I have had my consciousness raised about some of the serious barriers faced by elderly individuals to maintain functioning as hearing adults. Obviously, I cannot single-handedly get this policy change. I have, however, told my mother's audiologist that I am available to help with advocacy as this continues to be raised in this state, and I intend to raise the issue with my congressional representative as major changes in health care are being formulated.

My mother has recovered well. Tests show her illness is in remission. At 4 feet, 9 inches, she has gone from 72 to 105 pounds. At 93, she still wants to make a contribution, be useful, and stay

active. She would not want to go to a day program and engage in craft projects or games; she wants to be doing meaningful, useful, real-life work. My mother has taken the initiative to "own" several routine chores at our house (e.g., wiping and putting away dishes, folding laundry, emptying trash baskets, keeping her room "neat as a pin," etc.). She routinely keeps her eyes open for things that need doing and volunteers to get them done (e.g., she pretty much single-handedly and ecologically rid our front lawn of dandelions this past spring, with the help of tools my husband bought her to ease their removal). The American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare has identified this common aspiration among older adults to continue to be useful by designating "Advance long and productive lives" as one its twelve Grand Challenges (American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, n.d.). The real gap in my mother's adjustment to her geographic relocation to our community has been finding social outlets for her. She does her best to stay in touch with family and friends back home, including reading the community newspaper online. It is hard to figure out, though, where a newly relocated, healthy, ambulatory, and sociable 93-year-old female can safely find peers with whom to socialize. One option that has presented itself for us is Senior Circle (www.seniorcircle.com), a national organization with local chapters affiliated with hospitals and, in our case, conveniently located within the same office as my mother's new gerontologist. Still, the challenge in identifying appropriate social opportunities for older adults is not an isolated problem. More likely, many adult children are facing or will face the challenge of making social connections for functional older adult parents who relocate from a distance to reside with them. As the number of older adults increases, and as many of them remain in relatively good health (despite vulnerabilities that may require geographic relocation), the need for naturalistic systems to connect them with each other socially will only increase. The American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare recognizes this need and the health and societal benefits that accrue from social connection and has included "Eradicate social isolation" among its twelve Grand Challenges (American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, n.d.). A dilemma for caregivers is how to effect these social connections for older adults in our care without unduly disrupting the exigencies of our other commitments, both professional and personal.

While the story I have chosen to tell here is not drawn from social work practice, I believe it is representative of the sorts of "cases" my colleagues who work with older adults and their families regularly confront. The needs of frail older adults (with "frail" on a continuum) demand comprehensive health and social policies that address needs often identified in the process of working a "case" but that cannot be ameliorated without action on the level of "cause."

Returning to "The personal is political" slogan mentioned earlier, two applications seem pertinent here. The first speaks to the fact that the experience of caregiving is also a politicizing activity. One can hardly engage in caregiving without also becoming acutely attuned to the myriad issues raised by the gap between needs and solutions. In other words, we are politicized through the frustration of asking ourselves, "How do I and the person my family and I are caring for deal with the challenges presented by the lack of resources to address our dilemmas?" The second application of "The personal is political" slogan is that this caregiving experience has also further politicized me within my own profession. The National Association of Social Workers identifies its mission, in part, as the aspiration "to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families, and communities" (National Association of Social Workers,

2017). My caregiving and advocacy experiences with my mother have served to reinforce my conviction that the social work profession can truly fulfill this mission only if the profession identifies and operationalizes practice strategies that fuel the latent synergistic power that can be unleashed by simultaneously working the micro and macro spheres of influence.

We need to further integrate social work into all forms of medical care for older adults to help rectify the seven problems Jansson identified as confronting consumers of healthcare services. Further, if we are to effectively and indelibly connect "case and cause" as one, social work will need to apply a new practice paradigm, one similar to the CAN model (2011) Jansson has devised for healthcare, but formulated to generalize for most, if not all, practice settings.

One way to effectuate a shift from the current bifurcated specialties of micro and macro practices is to increase the capacity for social work practitioners to access macro interventions within their practice settings, as in the CAN model above. This would shift from the current reality in which direct practice social workers often must to add on to and go beyond routine and expected practice activities in order to try to impact the macro issues related to their practices. Practice settings could integrate the micro and macro by building into the work setting not only the expectation (as in the current state of practice) but also the capacity to influence macro change. Professional standards of practice could call for routinely making explicit the nexus between micro and macro in supervision discussions, in direct practice documentation, and in policies and procedures within agencies. Doing so in agencies is a particular challenge for most social workers today since there are comparatively few actual social work agencies. With the establishment over the past few decades of insurance and managed care-driven policies and reimbursement for direct services, social work has largely ceded its exclusive practice domains, with some notable exceptions—namely child welfare of various sorts—to settings which are no longer administered by social work managers, but often by professionals in medicine or nursing, psychology, education and even by those in the legal profession or business. The impact has been that social workers are being used for their practice skills, but the influence of social work philosophies is absent from the settings in which many social workers work. Unlike, however, the stated intent within the social work profession to effect both the micro and macro, these other professions have no need to recognize, and therefore have no incentive to operationalize, macro aspects of practice. Thus, for social workers in these settings, any macro effort is just that, an "effort" that almost certainly will happen only if a particular social worker takes on the challenge, very likely outside the normal workday and certainly outside the expectation of and without any concrete support from the employer.

The wisdom and power of the person-in-environment perspective in social work must be preserved for social work to be maximally effective. The only way to harness the power of this paradigm is to incorporate into all practice settings the capacity to directly impact both the "case and cause." To avoid doing so by not making explicit the integration of micro and macro into routine agency work is to maintain the status quo and continue to dilute the social work profession's contributions to the lives of those we serve and to society generally. The experience of walking alongside my mother on her health journey has helped me see ever more clearly the need for one whole social work.

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What's Your Number? An Example of Micro and Macro Practice in the Era of Police Accountability

Jandel Crutchfield

Abstract: This is a reflective narrative regarding the work that I did with a colleague on issues of race and violence. In my macro practice regarding such tenuous issues, it is imperative to include the micro aspect of work with individuals. This article provides an example of using self-assessment of individuals during a workshop with a macro focus that can be replicated by others involved in this work.

Keywords: police accountability, privilege, micro and macro social work practice

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an example of macro practice that includes a micro focus on the individual through the use of self-assessment. To tackle the largest macro issues in society, including race and violence, bringing communities together to talk about issues must involve individual engagement in the work. This is a narrative discussion of my experience planning a macro project and grappling with how to make it meaningful to individuals. I describe how I created a micro tool of self-assessment, the resulting project, and the continued positive reception and replication of this work. Those interested in macro work must understand that to truly have the broad influence desired, individuals and families must be fully engaged in the larger cause. In particular, race and violence are not often approached at the micro level, which allows individuals to evade the intrinsic work of anti-racism. The description that follows is of an event that was planned in a 2-week time frame that brought over 100 diverse individuals together to look at their impact on racial violence in their community.

The Plight

Since the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager in Sanderson, Florida and the subsequent acquittal of his murderer, the plight of Black America has again been thrust into the nation's spotlight. The nationally covered deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and others at the hands of police have sparked outrage. As a result, there has been a movement in the United States that calls for increased accountability of police officers and citizens around the killing of unarmed Black people. This movement is called Black Lives Matter, and it attempts to apply political pressure to the justice system to create a fairer application of justice in officer involved shootings of Black people. This movement has uncovered deep divisions and heated rhetoric, even including the dialogue within the 2016 presidential campaign. Candidates expressed support and opposition to this movement, and opponents of the movement called for more law and order rather than more accountability. There are very few stages in modern day America where this plays out more vividly than on social media.

In the age of social media, it is usually a Facebook post or tweet that starts an hours long argument about whether Black Lives Matter is a valid movement or whether one's version of a gingerbread house should be ranked highest. And so, a model of macro and micro practice for bringing communities together around issues of race and violence was born on social media.

The Pressure

In the wake of a local shooting of an unarmed Black man, I began to feel like there was nowhere one could go to escape the seeming epidemic of lethal force by cops against unarmed Black men and women. The summer of 2016 had been deemed by some as the "summer of hate" due to the multiple killings of unarmed Black men as well as police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge. As a native of Baton Rouge, I felt a particular sense of despair at the lack of ability to overcome issues of racial animosity. Since I had moved to a smaller town to begin a tenure track position at my university, I thought problems like this in urban areas would be minimal if not absent in the small town of my new residence. Yet, here I was in this small town of about 38,000 people and it happened. An unarmed Black man was killed by a White police officer and was presumed to be justified in the shooting. This, along with the years-long national spotlight on this topic were at the forefront of my mind when in my hometown, Baton Rouge, an unarmed Black man was killed and the videotape was released. I wondered how these things could be happening in my hometown. Before I could grapple with this question, another shooting of a Black man with his wife and her daughter in a car in Minneapolis was live-streamed on Facebook. As a Black American citizen and social worker, I could only think of Ida B. Wells and the despair she must have felt at the stubbornness of society to acknowledge and address lynchings of Blacks. I knew I wouldn't launch an international campaign like she did, but the least I could do was speak out. So, a historic Facebook post was born.

This is what I wrote and posted on my Facebook page:

> So Philando Castile did everything he was supposed to and has no criminal past...we've talked to our kids about what to do in police encounters...it's time for White parents to talk to their kids about being aware of subconscious bias and unfounded fear of Black and Brown people! (Personal communication, July 2016)

This post received 61 likes, 5 shares, and a firestorm of comments. It set off a Facebook war. Literally over 50 comments, mostly in support of the post, were written. One of my high school classmates completely disagreed with the idea of White parents educating their children specifically about race. And an amazing thing happened, both White and Black people all helped to explain to her about white privilege and how bias works. It was an amazing phenomenon to watch so many people come off the sidelines to engage this topic. It showed me a hunger in society to tackle these issues, and I began to feel the pressure to create a platform for folks to engage. That post was made on July 7th. What would follow would be a model of community macro and micro practice that is still opening doors of opportunity for dialogue in communities.

The Process

Less than 24 hours later, I got a text from one of my White male colleagues who had lent his privileged white voice to the Facebook debate the night before. He asked what I'd think of putting together some kind of public forum around law enforcement and race in the area and that we could invite law enforcement and the community to attend. My reply was literally "YAAAASSSSSSSS!!!!!"

Our text communication continued as we contemplated ideas about what it was exactly that we wanted to do. I kept thinking of Ida B. Wells and her international work. Within 4 days, my colleague walked into my office to make specific plans.

He smiled and said, "I'm here," and sat in one of the two chairs in my small office. He wrung his hands as I rocked back in my office chair facing him and away from my desk. As Tony leaned forward, he told me about backlash he experienced on Facebook after urging others to have compassion for Black people killed by police.

"Well this could go south," I said, and we both laughed.

"But it seems like White people attack me and other Black people when we discuss white privilege. My friend who attacked me on Facebook was forced to actually look at the substance of what was being said because you and other WHITE colleagues pointed out privilege to her. That's what I want to happen in the workshop: people really looking at themselves," I said.

"Exactly what we need." Tony agreed.

I continued, "White people may dismiss it if it comes solely from me, and Black people may dismiss if it comes solely from you. So, having a Black woman and White man should cover the male, white, black, and woman demographics for folks to be able to feel like they're represented in some way."

He nodded, "I think that's what we have to offer that others working on these issues lack."

During that meeting, we had more questions than answers it appeared. How could we use our skills as social workers to bridge such a large chasm in larger society, and more specifically in our community? Will anyone come? If no one comes will it still be worth it? How much are we wedded to this cause? Would this be an opportunity to provide social work continuing education? How will we get law enforcement on board? Who needs to be at the event? Where will it be? How will we advertise? How will White citizens acknowledge that racism and privilege exist? Or will they?

There were so many questions to answer, but Tony stressed, "Even if only five people show up, it's worth it!"

So, we went to work doing macro practice. What follows is a daily description of our activities

to make this event occur within a very short timeframe.

July 12, 2016: Drawing on the community resources to support this project, Tony found us a place that was willing to host the event for a nominal fee. And after sharing the information with a local pastor, we were able to get that fee donated by a local church. I also reached out to our department to see if we could sponsor this event with the university's name on it. The university in particular has had to grapple with race and violence, so I thought getting this approval would be difficult. It turned out that our chair loved the idea, and the dean of our school did as well. He even offered to fund refreshments and attend the event, and he spoke with the provost who also supported the idea.

July 13, 2016: We got approval for the location. Tony asked "Do you mind calling a reporter to talk about the event and try to get it promoted? This is someone I know." I replied, "Of course, we need to get on a news station to promote it too!" We provided details about the event and our photos to the reporter to write a feature story about it in the paper.

July 14, 2016: Tony made a Facebook page that started to garner substantial likes. When we went to look at the space, we had nearly 71 people going and 150 interested. We had to move to a larger part of the building because it quickly grew to 155 people attending and 300 people interested on Facebook. We decided we'd both focus on our own racial groups to try to recruit attendees. I would target Black clergy and community members and Tony would target White clergy and community members. We also explored how to offer continuing education units for social workers. I looked at the list of pre-approved institutions so that we could see if someone would sponsor us in case our university did not.

July 16, 2016: We had more technical discussions about structure.

"Okay, we don't want this thing going off the rails or fights breaking out," Tony said.

"True. I'm sure we may have some people there who are angry and unwilling to follow the process," I continued. "So how about we don't allow question/answer time, but just lecture. Maybe they can talk in small groups?"

"I think that works. So no passing the microphone. We can get wireless headsets," Tony offered.

On this day, our event also made the front page of the local newspaper. I got at least three copies of the paper and had people stop me during shopping trips to Walmart to say they were interested in coming.

July 17, 2016: During a conversation with the director of the event venue, we discussed how to address guns in this small town.

The venue director said, "We talk about this all the time and I'm comfortable with making it a gun-free zone if that works." Tony and I both looked at each other and said, "YES, PLEASE!"

July 18, 2016: We contemplated involving other community members in the presentation. Someone we didn't know had expressed interest in helping to lead the presentation with us. We decided that given the tenuous nature of the topic of racial violence, we would limit the presenters to Tony and me because we knew each other and worked together. We wanted to ensure that the main focus would not be jeopardized by someone being off message.

July 18, 2016: The mayor of the city confirmed attendance on Facebook (and I actually called his office to confirm his attendance).

At this point, I was energized seeing the emergence of a diverse community event, but until now we still had a macro perspective. My next task was to consider how we would get people to engage in introspection around these taboo issues in our society. After thinking throughout the entire day and night, I thought about the unique power of self-assessment to assist individuals and families with identifying their current functioning and planning treatment goals (Berg-Weger, 2013; Toseland & Rivas, 2012). Having seen evidence of this in my practice experience with individuals and families, I made a plan to develop a self-assessment that would draw participants into the discussion of the larger topic based on where they stood in terms of privilege. I developed the privilege survey that would allow participants in our workshop to check whether or not they had experienced a particular situation based solely on their families' standing in society and/or the circumstances of their birth. My initial goal was to destigmatize discussions of "white privilege" by broadening the understanding of privilege as something everyone has, but at different levels. The result of my planning was a 35-item list of statements that respondents had to review and whether or not each statement applied to them (see Figure A).

What's Your Number?
Place a check by each statement that is true ABOUT YOU. At the end, add up the number of checks you have and write down the total number.

I am…
_____White
_____male.
_____tall.

As a child I
_____Was born in the United States of America.
_____Was born without a disability (physical or mental).
_____Had two parents with college degrees
_____Had one parent with a college degree.
_____Both of my parents attended college.
_____Was raised by my biological family
_____Had low crime in my neighborhood.
_____Had parents that never had to worry about paying rent/mortgage.
_____Had parents who owned a home.
_____Lived in a house.

_____Lived with both of my parents.
_____Had parents that were married to each other.
_____Had parents who bought me my first car.
_____Had parents that could read and write English fluently.
_____Was never the only person of my race in a classroom.
_____Was never called a racial slur.
_____Was never told I am attractive "for my race."
_____Had Christian parents.
_____Knew one or more elected officials by name.
_____Had positive interactions with police officers.
_____Had parents that were allowed to vote.
_____Was never told to enter through the back door of a business.
_____Was never refused service because of my race.
_____Was never abused physically or sexually.
_____Had access to quality schools in my community.
_____Always had health insurance.
_____Was given a job by someone who knew my parents.
_____ Had parents that owned a car.
_____Had parents that owned multiple cars.
_____Never had to wonder if I would have enough to eat and drink.
_____Visited the dentist at least once a year.
_____Had swimming lessons.
_____Had art classes (dance, drama, drawing).
_____Played on a sports team.
_____Could get hot water from the faucet in my home.
_____Was able to go to school instead of working for the family.

Place your total number of "checks" here:_____

Figure A. Survey created to measure individual levels of privilege at workshop.

July 19, 2016: The event was publicized on the radio. I thought of a method to have participants take home a "charge" to continue the conversation after the workshop had ended. So, I decided to order buttons that refer to the privilege survey, "What's your number?" To be sure we would minimize arguments during the event, we updated the Facebook page to say:

> We want to emphasize that this event is a workshop and connector/community building event. For the sake of structure and time, this will not be an open floor forum or platform for debate. But we encourage constructive discussion with the presenters and other attendees during brief small group discussions and activities and also at the close of the event. Attendees should look forward to a lineup of great activities including looking at race relationship though the lenses of recover model and family systems model and the "What's your number?" group activity. (Personal communication, July 19, 2016)

We also hired security for the event. Our department and university was supportive and wanted to be sure there would be security for the event before they agreed to sponsor.

July 20, 2016: Tony invited the local leaders of the NAACP. I invited my preacher and congregation, and my preacher agreed to invite other local clergy.

July 21, 2016: I located a sound engineer to control sound for the event and ordered two wireless headset microphones to lessen the chances of sharing or passing the mike. The mayor's secretary confirmed it was on the mayor's calendar.

July 22, 2016: I participated in a radio interview with a local activist preacher to promote the event. During the interview, he got off topic and criticized the city's response to the shooting of the unarmed Black man this summer. So, I tried to redirect the discussion to the event, while thinking that this must be how politicians feel. I also recruited social work graduates and current students within our department to help with registration, distribution of the "What's your Number?" survey, and setting up refreshments, which were cookies from a local Subway. The email read:

> Hi social work students/graduates!
>
> I've heard from many of you about attending our Tupelo Together event next Tuesday night at the Link Center, but just wanted to send a reminder for those who haven't heard about it or seen it anywhere. It's also on Facebook.
>
> Mr. Tony and I are moderating this workshop on building relationships across racial divides, and it's open to the community. It would be great to see as many of you there as possible! Here's the article from the daily journal. [Link to article.]
>
> Also, we could use 5-6 of you as volunteers for signing people in that evening and handing out info as needed. If you're available and interested, reply to this message or message us on Facebook and let me know by Monday 7/25.
>
> Enjoy the rest of your summers! (Personal communication, July 22, 2016)

Within three days this email generated more than enough volunteers for the project. One student reported that she would bring her entire family in addition to helping volunteer, responding how the event was "much needed." I created a group text to ensure I had everyone's phone numbers correct and sent out two text reminders about arriving at the location by 6:00pm.

The "What's Your #?" buttons arrived in the mail.

July 24, 2016: We announced the offering of continuing education credits on the Facebook page.

July 25, 2016: I completed another local interview with a civic education focus. It was conducted at a local park. We chose that location because my 4-year-old son would need to be

occupied during the interview. Later, Tony and I were looking for a song to end the workshop, and while we were talking, "Lean on Me" by Bill Withers came on the radio. That's the song we selected. We started to get nervous because the event looked like it would be large. There were 155 people going, 348 interested, and 748 shares on Facebook.

July 26, 2016: We did a trial run of the workshop at 9 a.m. An hour before the event that evening, the media had arrived, and I was sending Tony text messages to find out his location. We provided three different interviews that night and were photographed throughout the night. I met with our 6 student volunteers for a short volunteer training in the galley of the center where we were holding the workshop. I instructed:

> I'll need two people to give out pens and copies of the 'What's your number?' survey to every person that enters the auditorium. Then I need three people at the sign-in table. If someone wants to leave his or her email address they can; if not, we're just looking for names. Lastly, we need two of you to set up the cookies on a table along with the water, napkins, and plates, but do this a few minutes after the workshop has begun so people will not grab something on their way in. (Personal communication, July 26, 2016)

They split up and decided what roles they'd each play saying, "We've got it, Dr. Crutch."

The mayor arrived. The hall began to fill up, and it was time to begin.

The Presentation

With a lot of fear and trepidation mixed with excitement, we began the workshop. As people came in they were given the "What's your Number?" survey and asked to complete it and hold the results for the second half of the presentation. I opened with a Facebook introduction, since it was a Facebook post that was the impetus for this project. People giggled as I established rapport with pictures and silly stories displayed on the large projector screen. This set the positive tone for the night, and then Tony began with his portion of the presentation focused on viewing community violence from a family recovery model.

Then it was my turn. Prior to the event, I had placed ranges of numbers on the walls around the room: 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, all the way to 35. I asked everyone to look at their surveys and identify their "number." Then I asked them to move to their numbers and sit down. The result was a clear visual of how white privilege works in society. Groups with the highest numbers (25+) were mostly White and mostly male. Groups with lower numbers (15 and below) were mostly minority. I took the time to have each group stand up so others in the room could see the visual. I explained that it was a representation of privilege. I reviewed the statements on the "What's Your Number?" survey and discussed how these were circumstances beyond the control of any individual, but that had given them a certain level of privilege. Then I had participants dialogue about the specific circumstances that led to their privilege numbers. I had them dialogue with individuals who did NOT have the same number as they did, whether those numbers were lower or higher. While the majority of those who attended were White, the dialogue with those of different privilege numbers created several racially diverse dyads. Given that many people spend

time with others who are similar to them socially, economically, ethnically, and in levels of privilege, these dyads may not happen in normal silos of society, and they were a unique part of the micro approach to this workshop. I talked to them about how they had no contribution to their numbers, so they could not be blamed for being given the privilege they had, nor should they accept praise for what they had not earned.

Then I announced, "I'm going to say something that may sound foreign to the American ideal, so don't attack me." I tiptoed behind the podium as if I were hiding and said "Hard work, in and of itself, does NOT guarantee success." I walked out from the podium and repeated this, as I saw people nodding in agreement or just staring at me.

I talked about dismantling this system and realizing that hard working people exist at all levels of privilege, but that those whose number is 30 are closer to the finish line than those with an 11. So, when those at 30 finish the race first, it appears that they worked harder when in actuality, they were born closer to the finish line, with an advantage. An example that drew applause from the audience was my mom's privilege number. I explained that my mom worked hard and even integrated an all-white high school, was the first to graduate from college in our family, and landed a good job. I talked about how the fact that she was born with the number 11 limited all of her hard work to the point that her daughter (me) was only born with a 17 privilege number. I discussed how all of her hard work still didn't get her to the 35 and thus, those with more privilege must reach back to close the gap between the higher and lower numbers. I talked about how those with more privilege could reach back to others with less privilege by simply having more respect for them and seeing them not as "other" but as another hard-working person born into a different set of circumstances.

My closing statements were, "Before there is ever a police officer or a Black citizen, there is a child born with a privilege number that represents low or high levels of privilege." And this privilege is the basis for the socialization that happens as we grow, whether we are socialized to value those with less or not. This numeration of privilege elicited a great response. People left with buttons that read, "What's your #?" Numerous people asked for copies of the survey to give to family members, and I left feeling very excited that there was such a positive response. The event ended at 8:00 p.m., but we stayed in the auditorium talking to participants for another 30-45 minutes. An elderly White gentlemen shared his thoughts with me:

> This is exactly right. It's so powerful. I was adopted into a family that gave me so many privileges, but my siblings were not. It's obvious that while we were biologically related, there was a difference in how we grew up. Circumstances mean everything. (Personal communication, July 26, 2016)

A young White woman who came with her son said, "I want my husband to see this, is there a way to get a copy of this?"

A middle aged White man also shared, "I've never thought about it being a privilege to know police officers and elected officials by name, but I had the police chief living in my neighborhood. I was given several jobs by politicians who were friends of my dad. But you

never think that those basic experiences are a privilege."

A middle aged Black man shook my hand and said, "This is powerful, showing more than telling us how the world works."

The Promise

Tony and I thought the event was well attended as evidenced by the comments from participants in person, on social media, local news media, and our colleagues at the university. Tony and I have replicated this event on the main campus of the university with similar positive reactions. We felt that people wanted more as even some folks asked "What's next?," "Are you repeating this?," and "Is there a part 2?" Doing this type of work has expanded both our professional and personal relationships. Professionally, Tony and I have committed to offering this workshop where requested and to respond to any calls for diversity training, privilege training, or other work in racial equity. We spend lots of time in each other's offices talking about the next project with which we've been approached, whether or not we're going to take it on and how. Personally, we've become closer friends, and our families spend more time together.

The success of the workshop at the micro level was partly due to the representativeness Tony and I offered to a large group of diverse participants. The modeling of a Black woman and White man joining an effort to bridge divides on race was something that could have been attractive to the group. To create personal reflection and growth, however, the micro focus on individual assessment, small group dialogue, and one-to-one dialogue were key strategies for this workshop.

From the work that we did at both the micro and macro level, numerous dialogues and opportunities for more of this work have presented themselves. Several weeks after the presentation, a local leader who had attended our event approached us about meeting with clergy who attended a monthly lunch meeting. He said that it had always been his hope that the church could continue conversations about how to bridge racial divides in the community. We have presented to this clergy lunch group twice and have had this work with the group featured in the local paper.

The state in which we've done this work has recently received a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to address issues of racial equity. Because of the work we've been doing, a grants man has reached out to us to help train others in the work of racial equity.

Our university is conducting a month-long series of workshops and seminars to address progress in the region that acknowledges issues of oppression and discrimination and showcases efforts to dismantle these. Tony and I have been invited to share the model from the workshop this summer.

In addition, our department of social work has asked Tony and I to conduct a repeat of the workshop at the main campus of the university. All of these functions are scheduled for 2017.

Not only is there promise for more community work when the micro and macro are melded together, but perhaps the most rewarding part of this is the individual or micro level transformations that occur. These efforts are what will truly influence the larger cause of racial justice. The clearest example of this is from a blogger. His parents had attended the workshop, and they brought home the "What's Your Number?" survey. The blogger completed it and had been extremely impacted. He wrote, "I've known for a very long time how lucky and wonderful my life is. But ever since I took that privilege quiz, I've begun to constantly think about what it means for where I am in my life right now." Whether it's called the "Privilege" quiz, "What's your number?" survey, or any other name, the usefulness of such a scale was dynamic in this effort. To make outcomes based on the tool even more meaningful, social work researchers who desire to support macro/micro work can contribute by examining the psychometric properties of those like the "What's Your Number?" survey. This could be a useful model of "evidence-based practice," in which practitioners more readily engage. Indeed, to develop similar projects, social workers involved in micro/macro practice can collaborate with researchers throughout the process of building surveys and self-assessment tools. Social work researchers even have the opportunity to contribute to these efforts by developing scales and examining the psychometric properties of non-standardized surveys like the "What's Your Number?" survey.

These are the promises of work that marries macro and micro practice: That individuals will come to a realization of their current status and contribution to the system of racial violence within society and, thereby, be committed to working to dismantle it. This is how practitioners can help individual cases to influence the larger cause.

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I Love the Profession, but Hate Where I Work: Remembering the Value of Organizations in Social Work Practice

Rukshan Fernando

Abstract: This reflection centers on a social worker's journey as a practitioner and as a witness to and participant of innovative and toxic social service agencies. The author implores practitioners and educators alike to consider that effective organizational practice is an essential part of social work practice. Thriving social service organizations where social work employees experience a sense of belonging and meaning is crucial to furthering social work's mission in the 21st century.

Keywords: social service organizations, social work education, social work macro practice, nonprofit organizations

Imagine that you and your colleagues are taking a much needed coffee break, discussing the challenges and rewards of the social work profession. The conversation drifts to topics such as social justice, passion, equity, and access. People are energized and there is an optimism in the room as you all sip your coffee. Members of the group speak about their desire to make the world a better place. They argue about the unjust systems and structures that prevent people in the community from thriving. People discuss the challenges of working with certain populations, or with policies designed to help these populations. The positive energy in the room dissipates as the complaints emerge. Inevitably, the topic of the conversation then shifts to the state of the organization. People express their frustration with leadership. They bemoan poor communication, micro-management, and passive-aggressive supervision. Before the group breaks, one member comments: "What happened? When I go home I spend a significant portion of my time feeling frustrated with agency policy and how I am treated by my supervisor. This isn't why I became a social worker. I feel bitter and burned out. It's the culture of this place that makes me consider leaving the profession. The organization poses the biggest challenge for me."

Social workers are employed by a wide array of organizations: public, nonprofit, for-profit, and hybrid. Acting as agents, they receive sanction and authority from the organization. Organizational philosophy and setting may affect how they practice and what barriers they may face (Furman & Gibelman, 2013). According to Jaskyte (2010), there is a correlation between a social service agency's organizational culture and its client outcomes. The culture of an organization drives the innovative practices that can help an organization thrive in the future. In addition, the culture of an organization impacts the daily experience of social workers at agencies. The various dimensions of an organizational culture affects "respect for people, team orientation, stability, aggressiveness, and attention to detail" (Jaskyte, 2010, p. 125).

Organizations, organizational management, and organizational change are central concepts in social work. While these are central concepts, students do not realize their importance until they work in the field as full-time professionals. In communities all over the country, people face a

variety of social problems that create the need for organized action. Organizations are the primary setting for social work practice and the vehicles for social change, but all too frequently, they pose obstacles to achieving social justice and meeting human needs. Human service organizations are increasingly expected to demonstrate tangible social value to the people they serve (Lynch-Cerullo & Cooney, 2011). As macro social work practitioners deal with human service needs and larger systemic issues in the social environment, they use the collective power of human service organizations to promote well-being and progressive policies and mechanisms in the social environment. To overcome social problems, social workers must understand and develop skills to function effectively in and through organizations (Furman & Gibelman, 2013). Social workers should be open to efforts to increase efficiency and apply relevant practices from business and public administration, while challenging and resisting practices and policies that can disempower both workers and clients.

The Organization as Our Cause

Abramovitz (1998) writes that social work has a unique purpose in that it deals with individual and societal issues. Social work engages problems at the individual "case" level and at the societal "cause" level. Rothman and Mizrahi (2014) have recently implored the profession to "recalibrate the imbalance between micro and macro practice" (p. 1). This reflection seeks to build on the concept of recalibrating our profession from a case-driven profession to a case AND cause driven profession. Too often, social workers seek an interconnection between organizations as the "cause" and the individual, group, and community with whom they work as the "case," rather than seeing the individual as the "case" and society as the "cause." Organizational culture, climate, values, and processes can empower or cripple employees who make up the organization (Jaskyte & Dressier, 2005). As a social work educator and practitioner for nearly two decades, I have participated in conversations where some fellow social workers communicate frustration about their organization. People feel hamstrung by policies and organizational culture. As a profession, we need to refocus our energies on creating better organizations for people and training social workers to be organization change agents.

In order for organizations to change, leaders of social service agencies need to use a combination of micro, mezzo, and macro skills. They need to view the organization and its employees as a system of change. For example, Jaskyte (2010) found that executive directors create consensus and collaboration in their organizations when they are explicit in their efforts to mentor, encourage, and recognize accomplishments of an employee. These processes do not happen on their own. They involve relationship building, rapport, active listening skills, and careful assessment. Executive directors must engage in a form of direct practice or micro work with the employees of their organizations, as well as with the populations those organizations serve. In order to do so effectively, executive directors require organizational skills (Busch & Hostetter, 2009).

The organizational system, or the "cause," cannot be separated from the "case" or the social workers in the organization. In this special issue of *Reflections*, much has been written about the dichotomy between the "case," or the individual, and the "cause." (Abramovitz & Sherraden, 2016). As a social work profession, we are right to think and act on the issues that exist in the

community and society. Yet, there is evidence that we have done this without learning how to be effective leaders in our organizations, causing some of our own to experience frustration, burn-out, and fatigue. My goal has been to help the social work profession be intentional about developing leaders and administrators in organizations so that social workers can thrive. Therefore, as a social worker concerned about the well-being of people and organizations, I share a vision of how change in our organizations can transform them into thriving spaces for both social workers and our consumers.

When Organizations Think and Act on a Bigger Level

As an MSW intern, I worked for an organization where the executive team regularly met in individual and group meetings after each grant application, project, and program. During these meetings, organizational roles and hierarchy were not observed. These meetings led to program and organizational innovations which changed the way we engaged the community, funders, and other stakeholders. These meetings were unusually refreshing to me. While I had taken courses in administration, I had never learned how to create an organizational environment where all employees were given the opportunity to have a voice at the table.

The executive director created a cohesive group environment in which everyone could express their frustrations, excitement, and concerns about any initiative. I learned so many group leadership skills by watching him lead such meetings. He fostered an open, collaborative environment and modeled for me the effectiveness of an organizational culture where the focus was not on role and personality, but on achieving organizational excellence.

Later I worked full time for a small nonprofit housing corporation. Each week, one staff person led the meeting during which s/he would seek feedback regarding a "wicked" question that they were facing in their work. Questions included, "How do I best interact with this funder?" and "What is the best way to develop rapport with this consumer?" The staff member would present his or her case and then would receive real-time feedback. Although one person was the focus of the group, each group member was able to glean new ways to approach the "wicked" questions they were facing in their respective roles in the organization. Finally, the staff member presenting the situation would receive valuable insights into their professionalism or oral and written communication skills. These "wicked" questions laid the foundation for pieces of my work in my macro courses today: students and instructor exploring how best to deal with interpersonal and organizational dynamics with consumers, other social workers, funders, and other community stakeholders.

The executive director's leadership style and attitude promoted open feedback and communication. He invited the staff into such conversations to improve how all stakeholders (staff, consumers, funders, etc.) experienced the organization. While the board shaped the organization's future, he was an articulate advocate for a healthy and thriving workplace. He knew that the employees of the organization were the means by which the organization could engage in the affordable housing work. He saw the staff as the veins and arteries through which the "blood" of the organization flowed. As he would say, "Without happy employees, you won't find happy consumers." This example highlights the effective interconnection of micro, mezzo,

and macro competencies that result in a thriving and healthy organizational environment. My experience as a member of that organization still shapes how I approach students, faculty, and fellow administrators as a higher education administrator.

Over the course of my career in macro social work, I have talked with students at the BSW and MSW levels who are working at an internship in the field. Despite experiencing the highs and lows of being emerging social work professionals, these students express the gratitude that comes from working with people in the field. However, what they report about their experiences as interns or employees of an agency is much more concerning. They express concerns about the way their supervisors are treated by the board or by the executive director. Some students observe the devaluing of employees through passive aggressive behavior, inconsistent rules and expectations, salary inconsistencies, favoritism, and a lack of communication. Some students share with me that when their supervisors have weak boundaries and are demeaning about the consumers they serve, it affects their commitment to the profession. These students will say something like: *Dr. Fernando, I want to be a social worker. I'm not sure if I can work for other social workers. What's the deal? What happened? I don't want to end up like her (or him). Yeah, I know I need to get stuff done at work, but do I respect my supervisor? No way. They've got too many issues.*

This comment leads me to a rich conversation about leadership, management, and the opportunity for this student to begin the process of "managing up" in an organization. These conversations allow us to not marginalize "our own" at the cost of helping those community members who are at the margins. Conversations like these are needed for social workers to deconstruct the structures and systems of a social service organization. Sadly, conversations like these may not happen as much as students would like.

Organizations as Containers

Growing up in Sri Lanka, I was fortunate to spend time with the Missionaries of Charity, a religious order founded by Saint Mother Teresa in 1950. Saint Teresa is renowned for her work in Calcutta and the transforming approach she espoused through her care of the marginalized in India. The nuns who took the formal steps to join her order were no different. They came from all over the world to Sri Lanka to care for the poor, the dying, the oppressed, and the destitute at Shanti Nivasa (Shanti's House). Watching these foreign women learn the local language and become one with the communities they served was humbling and inspiring, providing me with an early vision of service and leadership. I remember washing and cleaning the latrines with these women. In spite of our lowly duties, I enjoyed listening to them reflect on their service. Many of these conversations have stayed with me. I specifically remember talking with the nuns about what motivated them:

> Our order and sisterhood is our container. It keeps us joyful and secure. The values, beliefs, and practices that we share together—from washing dishes to singing hymns before bed—are the most important practices we share. It's the practices and the people-in tandem with each other—that make our commitment to this life filled with joy and peace. (Personal communication, November, 1991)

I have pondered these potent words in my work as a social work practitioner and as an educator. In my work as a scholar and practitioner in nonprofit organizations, the motivation of these nuns rings true. Like the Sisters of Charity, the social service agency is the container for the social work professional by its shared values, expectations, and policies. The container can both literally "contain" us, but it can also be a space where our employees can grow, transform, and become their best selves. Kelloway and Day (2005) discovered that workload, ambiguity of job description, career trajectory, work schedule, and job control are some elements which determine healthy workplace environments. Such workplace stressors undermine employees and cause them to feel undervalued.

Follow the Donors at Your Own Peril

Organizations often run into the risk of "the tail wagging the dog," where the funder is the tail and the organization is the dog. When funders create external pressures in an organization, it runs the risk of shifting the mission of an organization. Funder dollars come with their own expectations, accountability, and compliance obligations. What happens next is that social service agencies can develop a tunnel-vision and spend too much of their time meeting funder expectations and reporting requirements and lose sight of their overarching mission and purpose. Frankly, this is as true in social work education as it is in social service agencies. We might chase grants, but without a strategic process end up pursuing spending the majority of our time administering the grant rather than attending to valuable aspects of a program's mission. While such decisions do not possess "right or wrong" outcomes, how do these grants come back to benefit our students? During the past three months, I have interacted with social work educators who are unprepared to negotiate the challenging balance between ideology of social work education and the market-realities of higher education. These leaders find themselves swinging like a pendulum, where their pursuit of grants overrules the mission and identity of their schools. One educator told me: "I am just going after the money. I'll figure out how it works for our program later. I need to do this in order to keep up with institution X."

A student once commented to me, "The funding is much more important than me. I am told that I need to get the work done, because ultimately, the funder is the most important person in the room. I didn't think that I would hear this from a social worker! My own growth and capacity is invisible to them. The board is concerned about the community, but ultimately, money talks." Social workers' adherence to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics obligates them to balance the tension between conflicting commitments to both the consumer and organization (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). We need to live with the tension of valuing the consumers on our case load, the funding requirements, and the social workers who connect them.

From Funder-Centered to People-Centered

How does one create an organizational environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and meaning while continuing to pursue funding? Most social work graduates will assume management responsibilities, such as supervision or budget responsibility, within several years of graduation (Watson & Hoefer, 2016); and most social workers report having had some

management responsibility during their careers (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). Faced with enormous need and limited resources, social workers must bring skill and an ethical commitment to the effective stewardship of resources and management of paid and volunteer workers (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). However, in any organization, there needs to be a balance between meeting funder demands and providing opportunity for social workers to develop professionally. In my experience, this balance is not a reality. Pfeffer (2005) has written that nonprofits are supposed to be "people-centric" organizations. Ironically, he states that the leadership of such institutions is more concerned with the "case" (the clients and the donors), than the "cause" (the organization and the people that make it go). Pfeffer (2005) writes that employees often feel that they are the last on the priority list after the funders, board of directors, and the consumers the organization serves. Research indicates that this promotes a high burnout and turnover rate among nonprofit employees, including social workers. He states that regardless of whether employees work for for-profit or non-profit organizations, they need to experience a sense of community and value in the work they do. Pfeffer (2005) indicates that training, transparency of finances, and comparative compensation are practices that characterize "people-centered organizations" (p. 2).

As a member of the board of a local educational organization, I frequently talk with the executive director about the ways she can make her organization people-centered. In the past two years, the executive director holds regular meetings with staff members so that their voices are heard. This also allows them to respond to the mission and direction of the institution. She regularly updates employees about the fiscal health of the organization, showing them the overall fiscal health of the foundation and how the budget planning process is tied to the strategic plan. She comments, "I notice people are more willing to save money on small things like coffee and paper because they see the larger fiscal picture of the organization. They know that our office supply budget can eat up a majority of our operational expenses." The board creates opportunities to hear from the staff, which in turn shapes the strategic planning process of the board. Moreover, throughout the year staff connect with each other through team-building exercises, lunches, and informal gatherings. The foundation has developed a pattern of inviting employee participation and communication. This demonstrates a commitment to being people-centered. The executive director notes, "It's really the small, basic things that make the difference. We talk as social workers about building a healthy rapport with our consumers. For some reason, we don't think this is important for our employees." In order to empower the populations and create social change, we need to value and treasure those very social workers who are bringing about empowerment and social change.

The Hole in Social Work Education

As a prospective social work student, I saw the gap in emphasis on healthy organizations. I found myself confused by how I fit into the landscape of the profession. My fellow colleagues were excited about the prospect of learning about micro practice, while my mind overflowed with enthusiasm about systemic reform and community change. Because of my non-western, non-white background, I experienced social change occurring at the macro level first, in the context of a collectivistic, communal cultural milieu. I was eager to use my knowledge, skills, and abilities as a social worker to make change at the community and organizational level. This

conviction continued throughout my time as an MSW student, when I focused my academic work on community organization.

I learned about community assessment, organizing, community development, and participatory methods to engage populations social workers attempt to serve. As a graduate student, I read articles and books in which I saw the terms "communities" and "organizations" joined together. In the NASW Code of Ethics and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS), communities and organizations are mentioned in the same phrase (CSWE, 2014). However, while communities and organizations might be conjoined in our textbooks and foundational documents, in reality the organizational system and the community system are two distinctive identities which intersect. Therefore, in the organizational system, the way that one practices micro and mezzo components is different than in a community context. In the community context, one might engage with government, the local community, and business constituents. However, in the organizational environment, one might interact with these constituents and others such as funders, employees, regulatory agencies, etc.

My personal experience supported the notion that the intersection of micro and mezzo components within the organizational system requires specific competencies. Social workers understand that engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation are ongoing components of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The EPAS 2015 standards #6-#9 speak to engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating practice on a multiplicity of levels. However, other social work scholars have agreed that there has been an under-emphasis on organizational leadership, culture, and development training for the social worker (Wilson & Lau, 2011; Watson & Hegar, 2013). While it is imperative that all social workers incorporate the ability to practice on the micro, mezzo, and community levels with a diverse set of constituents, they also need to develop the capacity to practice in the organizational context.

While organizations serve communities, the organizational environment is a separate and distinctive arena. The social work profession has appropriately chosen to focus on the social, economic, and environmental problems for which organizations are created or are sustained. However, it lacks vision for the importance of thriving social service organizations. Without healthy organizations, social work will not be effective in empowering the individual, group, and community cases we seek to change. In order to lessen the frustrations social workers express about social service agencies, the profession must view the organization as an important context for change.

Over the past ten years, I have found myself in conversations with social work faculty—many of whom are clinicians—unsure as to how they should teach an introductory or advanced macro course. Rothman (2013) notes that due to limited resources and enrollment in MSW management concentrations, such courses are being taught by clinical faculty. Consequently, we hinder our macro students when clinical social workers teach outside of their areas of expertise. These clinical faculty have never participated in a strategic plan or a capital campaign, and may be unfamiliar with the leadership and nonprofit management literature. Therefore, the administrative and organizational curriculum they embed in their courses is outdated or

irrelevant for a 21st century context. I have presented on administration pedagogy and research at the Council on Social Work Education annual meeting. I have frequently enjoyed long conversations with graduate and doctoral students who yearn to be exposed to the latest literature related to workplace environment, conflict mediation, leadership, and effective donor engagement. Sadly, these students—the future of our profession—search for this literature on their own as they do not receive this curriculum in their courses, and lack specific training in their internships.

I have also had the opportunity to shape the minds and hearts of social work students who come into my macro courses convinced that a future clinician does not have a need for macro practice. In my macro courses, I dedicate a significant amount of time to developing students' organizational management and leadership skills. My courses highlight the need for organizational mentoring, managerial, interviewing, networking, conflict resolution, and team building skills. When I started out as a social work educator, many of my courses centered on community organization. However, after years of emails from former students and conversations with field instructors, I grew convinced of the need to spend more time on organizational leadership and development curricula for my students.

In Crucibles of Leadership, Thomas (2008) writes: "People discover new, hidden, and often captivating things about play when they practice. Virtually every one of the leaders I interviewed found something deeper and more meaningful in their play once they seriously committed themselves to the notion of practice. Learning in any domain, leadership included, is not likely to occur without a desire to learn and the willingness and discipline to practice, practice, and practice."

Practice is one of the major reasons why people from all backgrounds decide that they want to become a professional social worker. They want to practice in certain countries or with certain populations and settings. Throughout social work curriculum, there are opportunities for students to develop clinical skills, group leadership skills, and community organizing skills. For example, Bogo, Rawlings, Katz & Logie (2014) have written a textbook about developing clinical skills through an assessment tool called the Objective Structured Clinical Examination. This is a valuable tool that enables social workers to develop skills in motivational interviewing in field placements. Social workers from all settings have participated in clinical simulation to improve their interactions with clients.

However, there is a noticeable gap in the organizational simulations for program directors, managers, supervisors and executive directors. As has been written in Lynch & Versen (2003) and Fisher (2009), social work clinical supervisors often make the mistake of engaging in therapeutic problem solving when they are faced with personnel and human resources challenges. A supervisor must treat employees ethically and legally and should not engage in therapeutic discussions when faced with personnel decisions. This not only happens in the social work field, but also in the academy, where deans, department chairs, and directors need to address personnel issues surrounding social work faculty and staff.

As part of my macro courses, students engage in a number of supervisor and supervisee

simulations. Topics explore leadership themes such as work performance, professional conduct, sexual harassment, workplace conflict, etc. These simulations allow students to receive feedback on their verbal and non-verbal communication skills, their ability to communicate agency policy, their conflict resolution, and other skills vitally important for their professional development. A former student reported:

> From dealing with uncomfortable situations such as how to fire an employee, educating me on the far-reaching implications of organizational policy as well as furthering my efficacy of macro social work practice, this course developed me as a professional in every sense of the word. I am a better clinician and person because of the "sharpening" work that this practice class gave me. The "practice" in this class was tough! I left class sometimes worn out and drained. But…it gave me a great foundation for game day—I am ready for daily ups and downs of a social work career! (Personal communication, October 28, 2016)

I recently spoke to a group of students in an MSW program. Many of the students in the room were enrolled in the clinical concentration. I went around the room asking them about their long term career goals. While some of them were strongly interested in starting their own private practice, the majority of the students wanted to be leaders of an organization in the future. I asked them if they had received training on topics such as budgeting, fiscal management, managing staff, etc. No one raised their hand. This is the challenge that is before us. While the majority of social workers might choose clinical or micro "case" work in the future, social workers need to be trained so that they can effectively lead the "cause" of our social service agencies. Healthy agencies create healthy outcomes for our consumers.

Social work has a bright future. There are many opportunities for the social work community to make a significant difference. Professionals who tackle issues such as depression, suicide, or health care must work in environments where they are engaged and developed effectively, in organizations that are not solely driven by donors. When executive leaders facilitate the growth and capacity of their employees, social service organizations will be greater generators of social innovation, change, and restoration.

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Using Twitter in Reclaiming Macro Practice, and Affirming Our Social Work Roots

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Abstract: This article addresses some of the current discourse concerning the divide between micro and macro practice in social work. Today's ever-changing socio-political and environmental landscape requires social workers to look beyond internal divisions and focus on the central values that drive the profession. With an increasingly diverse population and more complex problems including globalization, the redistribution of political power, increased privatization of services, and increased exposure to the influence of social media, social work is more relevant than ever. We suggest social workers bridge the divide in practice and education by embracing technology through #MacroSW chats on Twitter and by refraining from thinking of micro and macro practice as polarized constructs, while remaining true to the profession's foundational roots of social justice, knowledge, and ethics.

Keywords: micro practice, macro practice, polarization, social media, technology, collaboration, Professional Learning Network (PLN)

Introduction

The field of social work is fluid and dynamic due to its constantly changing environment. Integrating Macro + Micro social work is more relevant than ever due to the social worker's unique skill in helping people and systems navigate an ever-changing socio-political and environmental landscape. Today, we face issues related to globalization of industry and human migration; the privatization of services; redistribution of political power and authority to local governments and the non-profit sector; an overall decline in civic and political participation, decreased privacy in social life; increased exposure to social media and its impact on the public's perception of social and human rights issues; and conflicts inherent in the shifting demographics and diversity of the nation's people and cultures (Reich, 2013a).

Micro and Macro Polarization

Social Work incorporates a continuum of interventions focusing on particular systemic units of analysis. Micro social work focuses on providing increasing degrees of resource identification, guidance, and support for vulnerable populations at the individual and family level. Mezzo social work focuses on small groups and systems, and macro social work concentrates on planned change interventions for large groups including institutions, communities, neighborhoods, and populations. All three levels naturally overlap and are interrelated. The polarization between micro and macro perspectives has resulted in loss of focus on the profession's common ground—namely what we would describe as social work's core focus on the interface between the person and the environment. This loss of focus distracts us from initiating efforts leading to sustained planned and systemic change. A number of problems can be articulated that stem from not utilizing an integrated perspective that aligns all areas of social

work practice as equally important.

One problem is the disappearance of macro social work. Macro social work has become a marginalized subfield within the profession, as clinical social work (a subset of micro social work) is promoted as both more relevant and more accessible (Fischer & Corcicullo, 2011, p. 359). Less than 9% of all MSW students were enrolled in all combined macro practice areas (Council on Social Work Education, 2012). Less than one in seven social workers identify macro practice as their practice focus (Whitaker & Arrington, 2008, pp.7-8) meaning schools of social work are producing a shortage of macro social workers, particularly in high need, low-income communities with limited access to power (Reisch, 2014).

Another challenge is that macro social work practice is often labeled "Indirect" practice. This is a misnomer. Macro social work practice integrates all forms of practice and realizes our profession's historic and foundational commitment to social justice, human rights and social change. Macro social work practice asserts that all social work professionals work within communities and organizations—both formal and informal—and that understanding how social policy affects one's work is essential to effective practice (Reisch, 2014).

A third problem is the lack of systemic change skill development and competency. Newly minted social workers often start with diminished ability and an unwillingness to develop necessary skills and thought processes to identify and utilize organizational and community strengths. These skills are needed to empower clients and communities to mobilize for systemic change (Koerin, Reeves & Rosenblum, 2000; Hymans, 2000).

Finally, there is a disconnect between macro practice curricula, faculty, and students. Many programs pay scant attention to macro content in field work or classroom curricula. Rothman (1999) found deans and directors of social work programs devaluing macro content and resistance among social work faculty in integrating macro practice content and field work into some BSW and MSW curricula. In addition, there appears to be a general lack of interest in understanding macro practice among social work students (Reisch, 2014; Kasper & Wiegand, 1999).

Personal Experiences with Bridging Micro and Macro Divides

My personal experiences have taught me the necessity of bridging micro and macro social work practice divides. I, Sunya Folayan, come to macro practice after many years as a clinician, transitioning into an encore career utilizing technology, prevention and research. I am especially interested in the mental and financial health care of women, and more specifically, women of color. I started my multi-faceted social work career more than 40 years ago at the age of 19 when I convinced our local social and rehabilitation services center's county director to find a job for me while I obtained my first social work degree. Four weeks later, I had a state car, an expense account and the title "Social Work Aide." I traveled all over my home state of Kansas, traveling on rural highways to supervise home visits. Since our local office was in the state capital, I frequently delivered official documents to state and local agencies, and I assisted child protective service workers with getting caught up on paperwork. After graduate school in North

Carolina, I started working with the families of alcoholics in an outpatient program. From there I went to a well-established community family service agency. Once licensed, I began a private practice that lasted for nearly 25 years. I have enjoyed the flexibility and utility of having a social work degree, because I have been able to have many career experiences within the profession. I have been a clinician addressing the needs of families. I conducted groups in an inpatient psychiatric unit of a hospital, and worked as the facilitator of batterers men's groups. I coordinated domestic violence capacity building initiatives for rural agencies serving women in Alaska, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. I trained domestic violence advocates in the Caribbean. I wrote and helped implement curricula to help the United States Marine Corps address domestic violence and to increase communication between civilian and military police. I performed employee assistance counseling with clients in television stations, grocery stores, a hospital, fortune 500 companies, and textile chemical plants. I have been a community organizer in New York. I have collaborated and advanced learning with social workers in England. I have coordinated a social work department at a Historically Black College (HBCU) combined with teaching. During that time, I helped write curricula in preparation for re-accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). I am the co-founder of a womanist and social justice-based non-profit organization focusing on intervention and prevention of domestic violence amongst women and girls of color.

The tradition of self-help and mutual aid societies requires a hands-on-all-roles approach that is still prevalent in communities today (Betten & Austin, 1990). It is essential that one learn how to develop innovative programs to solve complex problems at the grassroots level because there is often limited or no funding for such programs. As a non-profit manager in a grassroots agency, I had to learn to tap into the cultural history and traditions utilized before the establishment of settlement houses and charity organizations became known. I also needed to learn budgeting, business management and a new set of leadership skills. In every career endeavor, navigating seamlessly between micro-(mezzo)-macro practice modalities has been essential. There is no separation between micro-macro as I have relied on each element of practice to inform the others.

Using Twitter to Address the Micro + Macro Divide

Technology will play an increasing role in the growth of our profession and cultural competence in the future. I believe Twitter will also aid social work practice in mitigating the micro+macro polarization that caused some of the challenges addressed earlier. One of the most empowering aspects of transitioning to a new phase of my professional life in social work has been becoming a partner of the #MacroSW chat team on Twitter (https://macrosw.com). As a partner of this online community, I work with a group of social workers, organizations, social work schools, and educators working to promote macro social work practice. I have grown and stretched as a social worker through this collaborative because it has shaped my professional learning network (PLN), which uses one's resources (typically social media) to communicate with other professionals, to collect or bookmark information related to their professional interests, and collaborate with others on projects (Richardson & Manacebelli, 2011). A PLN is nothing new to the social work profession. We call it life-long or career learning, and prior to the Internet and social media, social workers wrote letters, made phone calls and met at conferences to network

for professional growth. Today, we can use all types of digital tools to connect with others, share resources and even create meaningful connection around almost any topic.

My PLN has informed my understanding of the micro-macro divide, and it has allowed me opportunities to work beyond the divide. First, through Twitter, I am able to learn about macro social work practice at any time in any place. I stay current regarding trends in the social work profession by reading articles, blog posts and other relevant sources. My online interaction and my professional relationships with social workers who utilize the highest standards of ethics and practice push me to stretch myself to higher standards of practice. Because I am online, I am challenged to move past my comfort zone to learn new technology and take on new tasks, all of which contribute to my personal and leadership skill development.

Second, I am able to network with practitioners. I interact with social workers across the country and around the globe on a regular basis in conversations that encourage participation and networking with other social workers to create common language. The common realization is that the divide between micro and macro practice keeps us from focusing on the "how to" of creating planned change initiatives at all levels of social work. I am able to nurture relationships that contribute to my personal development. My network of international social work colleagues who wish to engage in online social work discussions and my chat presence have created new business opportunities for domestic and international travel.

Finally, through Twitter I have found that I can make a meaningful impact on my profession. My visibility has increased and given me a larger platform to share information about my life at the intersections of social work practice. I am part of a larger effort to influence CSWE and National Association of Social Workers (NASW) on the importance of micro+macro integration, and the rebranding of macro practice. I have increased my social capital, met new allies, and have confirmed and affirmed my identity as a macro practice social worker, further increasing my understanding of all interrelatedness of practice areas. I can use social media as a tool to disseminate knowledge throughout all areas of practice about the social justice issues I am most passionate about: financial capability; self-care and mental health for women of color; and food access in marginalized communities.

Advantages of Participating in Twitter Chats

While little research has been done on the ways that Twitter and other forms of social media can be incorporated into social work practice, we do know that social workers are beginning to use social media for communication and networking (Goldkind, Wolf & Jones, 2016; Sage & Sage, 2016). Social work educators are beginning to use Twitter to help students connect with practitioners and mentors outside the classroom (Hitchcock & Young, 2016; Taylor, 2014). Further, Twitter has the potential to connect social workers across the planet (Hitchcock & Taylor, 2016; Shelly, 2014). Anecdotally, during my discussions about social media technology and Twitter with colleagues, we affirm that technology and the #MacroSW chat helps bridge the gap between micro and macro is several ways. First, it increases the ability to interact with and engage a vast and diverse population of social work professionals who would not be able to come together under normal circumstances, allows one to affirm social work identity in a

supportive and collaborative manner. For example, our chats bring educators, students, researchers, grassroots citizens, and policy makers, interdisciplinary colleagues, and social workers from other countries together to share common concerns about the depth and complexity of issues facing our local and global communities. Social workers use this as an opportunity to discuss self-care, provide humor, affirm expertise and accomplishment, and to relieve stress in healthy ways based on a shared understanding of the nature of our work.

Second, we experience social workers coming together excited to create community and to discuss problems and solutions to today's complex and changing issues such as mass incarceration, income inequality and the needs of transgender children from a community and policy perspective. For academics, the chats provide a great opportunity for social work students to engage with practitioners on issues of professional standards of practice. The chats encourage student participation at a crucial time in their social work education—#MacroSW provides opportunities for learning about macro social work and the interrelatedness of practice areas while they are still in the formative stages of their social work development.

#MacroSW Chat topics discussed are timely and diverse and include: Building Micro-Macro Common Ground: Grand Challenges and Grand Accomplishments of Social Work; Trauma Informed Care; Technology Standards in Macro Practice; Macro Practice Ethics; Advocacy; Political Awareness and Advocacy; Developing Effective Agency and University Partnerships; and more. Chat transcripts and archives are available at https://macrosw.com/chat-archives/.

Additional Solutions to Bridge the Micro/Macro Divide

As a social worker who is continually striving for a holistic perspective, I offer the following practices and solutions to address the problems inherent in the micro/macro divide for the individual social worker. First, one should embrace macro practice as the integration of all forms of practice, keeping in mind that macro practice uses collective and collaborative efforts in program and policy development, and innovative services that enhance the quality of life (Begun, Berger, Otto-Salaj, & Rose, 2010). For example, the non-profit I co-founded is concerned about the connections between food insecurity, mental health and poverty. We observed that as women became more knowledgeable about food production and involved their friends, families and children in gardening, new community advocates began replicating what they learned in their neighborhoods. Next, we moved to apply for funding to plant an edible food forest to provide not only food, but therapeutic activities in cultivation that foster hope and change. In 2015, we hired farmers and scientists to engage a group of military veteran mothers, battered women with children—many of whom were living with emotional disorders—along with neighborhood residents to participate in a series of hands on demonstrations on how to plant and maintain a sustainable food forest. Next, we advocated for the county food policy decision-making council to diversify its leadership board to include grassroots women and women of color. All of these entities have had to work through a variety of social and personality issues to come together for the ongoing welfare of their projects. For this, we engaged a local dance company to choreograph a series of "eco movement" workshops to allow participants to express themselves, articulate conflicts, and work for the common good through performance. We are now in the process of helping the women we have worked with to train as

farmers, so they can eventually purchase small parcels of land for farming and food production. A final frontier is to help these women to gain access to food distribution networks and to create businesses of their own in sustainable practices: recycling, hospitality, waste management—domains which have typically been white and male. We have noted stronger voices advocating for their needs. We observe more family involvement and less hunger, and more receptivity to mental health services and greater awareness about the importance of maintaining holistic health.

Second, macro practice articulates the profession's ethical commitment to both individual and social change. Social workers must be mindful of this perspective. This focus can enable social workers to focus on our common roots and the prevention of societal problems, not merely developing remedial efforts (Reisch, 2014). As in all levels of practice, our greatest instrument is the use of self. Awareness of our personal biases, areas of privilege and limitations is as essential as knowing our strengths. It is equally important that we examine where we are as a profession and work to eliminate any silos that keep us as a profession isolated, uninformed and ineffective in being the social change agents we are to be.

Third, we should advocate for 20% macro student participation and identification in all social work programs accredited by CSWE by 2020. This can be done by supporting CSWE programs efforts to help students understand how community, organizational, management, and policy processes are integral to effective practice with every population and problem we engage in (Reisch, 2014). For example, require budgeting and management courses in all social work programs so that students learn a broad range of skills, and emphasize the importance of undergirding the NASW Code of Ethics (2015) foundational values of social justice in every aspect of student learning and professional practice.

To support CSWE's implicit curriculum, increase and encourage the development of stronger university-community partnerships (Begun, et. al, 2010). Another example could include utilizing social media in the classroom and modeling effective technology skills to students. Support students in utilizing social media, such as #MacroSW on Twitter, as a tool to advance the profession in the following: social work identity formation, advocacy, relationship building, education, diversity and inclusion, and dismantling hegemony.

Fourth, we can eliminate discussions of "indirect" practice, and we can emphasize the common ground among us that recognize all social workers work within the context of individuals, communities and organizations, as all are affected by social policies (Pierce, 1989; Netting, Kettner & McMurty, 1998). Along with this, we need to emphasize the importance of working collaboratively with people not merely with or within "systems" (Burghart, 2013) and the importance of common core of values intrinsic to the profession of social work.

Fifth, we can encourage all social workers to assume leadership in macro practice strategies, thereby promoting and ensuring social work promotes strategies that lead to substantive change affecting the lives and well-being of our society. (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989; Reisch & Andrews, 2002). Macro practitioners should familiarize themselves with macro competencies for effective practice, and be intentional about ongoing self-development. As educators, it is our

responsibility to introduce macro competence standards to students and to identify and nurture attributes that lend themselves to macro skill development. (Regehr, Bogo, Donovan, Anstice, and Lim, 2012).

Conclusion

The Social Work Code of Ethics is comprised of many parts. It is a beautifully written document of principles, centered in social justice and human rights. While it has been adapted and changed to meet the needs of today, its unifying essence remains unchanged. There is no micro/macro divide within it. The most powerful tool we bring to our work is the use of ourselves. If we are fragmented, disconnected or divided in our thinking, it will manifest in our work. We cannot afford to talk across the profession at one another, isolate ourselves in silos, or believe we are the only profession interested in making change. We must use technology in ethical ways that will advance our work. Working apart from community creates division. If we elevate one part of our profession and devalue another, we will not be empowered to foster the changes our society needs at this crucial time. Would we say our hands are more important than our feet? Can a tree prosper without its roots? We think not, and we urge a recommitment to the holistic embrace of our professional practice which neither elevates nor devalues its parts, and which always beckons us back to its' center.

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Streams to Ocean: Bridging the Micro/Macro Divide

Heather G. Howard

Abstract: This personal and professional narrative is a reflection of the emergence of becoming a social worker and embracing both micro and macro practice. The realization is that one flows into the other as a river flows into the ocean. The major implication is the importance of continually addressing human rights and social justice issues in our social work practice as both a micro and macro social worker.

Keywords: policy, community organizing, social justice

Introduction

For the last several years I have traveled to mid-coast Maine to my father's home after Christmas to enjoy a few days of respite and tranquility. The landscape includes hues of white, grey, and indigo reflected from the Penobscot Bay and the Blue Hill mountains. It is an ideal setting to reflect upon the year ending and ponder on the year to come. This past year has been a new chapter in my life, full of bittersweet transitions. I have a wonderful husband, father, and three beautiful sons, the oldest of whom left for college last year. However, it was the first year the two most important women in my life were absent from me. My daughter began her first year of college, and my loving mother's long battle with a chronic illness finally ceased when she passed away.

Yesterday I bundled up for one of my favorite activities: running. This is an activity I mostly do individually, alone with my thoughts, reveling in the scenery. I am attuned to how my muscles feel and the clean, crisp air in my lungs, and I absorb all the sights and sounds around me. For more than two decades this has been an essential, almost daily activity that has sustained me as a clinical social worker in healthcare. The six-mile route I always run I named Bluff Run. Part of the run is a mile up a mountain. During the winter months, the dirt road is closed off to cars and not plowed, so the top is icy and snowy underfoot, and I usually have to slow down to stay aware of my footing.

When I reached the top yesterday, I noticed there were numerous deer tracks in the snow, where the deer had traveled the same area I was now enjoying. But what I also saw was evidence they were not running alone. The deer had a companion, a partner, a family, or a community. These creatures were navigating their journey together. According to Riverwoods Preservation Council, doe herds comprise several generations and herd for protection against predators. I was struck immediately with memories of my compassionate mother and of my daughter when she was little and under my protection. I contemplated my years of individual running and my time running with the varsity track team in college. I also thought about my professional work as an individual social work practitioner and as a community organizer and, more recently, as a teacher in a social work graduate school. The fluidity of these arcs, interwoven throughout my family and career, entered my thoughts as I gazed at the multitude of tracks and listened to the snow crunching under my strides.

Personal Experiences

The beginning of my running career was not for self-care purposes—I simply liked to compete! After a strong high school cross-country and track and field career, I was recruited to run for Boston College. As a scholarship long-distance runner I was required to train all year and run at peak performances every season. For four years I lived a disciplined life of daily ten-mile runs, speed drills, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, and weight training. Classes and studying revolved around training and track meets. The workouts were strategic and prepared me to run fast 5-kilometer cross-country races at a 5:30 mile pace. Unknowingly, this individual training enabled me to develop personal goals for my future professional work with clients, families, organizations, and communities.

The summer before my senior year in college, I had one major goal for our team: to make Boston College history and be the first women's cross-country team to qualify for the Division I NCAA championships. I created postcards for the varsity runners and mailed them all summer long. It was simple. One week the postcard would simply read, "THINK," and the following week another postcard would arrive to my teammates reading, "NATIONALS." I was the only scholarship athlete on the team at the time. We would be competing for the spot against college track giants loaded with scholarship athletes, such as Villanova, Georgetown, and Providence College. After months of unending training, sacrifices, and dedication, our team qualified for NCAA nationals in Tucson, Arizona. Since that time in 1991, Boston College has qualified every year and recruited many scholarship athletes.

Retrospectively, my individual running successes do not compare to team successes of which I've been a part. Why is this? Why is it more meaningful for me to lead a team to victory than to cross the finish line first myself? When I consider why this is true for me, I think of my high school coach, who was one of my life's greatest mentors. It was he who taught me the value of teamwork. He created an acronym for TEAM: Together Each Accomplishes More. He cared about the team as much as the individual and believed great results could only be achieved through teamwork. He not only coached more than 20 individual state champions, he also earned several Massachusetts state championship titles. His high value of teamwork influenced me greatly.

My Boston College team achieved something we had only dreamed about. Not surprisingly, all the women who were on that cross-country team are now contributing to society as leaders in their fields of nursing, business, education, and research. The interconnectedness of individual success and team success is similar to micro and macro practice in professional healing. Unbeknownst to me as a young woman, my personal experience of competing was preparing me for a future of social work in healthcare as well as my work with vulnerable women pregnant and parenting amidst poverty.

Social Work Education

After taking Introduction to Social Work during my last semester of undergraduate school, I decided to go to graduate school for social work. What I remember most from that undergrad

course that led me to pursue a professional life in social work was the person-in-environment perspective. This ecological framework resonated with how I understood human behavior. Upon entering graduate school, I was required to make a decision before my studies even began: choose either a micro or macro focus. I remember being confused by this, as I believed, even then, that one part could not impact change without the other. They were interconnected. Each was equally necessary and important. Given that I had a double major in English and Psychology, I resonated with the details of individual and family stories, so my logical choice was micro. At the time, and confronted with that choice, I wanted to work with children and families in healthcare settings, not in community organizing.

Professional Healing

My first position as a clinical social worker was in a large, urban teaching hospital in a pediatric emergency room. Much of the work was crisis intervention, assisting and supporting families who brought their children to the emergency room after a traumatic injury, such as a drowning, falling from second and third story windows, car accidents, and child abuse. After a few months in this position I was asked by a few pediatricians to work with them in a community pediatric health center.

This center was located in one of the poorest communities in the state. Similar to most poor communities, the social determinants of health were prominent. There was a high prevalence of child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, and substance abuse. Though we had a great program and offered family-centered integrative care onsite, the problems were not decreasing. In fact, the volume of behavioral and social issues was not feasible for one social worker to address. In order to make long-lasting change, it would take a team approach.

Similar to my efforts to inspire and mobilize individual runners on the track to be the best team, my micro practice needed to connect with macro work. I began to meet with community partners, form professional relationships, and finally organize a large working conference with the local district attorneys, child welfare workers, pediatricians, and local school officials. The goal was to identify vulnerable families in our community and work collaboratively with agencies and families to prevent child abuse and to support families. An interdisciplinary system was put in place to create professional networks so that children and families who needed additional community supports could access services. This accomplishment was by far my most successful, because it was a collaborative effort creating impactful changes that, in turn, positively affected the children and families I worked with on an individual basis.

For the past 21 years, I have worked as a perinatal social worker in a large, urban birthing hospital. This work is primarily clinical and addresses intimate partner violence, sexual assault, substance use, postpartum depression, and perinatal loss. One of my areas of expertise is the prevention and treatment of perinatal substance use. Throughout the past nine years, I have seen pregnant women on a weekly basis who find themselves in a quagmire as a result of their pregnancy and their use of prescription opioids. This creates a profound ethical and professional challenge in respecting the women's self-determination and autonomy when they are required to agree to medication-assisted treatment at the onset of their pregnancy when admitted to heath

care facilities. The internal struggle for many women is their preference not to be on methadone or other medications when pregnant, yet their legal obligation is to do so. The following is a common example of my clinical practice that occurred many years ago and changed my professional life.

Lucia (pseudonym) entered my office reluctantly at the request of her obstetrician. Lucia was resistant to see me because she had experienced a negative response from clinicians she had already interacted with. Many years earlier, she was misusing prescription painkillers and was directed to a methadone maintenance clinic. After the birth of her first baby, she witnessed her infant withdraw from methadone. Lucia was emphatic that she did not want to experience that traumatic event again, declaring, "I don't want to be responsible for my baby withdrawing, and I couldn't live with myself." After many months of self-advocating for medically supervised withdrawal, the physician finally acquiesced.

Lucia explained to me how the clinicians at the local methadone clinic told her she was hurting her unborn baby if she discontinued her methadone, and that the choice made her a bad mother. She was also told that her choice could kill her baby. I listened incredulously to her experience with her health care providers. At the time, I did not have any knowledge about methadone maintenance, effects of methadone on mother and fetus, or the scientific evidence to support the practice.

Sadly, Lucia left our prenatal care clinic because the obstetrician at our center refused to support her choice of tapering off of methadone. She left to deliver in another state. Even though she was no longer our patient, she had asked me to stay in contact with her, so I telephoned her and inquired how her birthing experience was. She reported that she and the baby were doing very well and that her baby had not experienced any withdrawal from methadone exposure because it had been out of Lucia's system long enough. Interestingly, she shared that the nurses who cared for her during her postpartum period in the hospital discovered in her chart that she had been on methadone during her first and second trimester. They had commented to her how awful that she was on methadone during her pregnancy. "I just wish women would not be judged for their choices," Lucia told me. This was when it dawned on me that if Lucia had experienced this judgmental response from health care providers, perhaps there were other women just like her. Even more harrowing than what I watched Lucia encounter is what I see now in my work: Countless early postpartum mothers having their infant removed from their custody as the result of a positive toxicology urine drug screen during their third trimester. The infant is removed directly from the birthing hospital without any chance for the mother to bond or parent. The re-victimization and re-traumatization of these women is incomprehensible. The agonizing cries I have heard echoing through the halls and have witnessed as these mothers left the hospital without their newborns will be with me forever. At various times, this "micro-level" social work left me feeling helpless, discouraged, and experiencing the secondary stress of burnout and hopelessness.

Yet, ultimately, these and other similar experiences compelled me to continue my social work education and earn a Ph.D. The irony was that when applying for doctorate programs, I suddenly realized I was returning to the dilemma forced upon me in the MSW program between micro and

macro focus. However, now I truly understood that a social worker could not really help create positive change for groups without influencing macro policy and practice in organizations. My main goal was to develop and create maternal health policy that addressed perinatal substance use in a collaborative and social-justice based framework.

I often tell this story to my graduate students. If you find yourself frustrated and not impacting meaningful change with your clients, perhaps you need to focus on the current policies that impact the client system and ask yourself how you might impact social and organizational and political change? I was at a crossroads in my clinical social work practice. It was becoming apparent that there were human rights and social justice issues involved with perinatal substance use and that I was a cog in the wheel. Whether I intended that or not was not as important as the reality that I was part of these institutions as a privileged social worker.

As someone who values, both personally and professionally, self-determination and the dignity and worth of the person, I was compelled to conduct a qualitative health study using an interpretative phenomenological analysis to understand the lived experience of pregnant and postpartum women who have an opioid dependence. I wanted to understand who their support was and if they were able to work collaboratively with the healthcare team. I knew from more than two decades of clinical experience that women are highly motivated to care for themselves and their babies when they are pregnant. I also knew as an experienced clinical social worker the transformational power of having someone believe in you as a person, demonstrate respect, and support one's autonomy. I knew that anything was possible with support.

Similar to my perinatal social work practice, two of the major findings of the qualitative health study I conducted were the parallel fear pregnant opioid dependent women had of their infants developing neonatal abstinence syndrome and child protection services' involvement at delivery (Howard, 2015). The research was couched in questions like, "Is it possible to support pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders?" Is it possible to treat the mother and infant as a dyad rather than polarize the two? This multifaceted and complex issue is an example of the importance of the intersection of micro and macro practice.

Macro Concerns

For me it is important to understand micro level concerns within a macro context. This is a fundamental social work concept of the person-in-environment perspective. From the aspect of policy analysis, how can we address that women who are opioid dependent are fearful of their infants developing neonatal abstinence syndrome and also of child protective services? One starting point is to recognize that current policy tends to limit these women's options. A recent national study of neonates exposed to opioids who received treatment for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome revealed that the majority (78%) were on public insurance (Patrick et al., 2012). Like the national study, the study population in my research (Howard, 2015) was entirely drawn from a sample of women receiving government insurance benefits as opposed to women with private insurance and access to a broader range of health care alternatives in most states. This major policy limits treatment options for pregnant opioid dependent women depending on the practice guidelines in any given state. For the New England region, methadone maintenance continues to

be the recommended standard of care, with limited opportunities for buprenorphine maintenance or opioid-free recovery. Other states, such as Arizona, Kentucky, and Tennessee, require a pregnant opioid-dependent woman to enter detoxification as soon as she knows she is pregnant. This implies that if a woman is on public insurance, her choices are seriously constrained. Moreover, such constraints constitute a social justice and human rights issue, with painful costs to children, parents, and society that should be acknowledged and evaluated. In my own clinical practice and research, I seek to balance the existing constraints by keeping the mother's protective factors and concern for her infant as paramount.

Several of the participants in the qualitative health study I conducted described having a child protective service worker remove her infant from her care as like watching her child be kidnapped and not having the power to stop it. There have been several recent reviews of state policies focused on the reporting of prenatal drug exposure, as well as variability with how child protective services respond to referrals of substance-exposed newborns (Anthony, Austin, & Cormier, 2010; Goodman & Wolff, 2013; Miller et al., 2014). These reviews recommend early intervention, which can bring lasting benefits to the mother-infant dyad. New maternal health initiatives can encourage engagement with pregnant women in order to reduce substance use and promote healing in their lives. The primary recommendation in these reviews is to institute universal screening using a validated instrument, as opposed to urine drug screening, for early detection and treatment referrals. Helmbrecht and Thiagarajah (2008), for example, recommend creating cooperative teams for better communication between the obstetrician and the substance use treatment provider. The management of this high-risk population needs to be approached using a public health response rather than a punitive response when considering new maternal health policies. These macro level issues impact the mother-infant dyad in profound ways. I came to see in both my clinical work as a perinatal social worker and my research concerning pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders that there was an acute need for community action.

Community Organizing

Last month, I hosted a conference with the state Department of Health to create collaborative, coordinated, and compassionate care for pregnant women and their substance-exposed newborns. The purpose of the conference was to create strategies to work more effectively across disciplines to decrease stigma and increase accessibility to community resources and treatment for these vulnerable families. There were representatives from Healthy Families America, an evidenced-based program that provides weekly home visits to families and provides concrete and emotional support, maternal fetal nurses, substance use treatment providers, educators, social workers, and child welfare workers. The major feedback we received was that we need to host the conference every year and that professionals appreciated the opportunity to discuss and find solutions to address the opioid epidemic with a collaborative approach. I learned long ago that institutional change occurs only when the conversation is shared, the "problem" becomes human and tangible, and there is a vested interest by stakeholders and policy makers in doing better collectively—like a team.

Conclusion

Although this past year has presented difficult personal and life transitions, I am beginning a new chapter in my social work career in higher education. I look forward to conducting further research that addresses perinatal substance use as well as the opportunity to educate graduate social work students to be both micro and macro social workers in their real-world practice, applying all the principles of good teamwork.

Today, I ran on a wooded trail that led to a waterfall rushing into the Penobscot Bay. The mountain water had melted with the newly fallen snow and was powerfully flowing to the ocean's edge. The snowflakes had turned into a stream that connected with something much vaster. The fresh water and salt water became one intermixed fluid, and, resultantly, a much more formidable natural force. As I ran back to the cozy seaside home where my dad lives now, I felt my mother's presence, her legacy to continue to persevere, and my drive to be an example to my daughter as she pursues her own college education. I thought about my goals to impact maternal health policies that will support the mother-infant dyad as the snow crunched beneath my stride. But what led me to write this article were the haunting voices of those new mothers in the hospital, still echoing.

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From Values to Passion to Enlivened Practice: A Palette of Possibilities

Elizabeth Keenan

Abstract: This narrative offers a palette of possibilities for linking micro and macro practices that arose from interviews with social workers who were viewed as addressing the profession's dual purpose of individual well-being and social justice in their practice. I begin with my own experiences and desires to link micro and macro together as a clinical social worker and community organizer. An interlude describing the way the social workers stretched my thinking comes in between the themes. I conclude with a final reflection on the impact of their stories and implications for future research and practice.

Keywords: macro practice, social justice, social work methods, social work practice, values

In Pursuit of Fresh Possibilities

In my 26 years as a social worker, I have witnessed the power of relationships to support individuals' struggles for well-being and to galvanize collective action against social injustices. I've long been frustrated with the duality of the profession's dual purpose (individual well-being and social justice) and the corresponding micro/macro method divide because dualities tend to fuel conflict and competition (Jackson, 1993), diminishing the profession's ability to have the kind of impact we want to have (Haynes, 1998; Marsh, 2002). As a clinical social worker, I've seen how some psychological defenses reinforce dichotomies (e.g., splitting and idealization/devaluation), and have worked with individual clients as they develop the capacity to hold tensions and paradoxes. Now as a social work educator, I try to help social work students develop the capacity to hold tensions and paradoxes. I encourage them to think holistically by providing them with conceptual frameworks that describe health and diversity as differentiation with integration within individuals, families, groups, and communities (see, for example, Bloom & Farragher, 2013; Cozolino, 2013; and Siegel, 2012). Most recently I interviewed social workers who traverse the micro and macro worlds in an effort to find additional ways to reimagine the divides, debates, and dualities so pervasive in our profession. I wanted to know how they promote the dual purposes, and most importantly, how they make sense of these micro and macro divides: How do they see it? What do they do?

This paper alternates between my reflections on what I heard during the interviews and the social workers' ideas and experiences themselves, and in some cases I include my thoughts and the interviewees' direct quotes within the same sentence. I organized the social workers' stories in relation to how my own thinking stretched and expanded during the research. I conclude with further reflections and questions that (hopefully) spark the readers' imaginations for conceptual frameworks and practice actions.

While engaging in qualitative research with 18 social workers in a range of practice settings, I was heartened to hear participants describe their practice in a unifying manner, yet surprised by

their realness, immediacy, and their sense that what they're doing is "no a big deal." Listening to their stories, I paradoxically found their practice actions to be both novel and familiar within our current practice environment. Instead of focusing on fulfilling job description duties, they were activated by a fundamental sense that something was not right or fair in various circumstances and experiences with clients and community members. While these experiences stirred up their anger or cognitive passion, participants recounted the ways they responded in very matter-of-fact ways. One participant simply said: "I see the need and then I act.," while another said, "When I see gaps I try to do something."

Kaleidoscopic Images

After a few interviews I felt myself becoming enlivened and intrigued. How did they come to think and practice in this way? Participants often used familiar social work terms, so I started using a kaleidoscope as a metaphor to listen for varying understandings. I discovered that their stories clustered into various images of how micro and macro practices are interconnected. Two initial images felt familiar to me because they resonated with my experiences of engaging in micro and macro actions at different points in time while understanding the ways that those actions are mutually beneficial: 1) separate, yet linked efforts; and 2) micro/macro inform and benefit each other.

Separate Yet Linked Efforts

A few social workers talked about doing micro and macro practice at different points in their career. Their choices stemmed from valuing "the equitable, respectful treatment of everyone." At some points they specifically worked to address racism, gender discrimination, and LGBT issues because these are some injustices "that are still prevalent [but] not necessarily acknowledged." At other moments these social workers sought to ensure "that people have what they need to live a dignified, healthy life and that resources are available to all who need them."

After receiving her MSW, Dawn focused on individual well-being as a clinical social worker. She then addressed food insecurity, coordinating the town's food bank while her children were young. Dawn returned to clinical social work years later, helping her child and adolescent clients come to know "that they're valuable and they're unique and that they have something to give to the world." Kya had the opposite experience, initially engaging in community organizing before becoming a clinical social worker. She shifted her focus because she came to believe that "you really need to have individual therapy as part of someone's healing…or preparing to, to protest…to stand up and speak out…to be an advocate." From personal and professional experiences Kya remarks, "How are you an advocate if you feel as if you are worthless?"

In contrast to these sequential actions, Ann engages in concurrent micro and macro activities. Her commitment is divided between paid and volunteer work. She promotes individual well-being as a clinical social worker during the day, and advocacy, according to her, "Comes at six o'clock when you go to the NASW meeting" due to employment constraints. Ann has testified on issues related to elders and "I even went and brought a two-year-old baby with me once up to the... to the Capitol."

Dawn, Kya and Ann engage in micro and macro activities done sequentially or concurrently. Macro activities with friends were instrumental in forming commitments to social justice. Ann's experience with an NASW committee "taught me that the people that can make a change are... is anyone…You know, it's not just for the people in power." All three feel a deep obligation to act: "We're all responsible for this world. I might not be responsible for certain problems, but I have the responsibility to try to help change them."

Micro/Macro Inform and Benefit Each Other

Some participants spoke about the ways that their micro and macro practice activities become more impactful when informed by the other. Dana, a senior center director who cultivates a welcoming environment for all the seniors in the town, found that seniors with various mental illnesses experienced greater well-being after participating in program activities. Dana thinks this is because "people know that they can share stuff here…with staff…with each other…they are comfortable, they... they, realize that it's okay to be human." Instead of just linking these older adults with mental health services, Dana works with her staff to innovate ways of including people with Alzheimer's disease and other chronic illnesses into the life of the senior center. When faced with new situations, Dana says, "We just have to figure out how we're gonna do that, and we get 'em involved." Informed by individual interactions, these changes to programs and activities have had positive results: "And now we have people who are flourishing with... where they weren't years ago."

Individual experiences are also vital to Sue when she is constructing social policy. As someone who "was so much more comfortable in a spreadsheet than I was writing a paper" prior to earning her MSW, Sue learned the power of stories during her internships. She strongly believes that "solutions have to be developed down on the ground, and then brought up, because I think…those of us who are in advocacy, we hover lots of times around fifteen, twenty thousand, thirty thousand feet, and the ground is different." She also sees the need for policy practitioners to inform micro practitioners because "the person who is actually doing the work one on one with that client may not see the bigger picture, so there is a role for all of us to pull all of that together."

Sometimes it's one horrific event that spurs social workers into social action. After a tragic murder of a young child, Maya organized efforts to provide preschool for all children and started a child abuse prevention task force "because leaving your child with a boyfriend who's abusive ends up in death" and in this town "they're all our children." Many other times, it's the patterns amongst individual cases that spark action at the macro level. Lana, a school social worker for K-12 in a small town initially noticed the number of absences in the high school was "really growing." She started a task force to look at school absences and discovered that the problem started in kindergarten. She organized teachers to start altering the culture of "'it's just kindergarten. They can miss a week for Disney World'" by having them call parents when absences occur. She encouraged teachers to "start that conversation" early on. "Not to say 'Why hasn't your kid been in school?,' but 'Hey, we're noticing he's had four absences over the past month... What's going on? Do you need something?' Start there. Start that conversation." Lana's recognition of the pattern and subsequent school-wide analysis has circled back to proactive

individual responses early on.

The school social workers in particular framed their work with individuals within a social justice lens. They provided numerous examples describing the need to be fair with students: "there are rules, legislation, and ways that we need to behave in society that treats everybody fairly." Critiquing the negative impacts of such policies as "zero tolerance," Charles clarified: "And fair doesn't mean everybody gets the same thing. It means what's equitable and based on your needs." Agreeing that "everybody needs to be held accountable," Charles underscores the need to attend to how this occurs. He finds it essential for individual student experiences to inform the interpretation of macro policies so that accountability "will look differently for different individuals" because "there's always grey area!" And in fact, "if you don't take them into effect, then you're dealing out un-injustice."

Participants illuminated how micro and macro activities can inform each other in senior centers, community practice, and schools: Older adults with mental illnesses flourish when senior center programming is adjusted to include them; social policy addresses unmet needs more effectively when informed by personal experiences; schools can treat students fairly by holding them accountable according to their specific situations; universal preschool can protect children from domestic violence; and timely phone calls from teachers to parents can prevent unnecessary gaps in students' school attendance and learning. Notable impacts in all these arenas resonates with Sue's sense that there's a vision of interconnection that is beyond grasp: "I feel like we're at this edge of innovation that we're not tapping into."

Interlude

Early in my career I was hired as a clinical social worker and volunteered my time with political campaigns and social action committees. I saw the need to do both kinds of work, but similar to Ann, I did concurrent micro and macro work, removed from the daily experiences of the communities in which I worked. After moving into academe as a social work educator and shifting to macro practice activities, I more fully grasped the importance of being in relationship with a range of people. Opportunities in my personal life led me to engage in community organizing training and ongoing volunteer work as one of several leaders who guide the organization with two paid organizers. Community organizing deepened my understanding about how individual relationships and social change efforts need and benefit each other. I found that large scale actions happen best when those at the grassroots level are in relationship with each other and with those at the macro level who make policy, legislation, and other large-scale decisions. Relational power became my connecting thread between and within individual/micro activities and social change/macro activities. Yet I continued to struggle with how to conceptualize relational power within social work's micro and macro methods. I lacked the language to make further connections within our professional categorizations.

So I returned to the participants' responses with a renewed desire to see beyond my existing frameworks. My experience in both clinical practice and community organizing helped me identify two additional conceptualizations of micro/macro interconnections: 1) that social justice could, and in fact must, be promoted in smaller contexts; and 2) that a unifying view of practice

or identity could lead social workers to view micro and macro activities as similar. The social workers stretched my thinking to consider possibilities I had not previously imagined.

Smaller Context for Social Justice

Participants talked about two ways that organizations serve as a smaller context for social justice: by providing information to clients and seeking to change the mindsets of professionals. Dana frequently speaks up with older adults within her own senior center when she encounters biased comments. She told me, "I'm not willing to accept that," and turns that determination into action by reminding seniors that everyone is treated with respect at the center, and by providing educational programming where seniors can learn and ask questions about groups of people they might not be familiar with. Dave, a child welfare worker, shares information about opportunities with clients so they develop "the ability to know what's available to them." Dave understands that clients can prematurely close some doors because people in their social networks aren't familiar with what's possible or how to access it. By sharing this access information and helping clients learn how to navigate complex systems, Dave tries to promote socioeconomic justice.

Several participants spoke about the ways they seek to influence the mindsets of professional colleagues and administrators so clients can be understood and get the help they need. Joan, a clinical social worker within a hospital where the medical model is the dominant framework sees herself as an oboe, the one in an orchestra who brings a different sound "to be that voice, to be the one that says, 'Let's take one step back and look at this situation from a different perspective.'" Jada also invites other professionals to consider a different perspective in her work with mothers who abuse substances. She tries to change the mindset of child protective service workers (CPS) and family court officials by sharing the circumstances and the "forces working against this family" rather than "villainizing the mothers." Facilitating complex understandings, for Jada, is "a smaller context for social justice" that has a ripple effect across systems: "To, little by little, try to change the mindset about that…changes where money gets spent…what gets funded and what doesn't, what happens ultimately in the lives of, you know, a pair of moms and kids."

By speaking up in the face of bias, offering opportunities to learn about various groups of people who live in the U.S., providing information about how to access complex systems, and seeking to change the mindsets of other professionals, these social workers remind us of the powerful middle spaces where supportive spaces are potentially created and decisions that impact large groups of people are made.

Unifying Views of Practice and Identity

This final conceptualization of micro/macro connections is the one that gave me pause. Stacy's viewpoint, "It's all the same…I see the micro and the macro as exactly the same thing" was at first surprising and perplexing. I wondered how psychotherapy and program development could possibly be viewed as "the same thing." Digging deeper, I found that the "same thing" for Stacy reflects her belief that "you're using yourself in exactly the same way," as she is "assisting somebody on a micro level…versus providing the community assessment." The "same thing,"

therefore, is about how Stacy conceptualizes use of self. She sees herself as a "conduit for change," using her assessment skills to coordinate social services in a small town. She notes that the knowledge base may vary, but, "It's just different obstacles and challenges that come up for you." For Stacy, a "conduit for change" uses oneself to link, connect, and bridge current gaps to enhance well-being for individuals and communities.

Charles also views himself as a "conduit for change" as a school social worker. Being "visible and valuable" to students, parents, teachers, and staff is the way that he has been able to notice and respond to individual situations as well identify the need for school-wide responses, such as altering the culture when students return from suspensions. A "conduit for change" for Charles involves helping to "create an environment that allows the student to be welcomed back…and be allowed to be a different person."

A few other social workers in disparate roles also provided understandings regarding their use of self, which led them to see micro and macro practices as similar kinds of activities. Lisa, a clinical social worker at an intensive outpatient program, describes clinical and organizing work as forms of advocacy against institutional cultural norms. Lisa works with people who have recently been hospitalized for psychiatric issues: "I feel like the hospital system just wants to…get them stable…I wanna get people up to here, to like being happy, or exuberant, or creative, or, like, working towards something." For Lisa "the bottom line is advocating," advocating with the client during an intake to help them shift from a goal of "stable" to a goal of "exuberant," and then organizing other clinicians to stand together against procedural and scheduling changes that interfere with the program's effectiveness. Lisa is "trying to get them to all act together and say this is not fair for us and it's not fair for the patients." As a clinical social worker, Lisa strives to motivate and advocate for and with her clients and her coworkers.

Micro and macro are similar for Joel and Jeff because of the similarities between their professional and social identities and the way they translate those identities into practice activities. Joel sees himself as "a social worker who's in business" who has a responsibility to work to "heal the world" (*tikkun olam*). Although he is no longer a practicing Jew, he still identifies with the spiritual beliefs from the Judaic tradition. Jeff's view of himself as "the public servant, who happens to have a private practice," and his identity as a gay male parent informed his practice actions. Initially he worked with LBG clients, and in recent years developed a specialty with transgender youth in clinical and macro practice.

The overlap between professional and social identities makes micro and macro actions inseparable for Joel and Jeff. Joel views his work managing a group private practice office in broad, flexible terms: "When I hear gaps in services, inadequacies in communal coordination or understanding, I try and propose, make, facilitate something that might help," without concern about whether it is a clinical or macro practice action. Joel offers "adjusted fees and some pro bono work because the community deserves and needs us to be available," organizes a coordinated network of providers, conducts book drives, and advocates for greater mental health coverage and access. Jeff, too, has done pro bono clinical and macro work, including informally organizing a statewide referral network of therapists who work with LGBT clients and their families, and volunteering his time to help people know where to get help with issues regarding

identification as a sexual minority or transgender person.

Joel's and Jeff's particular configuration of professional and social identities impact the scope of their practice actions. Joel thinks broadly as he responds to gaps and inadequacies by "rolling up [my] sleeves and assisting others to be fair and to make life more manageable and healthier for other people." Jeff, in contrast, has a more singular focus: Helping LGBT clients "understand and articulate" specific forms of injustice, and encouraging them to "join with other people who feel the same way, and to stand up to the oppression when you safely can, singly or, you know, jointly."

From Kaleidoscopic Images to Palettes of Possibilities

As I moved from the more familiar ways of conceptualizing micro and macro activities (separate yet linked, and micro/macro informing and benefitting each other) into newer territory (honing in on smaller contexts for social justice, unifying views of practice and identity), my image shifted from a kaleidoscope of familiar concepts to an expansive palette of possibilities. The social workers selected these possibilities because of what they value and because they had unifying views of how they use themselves in practice, not because they had a preferred method. I discovered this when asking about their understandings of well-being and social justice. They described passionate commitments to specific values (e.g., respect, fairness, inclusion) that illuminated injustices and unresponsive services and stirred their desire to respond using the micro and macro practice methods that were available to them and best suited for a particular situation. Individualized unifying views of practice (e.g., "the bottom line is advocating," "conduits for change") and identity (e.g., "the social worker who is in business," "the public servant who happens to have a private practice") facilitated their ability to consider and select a wide range of methods.

In retrospect these newer conceptualizations helped me see that I've experienced my practice in this way as well. I've always viewed myself as a social worker who tries to "do what it takes" no matter what role I'm playing: clinician, organizer, instructor, or committee chair. Reflecting further led me to discover that my actions have also been fueled by values: a passionate desire for fair and just actions that respect the dignity of everyone involved, and alter structural inequities. Over the years I've been searching for images, metaphors, or language that help me imagine and use the wide range of practice options available to me. My conversations with participants helped me formulate a way to talk about the profession's purpose and identify areas for continued scholarship.

I've begun to find some language to articulate this new perspective: When practice understanding and actions (including how we conceptualize micro and macro interconnections) are grounded in the profession's values, we have a greater capacity to promote a unifying purpose, a "just sense of well-being" (Keenan, Limone, & Sandoval, 2017). Practice methods are in the *service of* pursuing what is valued. Although many social work practitioners and educators would suggest that we've always thought about methods this way (e.g., O'Hare, 2009), the divides and debates between micro and macro seem to foreground method and sideline the values and purposes that would inform a solid assessment and corresponding method selection.

What the participants taught me are that micro and macro methods form a palette of possibilities that are selected and pursued because they become the means to enact and promote greater realization of respect, dignity, equity, fairness, and inclusion. Operating within particular possibilities and constraints (based on their practice context, work responsibilities, what they've seen modeled, etc.), social workers flexibly see (assess) and act (intervene) across method with varying systems, in pursuit of a "just sense of well-being." This appears to be done through individualized unifying views of practice or identity.

But could participants be suggesting more than a unified purpose grounded in the profession's values? Are those with a unifying view of practice or identity pointing to something more? What else is implied in such a vision? If there is a unified purpose, then there are likely similarities between and within micro and macro methods. Participants provided some preliminary ideas for similarities: viewing one's use of self as the same across methods, and commitment to values of respect, fairness, and inclusion. Reviewing recent scholarship leads me to speculate that there may also be a set of skills that would be similar (e.g., Hardina, 2013; McLaughlin, 2011). Both micro and macro competencies appear to include critical thinking, ethical decision-making, formulating assessments, identifying goals, evaluating processes and outcomes, and a whole host of interpersonal skills: engagement, group leadership, coordination, collaboration, advocacy, etc. Perhaps there are some common factors underlying all practice methods (Cameron & Keenan, 2010). Empirical research could provide potential support for the skills associated with the unifying views of use of self that participants reported. Conceptual strategies, such as the use of images like Venn diagrams could also disrupt the current binary divide between micro and macro methods by organizing overlapping similarities from which differences diverge.

So where does that leave the profession's thinking about micro and macro practice? Fundamentally, participants' views provided new points of entry into a long debate that has, unfortunately, simply reinforced the micro/macro divide. Their ability to practice out of unifying views of practice (e.g., "conduits for change") or identity ("the public servant who happens to have a private practice"), grounded in respect, fairness, and inclusion, provides a third option, a fresh angle for consideration.

Current scholarship also encourages such flexible, integrated thinking to increase impact. Anti-racism work, for example, uses an image of a "web of resistance" to capture how values inform learning and conversations. This multifaceted web promotes just spaces of encounter, opportunities to recognize and heal internalized oppression, and collective actions to challenge injustices within organizations, communities, and nations (Garran & Miller, 2015).

Trauma-informed systems of care are likewise making space for new possibilities of responsive practice across ecological levels (e.g., Bloom & Farragher, 2013). Scaffolding is another image being proposed within mental health and substance abuse to disrupt existing silos, shift what is foregrounded and backgrounded, and make space for additional possibilities to be imagined (Keenan & Grady, 2014). The social workers I spoke with sparked my creativity and supported my efforts to hold a "yes, and" stance that uses a flexible palette of possibilities for understanding enacted out of an integrated grounding in what social workers value. I was profoundly impacted by their experiences and am working to invite, model, and share practice

stories to broaden social workers' palettes of possibility beyond job descriptions and roles. In this digital age of new images and metaphors, perhaps the profession, too, can shift from dualities and micro/macro divides into palettes, webs, scaffolds, and networks that holistically frame thinking and actions in pursuit of a "just sense of well being" for all.

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Using the Nokota® Experience to Connect Individuals with Their Communities

Sarah L. Lieser

Abstract: This article is a brief history and explanation of the Nokota® Experience, a horsemanship clinic. It describes how individuals experience personal growth during a five-day clinic working with unhandled Nokota® horses and how it empowers them to become better individual leaders to serve their schools, communities, and organizations. Included are testimonials from students who have been impacted by their participation in the clinic and descriptions of how it has enhanced their ability to serve the world at large.

Keywords: Jack Lieser, Sarah Lieser, horsemanship, leadership, horses and leadership, Nokota® Experience, The Nokota Horse Conservancy®, trust, mastering one's energy, character building and personal growth with horsemanship, learningcircle.com

The goal of this article is to share with you the amazing changes that take place when individuals and a herd of horses come together and learn to communicate with one another. It is truly an amazing experience, hence the name, The Nokota® Experience!

> Working with Jack and the Nokota® horses last summer in North Dakota was a transformative experience for me. With Jack's guidance, each day I gained small insights about how I connect with my horse and the world. By the end of the week, those small insights had turned into a larger vision of how I could be more proactive in my life and take actions to create a positive impact in the lives of others, both human and horse. (Mari Rubens, RN, personal communication, November 2016)

> During the week I spent at the Nokota® Experience it became very apparent to me that there's a parallel between horse behavior and human behavior. A lot of the reaction I get both with horses and humans is caused by how I present myself. Through working with the horses Jack taught me how to be more aware of my body language and the effect it has on those around me. By the end of the week I had gained confidence in my own ability to handle my horse and human relationships with a clearer focus on the kind of leader I wanted to be. (Kathy Heise, personal communication, August 2016)

What Is the Nokota® Experience?

The Nokota® Experience is a horsemanship clinic that has grown over the past seven years into a personal development and leadership workshop. In its beginning stages, it was designed to help The Nokota Horse Conservancy®, which is based in Linton, North Dakota, get their horses gentled and ready for sale.

Jack Lieser, the professional horse trainer and instructor of the clinic, has a gift for teaching others how to establish relationships with the equine species. In the past Jack and I had organized "colt-starting" clinics together and decided that working with The Nokota Horse Conservancy® horses would be a fantastic opportunity for those who wanted to further their education in the language of the horse.

June 2009 was our first Nokota® clinic. Right away we began to realize Nokota® horses were special, possessing a heightened sensitivity that makes them perfect for the kind of work involved in our clinics. Clinic discussions were filled with insights and emotion. Students went through profound personal changes as they went through the steps of gentling an unhandled horse for the first time.

As the years progressed, we began to have a vision of the experience becoming a tool for change in peoples' lives and decided to incorporate the things we were learning in our personal lives about self-development and growth, along with leadership skills for organizations and communities.

The action of hosting the clinic itself has pushed us to learn more and be more by expanding our world as we begin to see ourselves as leaders. It has also shown us how relationships are vital to the success of any endeavor in life and that we are all connected in our team effort to help horses and humans.

What started out as one thing has developed into another, and at times it can be a bit mystical, as is true for the history of the Nokota® horses. The Nokota® horses have ties to the Lakota people, specifically to the honorable Chief Sitting Bull, whose horses were confiscated by the U.S. government in 1881 and dispersed in the area where the Nokota® breed originated in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota.

I believe that for those who participate in this experience, there is the powerful presence of Native American culture, both past and present, that must be acknowledged and remembered respectfully. What I find beautiful is how the horses somehow quietly convey this memory, causing us to reflect deeply about an important time in our history. One can't help but think they are helping impart some of the clinic's messages about communication and awareness through a connection with something higher for a definite reason at this point in time.

We conduct the clinic on the lush open prairie outside of Linton, ND. We work under the big sky, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the past, with tepee rings and other artifacts as not-so-distant reminders of those that walked there before. The horses are brought from their pastures into an enclosed area where they are kept for the duration of the five-day event. A tent is set up along the outside of the makeshift arena for auditors to sit and watch, and for participants to sit under during breaks for meals and discussion time.

I find it inspiring to be in this environment along with students from all over the world who want to learn the language of the beautiful Nokota® horses and who have the courage and willingness to be in the arena with 20-25 unhandled stallions who have just been separated out of their herd,

often for the first time. Their faith in Jack and his assistants to guide them and show them what to do is amazing. I believe it takes a certain amount of emotional intelligence just to enter into the space with an open and willing heart.

The horses often play and rise up on their hind legs, pawing at one another with their hooves while squealing loudly. It is a powerful and intimidating sight. The energy amongst them is palpable, demanding keen awareness from the humans inside the arena. This energy may remind participants and onlookers of the drama found in their workplace or, sadly for some, a home life where awareness is necessary for survival.

Jack teaches students to become aware of their energy level and to observe how it is affecting the horses. He shows them how to use their energy by moving it up and down on a dynamic scale to influence the horses. He does this at the beginning of each day by having them walk into and through the herd. According to Katherine Turpin, a two-time Nokota® Horse Experience participant:

> To walk through a herd of these very sensitive horses, we were encouraged to be aware of our energy and watch how the horses responded to it. It was my first inkling of my energy field. Walking through the herd was a fabulous opportunity to see how my energy directly impacted beings who are sensitive enough to reflect how 'big' (or 'small') our energy is. (Personal communication, May 2017)

This year, as one of the students walked through the herd, the horses immediately began to scatter. Chaos ensued because her energy was too strong and too directly focused. Jack had her soften and spread her energy in a more diffuse way, enabling her to walk through the herd to the other side of the arena while being accepted by the horses as non-threatening, but respected enough by them as not to push into her.

The opposite happened when a student went in with such low energy that she became almost invisible. Jack reminded her that in her personal life, she commands an audience as a speaker and teacher and to call upon the same energy she uses while on stage. Once she did this, the horses stopped pushing into her, respected her space and went about their business while accepting her as part of the herd.

This exercise is at the heart of the clinic. Each day the students grow in self-awareness and in their ability to influence the horses with their energy.

The Skill of Mastering One's Energy Is One that Many of the World's Greatest Leaders Possess.

In her book, *The Power of the Herd: A Nonpredatory Approach to Social Intelligence, Leadership, and Innovation* (Kohanov, 2015), Linda Kohanov points out that many of our nation's great leaders have also been exceptional horsemen. She uses George Washington as one example.

There are 13 character traits of horsemen and women listed in our Nokota® Experience Workbook (Lieser, 2016) that we feel are important to cultivate and be aware of throughout our interactions with the horses and each other. They are: humility, gratitude, patience, honor, generosity, kindness, strength, tranquility, trust, enthusiasm, order, awareness, and truth.

The workbook, which we co-wrote for this clinic, is our guide and journal. Each day, Jack leads discussion time with daily questions to reflect upon as the process of handling and relating to the horses begins. We believe asking ourselves the right questions will lead us to growth and self-discovery, so each day Jack has questions specific to that day's work.

Day One:
Who do you want to be for your horse? Who are you showing up as? What are your first impressions of the horses? What are the horses' initial reactions to you?

Day Two:
Are you aware of how your body language, energy, and emotions influence your horse?

Day Three:
What is your leadership style?

Day Four:
Are you developing consistency and good habits with your horse?

Day Five:
What will you take away from the Nokota® Experience?

Life Outside the Arena

Insightful questions like these, along with the work involved in the horse-gentling process, apply to life outside the arena. Once you have been part of the super-charged atmosphere that the clinic experience provides, the lessons begin to take hold in the real world. There is a newfound awareness as you begin to realize that the person you show up as with the horses is the person you show up as in your daily life.

The Nokotas® are masters at teaching us who we are. Some people believe that horses mirror the person that is working with them, but what I find is that horses are much like people, possessing their own distinct personalities and quirks.

When a person relates with a horse, the challenges that occur will often point out their strengths and weakness just like any relationship will. Horses cannot speak to us with words, so they require us to pay attention to the subtleties that might go unnoticed when interacting with humans. Trying to convince an unhandled stallion that he can trust you to put a rope around his neck and touch him demands intense awareness and quick decisions in order to make a connection and develop trust. Empowering, interesting and thrilling are words that come to mind when describing communication with these instinctual and perceptive creatures.

Two Different Approaches to Horses and to Life

In parting, I will share with you the story of two students and their very different approach to the horses, along with a word from Jack. I also encourage you to read the amazing history of the Nokota® horse (Nokotahorse.org) and the family and team of people dedicated to saving this rare breed.

Last year a young Lakota man who had no horse experience went into the clinic with a very open and accepting heart. In return, the horses were very accepting of him. He was able to connect and develop a relationship with his horse because he was unassuming. Oftentimes, if you go in with a strong agenda, the horses become resistant. There was an innocent curiosity in him that horses really responded to. He now has a job working with rescue horses, which was a dream for him before the clinic.

Another student came to the clinic with a preconceived idea about how the outcome with her horse should be. She was rigid in her thinking and had a fixed mindset, along with a very formulaic method about the way to work with a horse. The horse immediately felt pressured because the relationship was not being developed. She was so focused on the end goal and outcome that she overlooked what the horse needed. Her previous experience with horses led her to believe that she had nothing new to learn which led to a great a deal of frustration for her. One of the key factors of working with a horse is to stay open and flexible. These are the same attributes that are required for people to serve in other areas of their lives.

Who you are in life is who you will be with the horses.

Coming to Your Horse with Awareness: A Word from Jack

"The main thing I have found important when working with horses and people is awareness: Being aware of what they need, what they want, and how I can help them by staying flexible and using my energy in a dynamic way.

"There are times I have to be big, strong and very direct, or times when I need to be softer, lighter, and almost invisible. My ability to slide up or down that scale at a moment's notice is what has helped me as a horseman and coach.

"As humans we tend to get stuck somewhere on that scale, depending on our personality.

"My work is to help people become aware of their energy and to learn from the horses how to use this skill in their daily life, as they live and work with others in their families, organizations, and communities. It is my hope that they will discover their potential as a result."

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Animals as Agents to Inform the Intersection of Micro and Macro Practice

Maureen MacNamara

Abstract: Social work is my second career, but my childhood and first career experiences contributed to my realization of the ways in which the larger mezzo and macro systems can create barriers for individuals, making it difficult or even impossible for people to reach their full potential. This article explores how the existence of animals in human cultural, social, and emotional environments requires that all social workers develop a foundational understanding of the relevance of human-animal relationships to individual, family, and community well-being.

Keywords: animal-assisted interventions, human-animal relationships, macro practice, animal-assisted social work

Social work is my second career. My childhood and my first career experiences provided the bedrock in my understanding of the ways in which the larger mezzo and macro systems create barriers for individuals, such that it is difficult or even impossible for people to reach their full potential.

As a child with disabilities, I was prevented by school administrators from attending school and participating in school sports. Without input from my family or my physicians, school officials determined that participation would be "too difficult" for me. In more public areas such as the community swimming pool or the neighborhood playground, parents often pulled their children away, whispering, "Don't play with her, something is wrong with her." Even my church refused to allow me to attend catechism classes; the priest remarked that my presence could inspire the other children to question God's grace.

Although my family included me in every game and activity, no matter how rough and tumble, the clear message from others was that I was defective. In fact, "defective" was the label most often used to describe me. I had a heart defect, my heart was deformed, I had heart disease. At best I had a heart condition. This "condition" gave me a blue complexion, purple lips and clubbed fingers. Adults and children called me names, and the song "One-eyed, one horned, flying purple people eater" provided a lyrical chant to their harassment. (The creature's full description is "a one-eyed, one-horned, flying, purple people eater," the lyrics make it clear that this is a creature who eats purple people. Sheb Wooley (1958). Writer/s: S. WOOLEY; Publisher: DOTSON-WOOLEY ENTERTAINMENT; Lyrics licensed and provided by LyricFind.) As a result, I spent hours in self-imposed seclusion. I often locked myself in the bathroom and pinched my lips until they turned red, wondering what it would be like to be the right color. I could not understand why this color difference made people seem to hate or fear me.

My world was not, however, without friends, playmates, or confidants. Instead of people, I relied on animals for support, encouragement and understanding. The family pets—dogs, cats, and a

small pony—never excluded me. The dogs would happily sit by as I rested to regain my breath rather than leave me behind. Our family cat was a willing listener while I sobbed from the latest name-calling by neighborhood children. Instead of trying to make things better or dismissing my hurt feelings as foolish, her warm presence reassured me that I was loved, and her soft purr soothed hurt feelings. When I faced the fear and loneliness of frequent hospitalizations, my pony's halter, not a doll, gave me a sense of control and security.

For me, animals served as a great equalizer. With animals as partners I found that I was as capable as able-bodied children and even adults. Bike riding was an incredibly strenuous activity for me, but when I rode my pony I was able to keep up with other children as we rode for miles. Animal-related sports (i.e. horse jumping contests, dog coursing [racing] trials) showed me that I was capable, that I could be effective in my life. For example, horse shows gave me the opportunity to alter my self-perception as "disabled" and "not as good" to the "best" and "champion" as my horse and I won jumping contests.

Most importantly, animals provided me with access to community. When the neighborhood children learned that I had a pony they forgot about my differences, and they seemed to see me as a person. Of course they wanted to ride my pony, but I noticed that the conversation about the pony changed the way other children related to me. I noticed that gradually the conversation about the pony moved on to other topics. Over time friendships developed. The common interest in the pony bridged the divide between us.

I also began to question the difference between the behavior of people and the behavior of animals. This was a time when animals were considered to be mere automatons without feelings and possessing brains that responded mechanically to stimulation. However, I observed that animals cared for each other and even cared for members of other species. My dog licked my face when I cried. The cat often slept on the pony's back. I observed my dog and cat learning to play together. The cat sheathed her claws and the dog was careful in pouncing in their games of chase.

At the same time, the violence and determination of the civil rights movement was playing out on our television. I realized that discrimination based on an aspect of a person's physical appearance was occurring in a larger context than my own community. My world grew exponentially larger by watching the struggle of others and recognizing commonality with people I didn't know personally. I empathized with the anger and frustration I heard and witnessed on the television. I wondered why humans, who were supposed to be more "advanced" than animals, were so cruel to others because they looked different or had different customs.

These insights guided me in my first career as an equestrian coach. I worked with young riders who aspired to compete in the Olympics. I assisted competitors in developing their own skills and also in developing the skills of the horses they rode. To be competitive the young riders had to learn resiliency, patience, and communication. They had to bounce back and learn from defeat and to win with grace. I drew on my understanding of animal behavior and realized that the children were encountering developmental challenges similar to young animals with the

exception that the timeline for humans was more drawn out. Adolescent animals struggle to take on adult behaviors. For example, an adolescent kitten might work at catching a mouse but still runs back to its mother when frightened or hungry. Most of my riders were between the ages of 12-18, and I found that they too wanted to be independent and capable but needed reassurance and support when things went wrong.

During this time, I was also working with racehorses. At the time, the racehorse world was strictly men's purview. The world of the racetrack existed in an unspoken yet strictly enforced hierarchical arrangement; the high ranking, high paying role of trainer was reserved for white men, and the low ranking, low paying role of groom was reserved for men of color and women. I felt I could train horses as well as the men and couldn't understand why I was considered less capable just because I was a woman. However, this goal required me to, once again, negotiate systemic barriers to my participation. Rather than discrimination based on physical ability, now I faced discrimination based on gender.

Again, I reflected on my knowledge of animal systems. In herds the leader is the one deemed most capable. Large migratory herds of buffalo, elephants and others are led by older females that know where to find water and the best grazing areas. Males serve as guards to protect against other males or predators. With this knowledge, I persevered in my quest to become a licensed trainer by taking on horses rejected by male trainers as failures. Under my guidance many of those horses became winners. Finally, the men gave in and accepted my application for trainer. I became one of the first women licensed by the United States Trotting Association. This experience added to my understanding of feminism and gave me a new perspective of systemic oppression.

A turning point in my life came when I was offered a position as a high school vocational instructor for a horse science program. I imagined that the students in this program would be similar to the riders I coached. However, on the first day of the school year, a student threw a pitch fork at me when I asked him to clean up some hay. I soon realized that the school administration placed students in the program who were considered "bad actors." Today these students might be labeled "behaviorally and emotionally disordered" (EBD). The school administration reasoned that anyone could learn how to clean up after a horse.

After consulting with a friend who worked as a psychologist in a juvenile detention center, I placed students with the horse that most matched their behavioral profile. I reasoned that I could better coach them if the horse's response provided them with immediate feedback for their behavior. I matched the boy who threw the pitch fork at me with a particularly challenging colt. This colt had lots of energy and little self-control. He was hard to manage because he would snap and stomp when people worked around him. This adolescent horse resembled the adolescent boy, Jim (not his real name), as both challenged authority and were most likely to resist direction rather than follow it.

I monitored the interactions between Jim and the colt as the boy strove to teach the horse how to pull the race cart and cooperate with bathing and foot care. One day Jim was struggling to trim the horse's mane. Every time the boy reached toward the horse's head, the horse would shake his

head and rear up. As Jim became more frustrated he began to handle the colt roughly, jerking on the halter and shaking his fist. Rather than let them hurt each other, I offered to help. Jim glared down at me from his 6-foot-tall frame and said, "You think you can do this, you're too short." I agreed that I was short, but I bet him I could get the horse to put his head down. The boy laughed and handed me the clippers. With gentleness and soft reassuring words I enticed the horse to lower his head and I quickly trimmed his mane. The boy was astonished but wanted to recover his pride. "Well," he blurted, "that's a girlie way to do it." I smiled and explained that not everything needed to be a battle. I told him that if he wanted this horse to go fast on the track, then he had to get the horse to work with him, not against him.

Over the course of the next few months, I intervened in much the same way whenever Jim was beginning to respond to the colt's adolescent behavior with rough handling and anger. Each time the colt resisted direction, I modeled for Jim methods to encourage the horse to cooperate. At first Jim resisted direction, telling me those methods were "girlie" and too "kissy-face." However, Jim observed that the colt responded to clear direction and consistent handling. Jim noticed the difference and began little by little to alter the way he handled the colt. The interactions between the two became quiet and predictable. One day, after a particularly successful training session, Jim remarked that he realized that if he wanted to be a trainer, he had to get the horses to work with him and hitting them didn't work. I agreed and suggested people might respond the same way. Jim said he thought that might be true.

This young man went on to become a real leader in the class. Gradually, Jim dropped his machismo posturing and replaced it with leadership and self-discipline. He opened up to learning and helped classmates learn as well. The results of this change in focus and attitude were immediately apparent. The horse he battled with settled down and became, under his training, a first-rate race horse, and classmates who previously avoided Jim now came to him for help. It amazed me to see the changes in the students. I discovered that these adolescents who were expected to fail seemed to blossom by carefully matching horses and youth and scrupulously observing and guiding the interactions between them.

Given my personal experiences of pets as sources of significant social support I was intrigued with the link between people and their animals. As I was considering how I could best bring people and animals together, I learned of a group exploring "the human/animal bond." I attended a conference hosted by the group and met, to my surprise, academics, veterinarians and human service providers interested in the very same phenomenon. I was inspired by meeting the leader of the group, Leo Bustad, DVM. Leo listened with delight as I told him of the horse program and my experience working with challenging youth. He noted that I had extensive animal experience and suggested my next step should be to gain just as much knowledge and skill in human behavior.

I explored graduate programs in education and psychology, but my experience being labeled as defective made me uncomfortable with the psychological perspective that labeled behavior as pathology. The stories I heard from the youth in the horse program were full of loss, family, violence and neglect. I had trouble thinking of their behavior as pathological rather than as misplaced survival behavior. Through working with animals I was aware that survival is the

central concern. Animals arrange themselves in a variety of groups to ensure their survival. Taken out of context, many behaviors that are important to group success look maladaptive. For example, horses are adapted to stay with their herd (group). However, a rider may want to take a horse on a ride alone. The horse may try running back to be with its group. While this is an important survival behavior for the horse, it is considered bad behavior by riders and the horse may be labeled as a "problem."

Quite by accident I stumbled on the field of social work. I was delighted to read of social work's theoretical emphasis on person-in-environment. I was also taken with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) perspective on human ecology and systems theory. I was further delighted to discover the macro practice concentration offered by Columbia University. Given my personal experiences, I felt I could make a greater impact by working to change systemic barriers. Organizational and community theories were a good fit with my understanding and experience of animal community systems. Herds, packs and flocks are devised of different leadership structures and internal mechanisms, but all are organized to provide the group with food and security.

In one of my first jobs as a social worker I served as the executive director of a sexual assault crisis center. Agency clinicians confirmed that my understanding of traumatized animals could be applied to traumatized people. Reestablishing trust and encouraging new behaviors were primary goals for both. The work of the agency suddenly became front page news when a particularly high profile child sexual assault occurred. The perpetrator, a recent parolee on another assault charge, had assaulted and maimed a young boy. As it turned out, the perpetrator also had a history of animal abuse, and I was familiar with the nascent research supporting a link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence (Ascione, 1999). I contacted the researchers involved in this area of investigation and invited them to participate in a community training for human service workers and animal control staff to develop a method for cross reporting abuse. The researchers were happy to participate in one of the first cross trainings for human and animal welfare workers on the link between human violence and animal cruelty.

In the meantime, Leo Bustad and others I met at that small gathering about the human/animal bond had formed the Delta Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to exploring the role of pets in human lives. During the years that I attended graduate school and worked in those first positions as a social worker, Delta Society had grown and was poised to launch a national initiative to support research and program development in improving individual lives through contact with animal companions.

I was able to bring together my education in animal behavior and learning with my education in macro practice social work as vice president of programs for Delta Society. The macro practice aspects included advising and facilitating the work of multi-disciplinary teams such as the American Humane Association Task Force on Violence, the Bar of the City of New York regarding service animals and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the New York State Public Health Commission regarding regulations for pet animals in long-term care facilities. Work with these complex systems caused me to reflect more about the similarities between animal systems and human systems. Some of the community groups I worked with resembled a flock in which members shared leadership to accomplish a specific task and then disbanded.

Other groups were more similar to packs with strict hierarchical structures and a need for clear role definition. I believe understanding these parallels helped me become an effective and flexible facilitator.

I am most proud of my work on a nation-wide needs assessment to determine how to best introduce human service professionals to the impact of companion animals on human health and well-being. From the needs assessment, I created the Pet Partners program which became a model for animal-assisted intervention programs throughout the U. S. The one hundred plus professionals who collaborated on this project developed the terms "animal-assisted therapy" and "animal-assisted activities." The program changed the way we think about animals and people.

My position with Delta Society allowed me to consult with clinicians to discover the best way to create goal directed animal-assisted interventions. For example, I was contacted by an agency serving children with anxiety disorders. Still in its infancy, the program brought school children with a variety of social-emotional issues out to a small farm with the goal of helping children learn social skills. One child, Rudy (not his real name), was the source of a great deal of staff concern. Rudy was an eight-year-old boy, the youngest of three siblings. He lived with his mother and brothers, but no father was present in the home. Rudy was failing in school work, had no friends, and was often the target of bullies. The staff were afraid to include Rudy in the horse program as he refused to listen to directions and had to be physically restrained from chasing the horses. I assisted the clinicians in identifying clear goals for Rudy's involvement at the farm. Thus the goals for Rudy were the development of self-control and increased positive interactions with peers.

I reasoned that Rudy's unpredictable behavior presented a risk for working around horses, but pairing him with a highly tolerant older horse would not provide the kind of feedback that would encourage him to change his behavior. Rudy needed to be matched with animals that could provide him with immediate feedback without the danger of hurting him if they became frightened and ran away. Based on this analysis and my knowledge of animal behavior, I brought a small flock of Icelandic sheep to the farm for Rudy's next visit. Icelandic sheep offered a number of advantages for work with Rudy. First, they were small. Adult Icelandic sheep weigh about 100 to 200 pounds as compared to the 400 to 500 pounds for many other breeds of sheep. If Rudy scared these small sheep, he was less likely to get hurt. Furthermore, the sheep I selected were very friendly if approached slowly and quietly. Second, Icelandic sheep have a variety of wool colors including black, white, brown, grey and spotted. This would help Rudy recognize individuals so the staff could direct him towards a specific animal.

When Rudy arrived at the farm, he was given the task of feeding "Lucy" her favorite food. Despite directions to approach the small brown sheep slowly, Rudy took off chasing the sheep with the bucket of feed. After twenty minutes of running back and forth across the sheep pen, Rudy was breathless. I asked him if he would like some help. Frustrated and tired, Rudy accepted my help. I encouraged Rudy to sit in the straw with me and set the bucket down in front of us. All the running had made Lucy hungry and she immediately approached the bucket. Of course Rudy jumped up to pet her and Lucy dashed away. After several more attempts, Rudy

was able to control himself long enough for Lucy to eat some of the feed.

Over the next weeks the staff built on Rudy's success, helping him gain more patience and understanding of others' needs. The staff used the interaction between Rudy and the sheep to help him see how his behavior influenced others. In addition, working with the sheep provided Rudy with opportunities to experiment with new ways of behaving. And just as my pony had become a topic to draw children to me, Rudy's work with the sheep became a focal point from which he was able to make friends with other children at the farm and eventually at school.

I have spent over twenty years pioneering the inclusion of animals in social work practice. However, I find that the social work profession rarely acknowledges the countless places where human and animal needs, experiences, and rights intersect. According to Risley-Curtiss (2010), only seven of 230 schools of social work in the United States include human-animal relationship (HAR) content in curricula, marking an absence of animals in foundational training for professional social workers. The existence of animals in human cultural, social, and emotional environments requires that all social workers develop a foundational understanding of the relevance of human-animal relationships to individual, family, and community well-being. Animals, and the shifting values regarding the place and consequence of animals in rapidly changing client populations, are steadfastly embedded in all levels of our communities. Given ongoing calls for culturally competent practice, fully integrating human relationships with animals into micro, mezzo, and macro level social work practice is not only timely, but critical (Moga and MacNamara, 2014).

Animals can be a key to bridging the divide between micro and macro practice. Consider the trend in which domestic violence prevention agencies are establishing partnerships with animal welfare organizations to provide outreach, community education, and policy development to address the link between animal abuse and family violence (Ascione, 2005). In the United States, there are numerous collaborations between social services and animal welfare agencies to provide safe haven for the pets of domestic violence victims. Additionally, efforts to develop cross-reporting protocols where human issues and animal issues intersect are growing (Long, Long & KulKarni, 2007).

Social workers in all levels of practice should advocate for informed policy regarding animal welfare and care, particularly because animal welfare is linked to individual, community, and public health. In times of natural- and human-made disaster, the lack of integration between micro level needs and macro level policies becomes more crucial as people are often forced to choose between their own health/safety and the health/safety of their animal companions. The costs of this gap in terms of mental and public health are well documented and include evacuation failure in times of disaster (Brackenridge, Zottarelli, Rider, & Carlsen-Landy, 2012; Heath, Kass, Beck, & Glickman, 2001) and an increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder among disaster survivors who are forced to leave animals behind (Hunt, Al-Awadi & Johnson, 2008).

The rapid proliferation of animal-assisted interventions in mental health programs is an additional area of concern. These interventions appear to be driven by the ardent faith of

practitioners and supporters who believe that these interventions work even in the absence of consistent efficacy data. Researchers and clinicians sometimes accentuate the positive by discussing the beliefs of subjects based on anecdotes, despite empirical evidence that the animal-assisted interventions had no measurable beneficial effect. For example, in a study on the impact of pets on individuals with chronic fatigue syndrome, Wells (2009) emphasized that subjects felt that their pets improved their health even though three quantitative measures found no evidence of any impact of pets on physical symptoms or psychological health of their owners.

It is my impression that practitioners who are interested in animal-assisted interventions use such reports to reinforce their beliefs about the value of animal-assisted interventions. However, more skeptical audiences, such as administrators of budgets who might fund animal-assisted interventions or research, require a higher standard to begin to endorse the use of nontraditional therapies. Moreover, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that socialization and culture play an important role in determining the efficacy of any intervention. Not all people have warm associations with animals, and may indeed find their presence to be stress inducing. It should not be expected or implied that including animals will be appropriate or beneficial for all individuals.

While anecdotal accounts, such as those described above, are intriguing, it is quite another matter to raise the empirical question of whether animal-assisted interventions can ameliorate social, emotional, behavioral adjustment problems and diagnosable psychiatric disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression, conduct disorders). As many investigators have pointed out, evidence for the efficacy of animal-assisted interventions still does not rest on a firm empirical foundation (see Kazdin, 2011). Notably, in a meta-analysis of animal-assisted interventions, Nimer and Lundahl (2007) concluded that animal-assisted interventions showed promise as an additive to established interventions and suggested that future research investigate the conditions under which animal-assisted interventions could be most helpful. The authors did, however, concede that although the quality of studies in this area has improved, providers including animals in clinical settings should consider the possibility that poor research is not necessarily preferable to no research.

Finally, fully understanding of the role of animals in people's lives requires more than personal experience as a pet owner. Still, the vast majority of practitioners who choose to integrate animals in practice depend upon informal mechanisms of knowledge distribution (networking amongst peers and personal relationships with animals)—not graduate or post-graduate training—to inform their clinical reasoning and practice methods (Risley-Curtiss, Rogge & Kawam, 2013). Of concern is the trend for organizations, communities, and even local governments to offer—and sometimes mandate—these programs despite the lack of specific program goals, outcome expectations, and coherent practice methods (MacNamara & Butler, 2010). Formal training in the many ways animals inhabit social, emotional, physical and spiritual worlds is necessary to combating reductionism and completely serving the individuals and communities in which social workers practice (Moga & MacNamara, 2014).

It is incumbent upon social workers, particularly with our discipline's focus on systems thinking and evidence based practice, to propel change in the form of the implementation of

evidence-based social work practice inclusive of human-animal relationships. For social workers to consistently acknowledge and respond to system challenges that include animals as a central rather than peripheral component of the human social landscape, the discourse among social workers must move beyond that of pets and animal assisted therapies. While both are potentially important and useful, this narrow focus leaves out those for whom animals are not companions, but sources of basic life support, economic health, professional partnership, and social exchange. Of critical importance is the acknowledgment that supporting the human-animal relationship requires attention to the many resources (including social, physical, and financial) required to support these relationships in healthy, life-long ways.

As people become more isolated, less trustful of diversity, and as they live longer, it is vital that social workers at all levels of practice attend to the ways human/animal relationships serve as either a door, or a barrier, to the provision of basic services. Most important, however, is the premise that expanding the human social landscape to include animals is an ethical, practical, and just approach to improving the services we offer. When viewed from this perspective, access to animals and the natural environment becomes an issue of social justice (Moga & MacNamara, 2014).

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Herd to Horse: A Focus from Macro to Micro, Lessons from the Nokota® Horse

Christine Carapico McGowan

Abstract: The Preserve for Nokota® horses in Chester Springs, PA was founded in 2011 to celebrate the Nokota® breed of North Dakota, their remarkable personalities, and their exquisite, intimate language. The focus of The Preserve is to share the unique qualities and universal language of the Nokota® horse to ignite well-being, confidence, and partnership in human beings. The Preserve is where individuals learn to share in school, community, family or employee teams with authenticity, curiosity and clear leadership. It is shown through the wisdom of the horse communicating within the "herd." Join hands and hooves of the human and horse to create one magical herd with "one head and one tail."

We treasure the gifts shared by the Nokota® horse at The Preserve in Chester Springs: Those gifts heal hearts, minds, souls—the replacement of addiction with passion and anxiety with calm, positively embracing harmony and peace and partnership, all taught from the language of the horse within its herd.

Nokota® is a registered trademark of Nokota Horse Conservancy, Inc.

Keywords: Nokota® horse, Chief Sitting Bull, equine wisdom, equine language, non-verbal communication, herd mentality, equine therapy

Wild and Mild, Lessons from the Herd

A Road Less Traveled

The inspiration for The Preserve in Chester Springs was born from long roads of personal reflection. An eating disorder which controlled most of a 40-year-old woman's life became the impetus of a journey to heal. She sought to begin with the last place she felt okay, where time passed without measure, where she felt safe to step into a moment without overthinking, reviewing or revising. That place was a memory of endless summer days spent with her equine friends. She needed to recapture that peace, that place. The equine wisdom she would reveal from those happy memories would light an answer to her heart's calling.

Little did this woman, her family or her horses know that she would discover a dialect of equine language which could be interpreted and shared! And perhaps this dialect would include a language which spoke of inherent peace. And with this translation would come an arsenal of healing and gentle emotions that could build and replace negative and self-destructive voices, peaceful emotions which could replace fear and fraud with confidence and authenticity. The more time spent with her equine professors, the more clear language integrated into her vocabulary. Calm replaced confusion and secured a reserve of peace to reassess the unapproachable patterns and overwhelming conditions that seemed insurmountable before. The

future could now be equipped with skills to manage life's challenges and turns, thereby avoiding trauma and pain.

With passionate determination and focus she completely shifted her life to reflect this mission. The next 40 years would be devoted to the discovery of how to manifest the peace and the essence of equilibrium that the human condition fails for so many. She would start with the horse and its mystical, magical offering. The horse leads deeper, to the exceptional Nokota® horse and herd that run free and have the most exquisite equine language perfectly intact. Years of independence from human intervention and self-preservation have kept the Nokota® as true to their original language and social structure as possible, making them a fantastic study. This equine language houses the "je ne sais quoi"—the secret of authenticity and the celebration of the micro self held safely in the macro herd. While discovering her own healing and peace, she was able to script the NPCS program for emotional well-being. The program is structured on tiny successes which increase with each visit. The effect is to quiet the client's negative voices and to raise the volume of the herd's voices and wisdom. Working with the horses, specifically the Nokota®, give many the emotional sustenance and library of positive emotions to manifest healthy self-esteem, joy and happy outcomes in real life circumstances.

The Magnificent Nokota® Horse

These spectacular horses are the last of Sitting Bull's War Pony. Sitting Bull was a medicine man, a great peacemaker and a master horseman. The qualities he treasured for his horses included their adaptive, willing, curious, calm, communal traits, the makings of super emotional intelligence we seek as humans. The horses were recognized with a DNA test at Harvard University as the last of Sitting Bull's herd, and they lived as a feral band for many years in what is currently Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Nokota® are affectionately known as the "Labrador Retrievers of the Horse World," friendly and smart with a wonderful sense of humor. These traits are easily and subconsciously adopted by humans with mere association, and the horses radiate as well as mirror honesty and authenticity thereby supporting a beautiful, healthy herd. Leaders of the horse world and human world alike, who rise to the top by natural order to lead with calm, clear, kind, authority—whether to lead on the pasture or playground or the courtroom podium—there is much to learn from these gentle, wild and mild creatures. The idea of sharing time and gentle moments with these majestic horses is the core and the success of the therapeutic Nokota® at The Preserve in Chester Springs: The leadership qualities they embody become more and more apparent within ourselves as the Nokota® teach us to become more authentically human.

A Herd with One Head and One Tail

To relate this to bridging the micro and macro divide, we must think personally (ourselves, our family and our relationships), and then consider our herd (all the other horses, and our schools, neighborhoods and communities). The feral horse philosophically manages the herd to ultimately care for the horse in its community. What can we adopt of the horse's wisdom with a herd designed with meticulous care and attention to detail, a herd which quietly comes together to support the whole, one head and one tail? The herd becomes one: A group of two or more

formed in delicate union to create a mercurial safety and to harmonize. Exquisitely designed to celebrate equilibrium or "nothingness," the individual members are perfectly at peace with their unspoken roles and rules. The only sign of unrest is in a member struggling to discover his placement in the herd or who is immature and learning from those elders before him. If a member of the herd is drawing too much attention to itself—thereby threatening the safety of the whole—the lead horse will banish and isolate the animal until it is no longer producing a threat to itself and others. Isolation is death to the horse. There is a moment of permission asked and granted for reentry. Imagine our "world human herd" working in tandem to create this "nothingness", a structure supporting the whole with one head and one tail, moving together always, forward towards ultimate peace.

Suggestions from the Herd to the Individual, Macro Magic

At the NPCS we strive to show the beauty of the herd both conceptually and literally. The individual horses who make up the herd form a perfect parallel to the individuals who make up family units, communities and systems. Through time spent with the horse and time spent with the herd we are reminded of the interdependent relationship of the herd and its members. The emotional health of the singular horses defines the health of the herd. We see this illustrated with two unique friends of the NPCS: "Timmy" and "April." Timmy is a 12 year-old boy whose social awkwardness escapes singular diagnosis and isolates him from his herd—his community and friends—and April is an 8 year-old autistic child who struggles to fit into her herd of family, friends and school.

In the Case of Timmy

Timmy is highly intelligent, kind and empathic. He and his family celebrate his "special way" with animals. Timmy's behaviors with people often render him unsocial and hard to engage with others. Ultimately, Timmy's body language makes him appear awkward and contributes to his isolation from his community at school and in the world. Timmy is unaware of his awkwardness and the disconnection it creates around him. What he notices is that he feels misunderstood and alone in his "herd." The public school system magnified Timmy's suffering and lack of confidence by asking him to leave with a financial trust to support education elsewhere. This was a huge failing in our community's efforts to care for one of it's individual members.

Timmy spends most of his waking hours gaming, where he is not confronted with the loneliness of feeling misunderstood and disconnected. The virtual team players are unaware of Timmy's body language, which reads so differently from his peers. It is in effect self-medicating and self-soothing for him to hide from being present. While safe behind the screen, Timmy's daily routine is becoming less social and less personal. He yearns for friends, understanding and sharing. Fortunately, Timmy's mother was aware of his pain and sought to engage him beyond the gaming screen.

When Timmy arrived at the NPCS, we recognized his sensitivity for animals immediately. Our first course of action was to let the horse envelop him into their herd. Now within a nuzzling and curious group of new friends who are reading Timmy for his heart's authenticity and not social

labeling, Timmy began to laugh and laugh. The horses literally were following him around in play. Timmy's affect had no bearing on the Nokota's® inclusion of this tender boy into their herd. Timmy immediately went from isolation and feeling very hesitant to participating to not wanting to leave the horse's pasture. The "herd medicine" translated successfully to "self-confidence" and "success."

It would now be up to Timmy to reach to his new found self-esteem and feelings of inclusion, and decide which of his own traits are creating the community to accept him. The hope would be that this new language of confidence and esteem would begin to be incorporated into Timmy's own body and carry over into his day-to-day interactions with his human herd.

And that is what happened. After two years, Timmy returned to a regular school program where he engaged friendships, and he now laughs with sincere joy more than ever. The sensitivity of Nokota® feral herd language allows Timmy to feel inclusion. He is participating in a system of "one head and one tail" micro skills, towards placement within a macro herd/community. This gives Timmy the confidence to share his life and reengage as a healthy young adolescent. He is learning skills to resist old patterns of isolation, hurting and confusion and to replace them with feelings of inclusion, calm joy and understanding.

In the Case of April

April is an 8-year-old sensitive, lovely, young lady who inspires the horses as much as they inspire her. April's favorite mare, "Moon," is a stunning steel grey shining star. The mare embraces her role as leader, or alpha, and shares her wisdom with April's wisdom on a weekly basis. Static and inauthenticity trouble April in the classroom, her home and in her environment as a whole; Moon struggles with the same. She is ever-seeking calm and quiet, and she celebrates the magical wisdom of "nothing." "Nothing" is a feeling of balance and removal of life's pressure which can so often act as relief or "release" to those who suffer from sensitivity to imbalance. It is the very goal of every horse to maintain this essence, and they strive to disconnect and associate behavior which will lead to this release at all times. If April is overwhelmed she will appear to be stuck in a stare or daydream until she can rejoin on her own terms.

Both Moon and April are hyper-sensitive to input and static and are highly empathic. April is often overlooked or shunned by her shallow and emotional peers as strange and over-functioning. Moon enjoys April's sensitivity and strives to mirror April with her attention to details such as the tiniest fly perching on her leg and the shiver that dislodges it. April hears a distant crow—unheard by others—which Moon points out to her with a shift of ear focus. The language is purely non-verbal and quite soothing to those lost on empty words. The two share and enjoy far beyond the predictable Disney realm of most childhood entertainment. The details absorbed by this lovely herd of two are received, acknowledged, shared and rebalanced—details which would be largely lost on regular people and even most domestic horses.

The isolation April feels in her world as a little girl is joyously encircled by an understanding and empathic herd and community spirit. In the therapeutic environment it takes only two to

form a herd: one human, one horse. The Nokota® has the clearest and most sensitive language to offer the human with an undiluted script exquisitely preserved over time and without interference. Nokota® carry a wisdom beyond years of traditional talk therapy, often putting themselves out of business with one or two sessions. April is a dynamic inspiration to the investigation of this magical, empathic path. April is nearly fully non-verbal, which appears to outsiders to send her deeper into her private world. However, the silent missives exploding between Moon and April lead us to ask: How may we adopt this macro intelligence, this non-verbal language of the horse and the comfort supplied by the herd, so that the individuals are embraced, included and comforted within the context of a family or community?

Moon greets April at the gate with each visit; they both lower their eyes and bow to each other, exchanging breath. The race between these two delicate souls is to be the first to offer "draw" or softness to the other. Neither exhibits nor chooses to apply pressure to the other but to offer a haven and a joining between two spirits. Both mare—representing the wisdom of the herd—and child seek to nurture the other with acceptance and offering of selfless partnership. Piercing eye contact and isolation feels like too much pressure to both mare and child. However, the exchange of breath and touch and lowering of energy as they embrace each other's aura is a lesson in itself as they balance each other and become as one, essentially their own self-supporting and gentle herd. April and Moon celebrate their visits without time and place. They are completely present and in the moment.

Equus, Sharing the Unspoken Language

For the individual clients, the "mild" language of the "wild" equine becomes a gentle and powerful translation of equine wisdom shared from the horse to the human. The herd gives the security and comfort so necessary for an individual to feel understood and secure within community, the macro supporting the micro in a canopy of healing hearts and hands. In circle, the woman's journey to heal her addiction to food and pain has been realized in the exquisite language of the horse and the social support of the herd. Ten years later, children like Timmy and April are blessed with an early introduction to the healing equine language of trust and truth offered to support their life's journey. The hope is the wisdom of the horse can be shared early and often and will be found within human community—with or without the physical horse herd—as the language becomes more and more known. It is small wonder that the equine therapeutic industry is fast growing and dynamic as we learn more about the language of the horse and specifically the communal and magnificent "wild" but "mild" Nokota® horses.

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Bridging the Gap Between Micro and Macro Practice to Address Homelessness in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region: Implications for Practitioners and Community Stakeholders

Eva M. Moya, Silvia Maria Chavez-Baray, Omar Martinez, Brian Mattera, and Courtney Adcox

Abstract: Research and scholarship efforts continue to promote the integration of micro and macro practice in social work practice and education. Despite this, scholarship has documented persistent challenges in the fluid integration between the domains of micro-level service provision and macro-level social change efforts in practice and academic programs. This paper outlines a successful bridge between the micro-macro divide in the form of community-engaged practice to address homelessness and social work education in the U.S.-Mexico border region. MSW students enrolled in a macro-level course at the University of Texas at El Paso's College of Health Sciences successfully partnered with the Opportunity Center for the Homeless, a grassroots community-based organization serving individuals experiencing homelessness. The narrative describes how students were effectively able to apply both micro- and macro-level skills learned in the classroom to an experiential learning environment while providing much-needed assistance to an underfunded community-based organization. A set of challenges and recommendations are also discussed. Research initiatives are needed to evaluate and test clinical and community work initiatives, including the use of photovoice methodology to address homelessness, while being responsive to community needs and challenges.

Keywords: homelessness, micro and macro social work practice, photovoice, community-engaged practice

Introduction

In concert with the profession's fundamental mission to enhance the well-being of all people and pursue social justice, social workers are trained to operate and foster change at multiple levels of practice. Social workers intervene on the micro level to promote the well-being of individuals, groups, and families, as well as the macro level to influence policy and address social injustices in the community, organizations, and broader society (Burghardt, 2014; Reisch, 2017). Indeed, the dual approach of providing individual service and promoting social change is a defining characteristic of the social work profession, and undoubtedly shaped by the profession's origins in grassroots community organizing. Despite this, connecting these two levels of intervention in theory and in practice has been a persistent challenge for the profession, and the perceived dichotomy between micro and macro practice continues to hinder the fluid integration of practice levels in generalist social work education (Fogel, & Ersing, 2016; McBeath, 2016).

Integrating social services and social change has been of particular interest for grassroots social change movements, as participants have been consistently faced with the challenge of providing social services to communities while maintaining their identity as social change agents (Moya, Stoesz, & Lusk, 2015). Contrary to frequent usage, macro social work is not 'indirect practice'

(Reisch, 2017). All social workers, regardless of practice area, work within the context of communities and organizations that are affected by the larger social environment and social policies (Soska, Gutierrez, & Santiago; 2016; Binder, 2007; Rodriquez, 2007). As such, there is a critical need within social work education to impart the fundamental macro practice skills of the social work profession into field practice, the classroom, and the community to create a more equitable balance between clinical practice, policy practice, and advocacy.

The present narrative describes the development of an experiential social work course designed to bridge the gap between micro and macro practice by using community-engaged scholarship strategies to address homelessness from a cause and case lens. Through this program, graduate students were able to integrate and apply micro and macro skills outside the classroom, while fostering collaboration between the university, key stakeholders, community organizers, and service consumers themselves.

The Course

As part of their graduate education, MSW students at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) are required to enroll in a Multicultural Macro Practice course, which prepares generalist social work practitioners for leadership roles within communities and organizations. In the course, students are challenged to employ a 'big picture' perspective that explores micro-level issues 'outside the box' and focus on the prevention of problems (Reisch, 2017). Students are introduced to macro practice as an embodiment of social work's commitment to social justice and change by addressing fundamental barriers and promoting structural solutions to systemic inequalities and oppression that go beyond individual adaptation and resilience (Stepney & Popple, 2008; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

The course emphasizes that community engagement, social justice, enhanced relationships between community partnerships, and advocacy are required to bridge the divide between micro and macro social work practice. Students are encouraged to analyze how macro social workers play a role in transforming private troubles into public issues, as well as how to translate awareness of these issues into concrete policies and programs, with multi-level interventions at the individual, family and community levels (Mosley, 2017; Panwar, Nybakk, Hansn & Pinkse, 2016). The course provides an understanding of how community structures and processes affect the design and delivery of social services; how to foster and fortify collective efforts to empower individuals and families; and how to recognize how multi-faceted issues affect diverse communities differently (Traube, Begun, Okpych, & Choy-Brown, 2016).

As a faculty member in the Department of Social Work at UTEP who instructs this course, I am consistently confronted with the challenge of connecting levels of practice, classroom learning, and field experience, a challenge that is echoed by many of my colleagues. Every semester, I am reminded that the micro-macro divide is indeed not isolated to practitioners and researchers. With each new cohort of MSW students enrolled in the course, the stark contrast between the strictly clinical students, who bemoan policy and macro courses, and those strictly macro students, who would not dare enroll in a course on either clinical assessment or assessment and

intervention of their own volition, becomes quickly apparent. Throughout my experiences in teaching this course, it has been clear that for many students, engendering a sense of fluidity between micro and macro practice—in other words, 'bridging the gap'—is best achieved outside the classroom.

In Fall of 2013, I invited a guest lecturer working in the field of social work to share his story and experience with the students. What began as a 'typical' guest lecture, however, quickly transformed into an opportunity to bridge the micro-macro divide, an opportunity I had long awaited.

The Guest Lecture

When I extended the invitation for Ray Tullius (Ray), founder and executive director of the Opportunity Center for the Homeless (OC), to conduct a guest lecture about the mission of the organization that he leads, the lecture was intended to simply provide students with a real-life example of macro-level, grassroots community organizing. Eventually, this developed into a much more profound, hands-on reimagining of macro social work education.

Ray began his lecture with the phrase, "A new social worker can move mountains," and reminded the students that young professionals like them can make lasting differences. Immediately, Ray captured the students' attention with his own personal journey of homelessness and resilience:

> I was first introduced to homelessness in the 1980s, after a series of medical and emotional health crises that I suffered. I lived in the streets and in a homeless shelter and through the hospitality of friends. I knew that I wanted to help others facing similar circumstances. During my stay at the Rescue Mission [a Christian-based shelter for homeless adults in El Paso, Texas], I realized that homelessness was complex and that helping other people like me and my wife would require additional skills and expertise. I complained repetitively to the director of the shelter that the services of the facility were not appropriate and that the staff was not always sensitive to the needs of the poor. The director got so tired of my critiques that one day he turned to me and said, "Well Ray, fix it." (Personal communication, December 12, 2016)

And so, Ray shared, he took the first step and enrolled at UTEP, ultimately earning a Bachelor of Social Work degree and trained as a generalist. When discussing his experience as an undergraduate, Ray's feelings toward macro-level courses echoed those of the 'strictly clinical' faction of students, stating, "I must confess that I disliked the macro and the policy courses. I saw a huge divide between micro and macro practice and became quite impatient in the classroom and outside of it." Throughout his course work, Ray shared his continued frustration with how homeless populations were treated and how policymakers continually failed to adequately address the issues underlying homelessness.

This frustration ultimately grew into action when Ray convened a coalition of community

partners to move forward in establishing a "one stop shop," or day resource center for people experiencing homelessness. Ray described conducting a series of community forums with members of the homeless community. He reflected, "You could say that this was our first macro practice experience." As instructor, my urge to interrupt and point out a crowning example of the connection between micro and macro practice was overshadowed by Ray's intriguing lecture. He continued to describe his journey:

> The El Paso Community College came on board and applied for funding to the state to develop an occupational opportunity center for the homeless. We initially had the center at the College but it did not really work, so my friend [a real estate agent] found us a community site. Shortly thereafter, realizing that to legitimize my work with home-free populations as a social worker, I needed to re-enter the world of practice and graduate education and despite facing academic and health challenges, I went back to school and got a Master's in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993. (Personal communication, December 12, 2017)

The students were inspired by his personal story and were discovering and reaffirming the interconnection of the case and the cause (Rothman, 2013; Abramovitz, 1998) of Ray's personal story of homelessness and professional social work practice. Mr. Tullius had already touched on the micro-macro divide that continually presented itself in social work education and practice; the class was intrigued and moved, and students wanted to know more about how social workers like Mr. Tullius bridged the dichotomy of micro and macro practice. He continued with his narrative:

> Let's go back to the dream of establishing a resource center for the homeless and recommendations from the homeless community. The homeless people helped us piece the model together. They defined the services that they wanted to have in this facility. I realized that theory and practice are essential to the macro social work practice. I listened to many stories, talked to many people, and in partnership with El Paso Community College, helped secure funds to start the center. Lily [Ray's wife] and I opened the doors to the Opportunity Center in January of 1994 with little more than brewed coffee and crumbs of doughnuts, hoping that no one would freeze in the cold nights. The first day we opened, only three persons came in. The second night it was five, by the third week we had close to a hundred. (Personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Students were quickly able to contextualize not only the connection between levels of practice, but were also given a glimpse into the fundamental basis of grassroots organizing: an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals informing large-scale social action to address structural inequities endured by the population. Ray continued to share how the center continued to grow, attributing much of the agency's success to the persons whom the OC served:

> As rapport with homeless people grew, I began to understand that each person had their own strengths. Essentially, the homeless were able to run the homeless shelter and gain experience, self-worth, and dignity. The assets that the homeless contributed were

> bountiful. In 2002, a homeless grant writer was able to secure funding through the Veterans Administration to create one of the OC's shelters for Veterans. As funds grew, so did the Opportunity Center's services and residential facilities. With the new facilities arising, the Board of Directors of the Coalition for the Homeless was mainly focused on the growth of the Opportunity Center. The competition between other homeless shelters for funds created hostility, which ultimately led to the separation of the Opportunity Center from the Coalition in 2002 and the development of its own Board of Directors. (Personal communication, December 12, 2016)

The reduction of state and federal funds to address homelessness, the redirection of federal funds to support the Housing First model, and the loss of mental health funding for vulnerable populations created a significant competition for scarce funding among homeless shelters. When funding for vulnerable populations is limited and fragmented, tension is frequently encountered among grassroots community organizations and other nonprofits. Yet again, however, Ray's story proved the interrelatedness between micro and macro practice; that is, a lack of resources at the macro level - in the form of funding allocations reducing the scope of services available to individuals experiencing homelessness. Funding cuts experienced by the OC caused the organization to reduce social services and transportation and end the youth program.

Ray concluded the lecture by reflecting on the OC's growth, the work that still needs to be done, and his own personal investment as a person with experience of homelessness:

> We have come a long way, yet much more needs to be done. Through the community's support over the years, the initial shelter, comprised of simply walls, a floor, and a roof with few amenities, has grown to four emergency shelters and six residential facilities to include both transitional and permanent housing. I call my work "recovery through service," and I have watched other homeless people recover by helping other homeless people. With a strong faith, and work cut out for us, I believe that my own personal recovery can be mitigated through continuously affecting social work change in the areas of homelessness in my community. (Personal communication, December 12, 2016)

By sharing his experiences with the class, students were able to contextualize the course's key concepts, and understand the awareness, knowledge, and competencies needed to address the multidimensional nature and impact of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma. Using Ray's story as a framework for bridging the micro-macro gap, students began to discuss and address how social and economic justice are central values of the social work profession at all levels of practice.

From Micro to Macro

Ray's micro-level experience allowed students and I a glimpse into the challenges associated with addressing the needs of the homeless - both at the micro and macro levels - as well as the social injustices that prevail in the El Paso community. Using Ray's experience as a starting point, I began to conduct literature reviews to explore the 'big picture,' and identified a series of

social and economic injustices to humanize people experiencing homelessness, mitigate the invisibility of homelessness, enhance professional competencies, and respond to the needs of diverse populations. Several key structural, environmental, and contextual factors came to light as a result of this research. Suitable housing and health and human services were identified as critical for individuals at risk of homelessness and for those that are chronically homeless (Fox et al., 2016).

Analysis of the historical and contemporary perceptions of people experiencing homelessness revealed that traditionally, homelessness has been conceptualized as a poverty-related problem (Aykanian & Lee, 2016; Roos, Bjerkeset, Sondenaa, Antonsen & Steinsbekk, 2016). Within the larger social environment, people experiencing homelessness have been viewed as deviant, immoral, and in need of care or recovery. In particular, behaviors associated with chronic and street homelessness, such as panhandling and public drinking, have triggered negative perceptions of homeless populations from the early 1900s (Aykanian & Lee, 2016; Schiff, 2015).

Persons experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable and socially excluded, and they often find it difficult to access the services they need. Homelessness has been identified as one of the most extreme forms of social exclusion, and is associated with poor health outcomes for adults and children (Carson, Powis, & Imperato, 2016).

Nationwide in 2014, more than 1.48 million people stayed in a homeless shelter for at least one night, and almost two-thirds of them were individuals who were not part of family units (Greer, Shinn, Kwon, & Zuiderveen 2016). In El Paso, Texas in 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2016), about 24%, or a total of 194,470 persons, lived below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Due to the highly transient nature of those unhoused, it is difficult to determine whether or not the number of homeless individuals falls solely under that same percentage in El Paso living under the poverty line. However, the 2016 Point in Time Survey conducted by the local Coalition for the Homeless revealed that a total of 1,227 homeless persons were counted on any given night during the January survey of the region (El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, 2016).

From Micro to Macro: Program Inception

From the micro experience that led the OC director to macro practice with homeless populations, and the research conducted thereafter, comes a reimagining of the MSW Macro practice course: one that is grounded in a ‘community of learning’ model. Once immersed in the research, I adapted the syllabus to create a more experiential macro practice and social action course for students. The macro course classroom became the Opportunity Center of the Homeless in the Fall of 2014, when the students visited the OC for a lecture presentation with Ray Tullius. Just earlier that morning, Ray had learned of a severe loss of funding, close to $450,000 to his budget. Unsurprisingly, this news was devastating to the OC.

Ray informed the class that in 2013, the OC started to experience significant resistance from the Coalition for the Homeless, and in 2014 they suffered the most significant funding cut, leading

to the dismantling of the mental health and psychiatric clinic. He provided a brief background history on the organization and asked the graduating class: "What can you do to alleviate the impact of these cuts?" and "How can the University help out?"

Following the core values and ethical principles of the social work profession, we offered to work with the director and the OC team to develop plans to engage University administration and faculty in this deliberation. That summer, we secured support from the Dean of the College of Health Sciences. A series of individual meetings with the dean of the School of Nursing; the university president; the administrators of the Department of Social Work; and representatives from the Rehabilitation Counseling Program and the Center for Civic Engagement took place that summer as well. Administrators and faculty visited the OC to determine how optimal learning and partnerships could be formed to help mitigate the financial and service crisis, while educating students in health inequalities and social action. After several conversations with the OC director, his team, volunteers, and key stakeholders, the new team agreed that the best way to engage the University partners and students was to work through student instruction and macro-micro service learning experiences.

The Program

With the support of the College Dean and University President, we moved the MSW Macro class to the modest conference room of the emergency shelter for men at the OC in the Fall of 2014 (See Figure 1). Moving the students from the University campus to the OC was not easy. There were students that were fearful, skeptical, and worried about their personal safety, vehicle safety, parking, the agency's host neighborhood, and the stigmas associated with being in a shelter for persons experiencing homelessness.

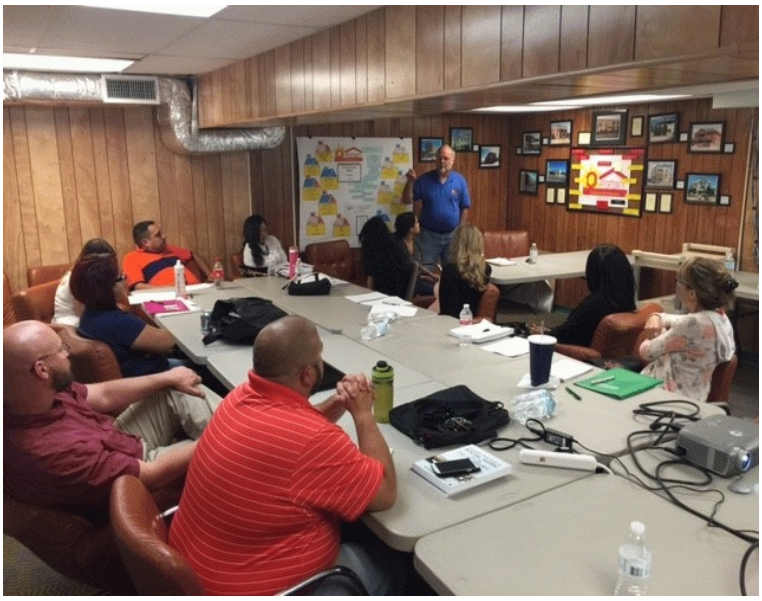

Figure 1. Macro course students at the Opportunity Center for the Homeless. Courtesy of the Opportunity Center for the Homeless.

These manifestations made clear that the students had personal biases and judgments that are barriers to effective professional practice. These findings reinforced the need to focus on core values and ethical principles of the social work profession.

We deemed it essential to structure and conduct the course in a way that effectively engages students while also bridging the micro-macro gap, providing hands-on experiences in grassroots organizations, and lending support to the underfunded agency. The course syllabus included lectures imparted by me and members of the OC team, neighborhood walks, a group community assessment, an intervention project, a case study presentation using liberating structures techniques, and a Healthy People 2020 proposal on homelessness (See Figures 2 and 3).

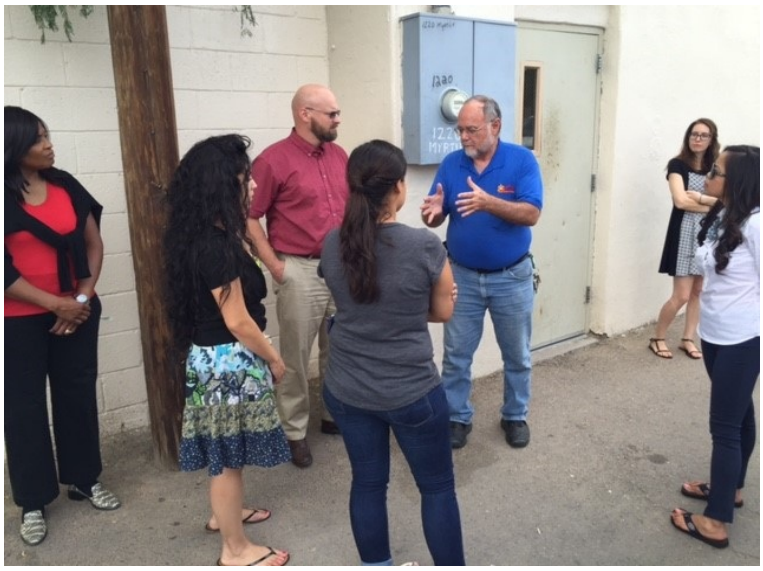

Figure 2. Macro course students walking the neighborhood with Ray Tullius, Director of the Opportunity Center for the Homeless (OCH). Courtesy of OCH.

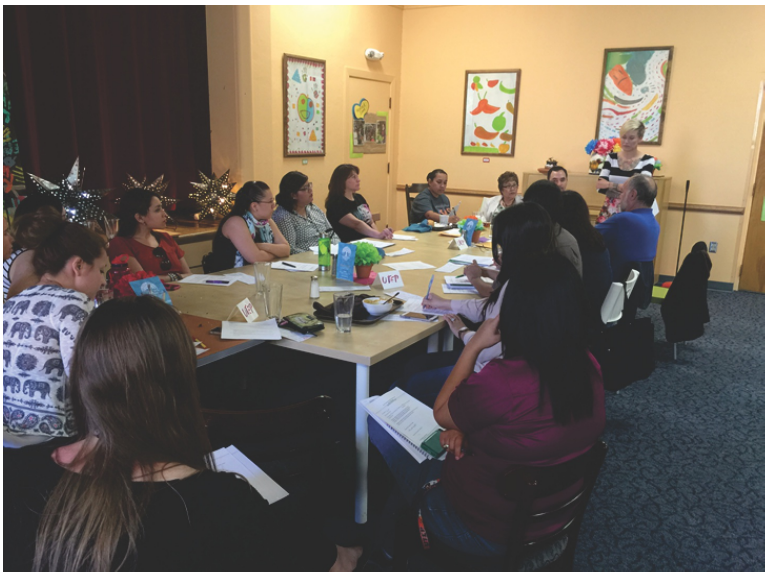

Figure 3. Macro students presenting macro interventions at the Mustard Seed Café, a neighborhood organization. Courtesy of the Department of Social Work.

Members of the OC team were present during some of the classes to observe the process, engage students, provide feedback, and conduct peer reviews of their assignments.

This type of co-instruction was both enlightening and rewarding for the students as well as team members of the OC. Students in the first Macro class conducted at OC successfully completed their semester, and overall course evaluations were very positive.

During the same semester, four graduate social work students and I volunteered to conduct a Photovoice Project (Moya, Chávez-Baray, Martínez & Aguirre-Polanco, 2015) on homelessness with the residents of the OC. The goal of the project was to increase awareness of the impact of homelessness and struggles associated with poverty, disparities, stigma, and oppression. The project aims were: to document how homelessness affects the mental and physical health, to understand how social stigmas can affect quality of life, and to create social awareness and mitigate misconceptions about people experiencing homelessness (Moya, Chavez-Baray, Martinez, Adcox, 2017). Through the Photovoice sessions, student facilitators and I framed the questions for the photography and narratives.

The participants identified mental and physical health challenges, broken health and human services, stigmas, and characteristics of their quality of life. Participants generated qualitative data describing the effects homelessness had on their mental and physical health through written documentation (Agarwal, Moya, Yasui, & Seymour, 2015; Catalani & Minkler, 2010; De Heer, Moya, Lacson, & Shedlin, 2008). The students helped to organize weekly group sessions, conduct content analysis, and mobilize participants to present their perspectives and address policy and decision makers during the Second Conference on Homelessness, hosted by the University in February 2015.

A three-part Homelessness Conference series was hosted at the University for the first time, during which students presented a call to action (Moya, Cox, Seymour & Chavez, 2015), humanized the experiences of persons experiencing homelessness through the use of stories and photographs, and leveraged support to strengthen the partnership between the University, OC, and organizations serving vulnerable populations (See Figure 4). Photovoice participants and social work student facilitators came together to create a gallery and a call to action that would later be showcased at the Texas State Capitol (Moya et al., 2017).

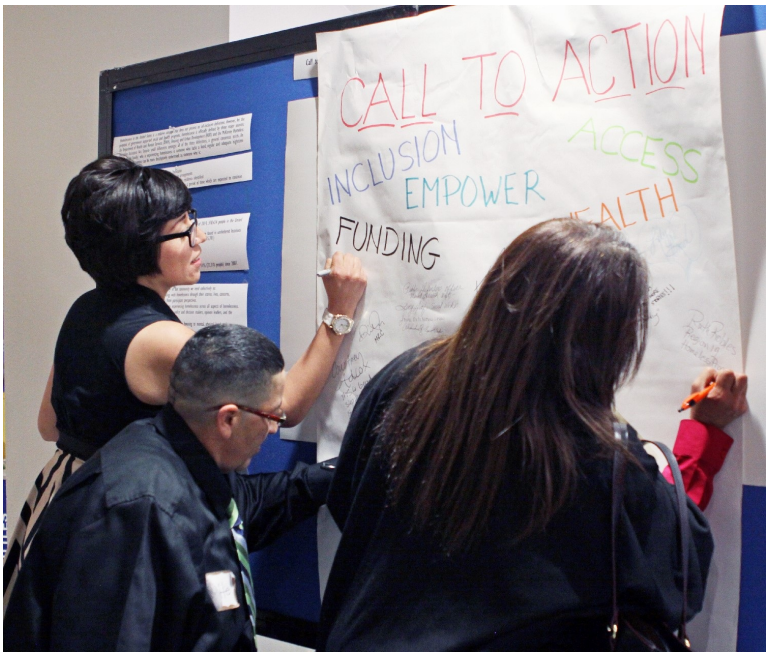

Figure 4. Call to Action Presentation led by Photovoice Project participants and students. Courtesy of the UTEP Department of Social Work.

From this case experience, a series of macro partnerships began to form between the OC, the University, the MSW Student Organization, and Think Tank on Homelessness, a group of agency directors and practitioners working to address homelessness in the community. Through this program, students were able to apply micro approaches learned in the classroom to macro-level social practice in the community. Engaging students and persons experiencing homelessness as collaborators during every step of the Photovoice project was crucial in creating a true community-based participatory research (CBPR) process. The CBPR foundation of the Photovoice project honored community members' expertise and contributions, and encouraged the residents to share decisions concerning research design (Catalani & Minkler, 2010).

Outcomes and Impact

The community of learning at the OC generated a series of training opportunities for the students on participatory action research and macro social work practice. The Voices and Images of Homelessness project exemplified a creative, resourceful, and interdisciplinary community and academic collaboration. The project spanned six months and used a combination of strategies: a Photovoice project with persons who experienced homelessness; the formation of a multidisciplinary group of graduate students who worked with faculty to implement and evaluate the project; a three-part conference series on homelessness; a University-wide Centennial Lecture by Philip Mangano, an expert on homelessness, hosted by University President; and a small Community-Academic Engaged Research Project grant to follow-up with project participants and interview key informants (Moya et al., 2017).

Before long, the MSW Policy course students who were taking the course on campus during the

same semester discovered what the students in the Macro course at the OC had been working on. One of the class groups was intrigued and approached me to ask if they could focus on homelessness for their group policy action project. The group met with the OC team, Macro students, and residents, and identified basic shelter needs. The members of the MSW Student Organization joined the effort and conducted two food, clothing, and personal hygiene drives that generated more than $500 and hundreds of food provisions for the residents.

At the end of the semester, students presented their intervention projects to the leadership of the center for review. There were two intervention projects that particularly stood out. The first intervention focused on the delivery of health and human services for the residents of the facility through a partnership between social work, other health disciplines, and community partners. The second intervention focused on integrating rehabilitation counseling and social work to assist the residents with employment and vocational services. These two projects illustrated the important role of collaboration and micro-macro level integration, and also served as the genesis for the Health Opportunity Prevention and Education (HOPE) Clinics, later described in this narrative.

In 2016, the Provost, in partnership with the University Center for Civic Engagement, hosted the first series of community tours of community-based organizations (including the OC) for faculty members. Within one month of the visit to the OC, four scholars from Social Work, Nursing, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and Pharmacy, along with a cadre of students from these disciplines, came together to explore the two intervention project ideas that the students proposed. In the spring of 2016, 10 faculty members, 62 students, and 24 volunteers from 10 community agencies launched the HOPE project, the first health fair focused on persons experiencing homelessness at the OC and served 190 individuals (Moya & Solis, 2016a). Employment and rehabilitation became the central goal for the second clinic organized by the University Rehabilitation Counseling Program, through which over 99 persons experiencing homelessness and other community members were given an opportunity to conduct mock interviews, enhance their resumes, connect with rehabilitation and vocational services, and accept employment (Kosyluk, 2016).

In the fall of 2016, the third HOPE health fair was launched. The fair expanded its mission, and more community partners began contacting the OC, with eagerness to serve. This event was led by faculty and students and later became a model of practice. Nearly 141 residents were provided with HIV, HEP-C, and STI testing, vision and hearing services, clinical laboratory services, foot care, cancer screenings, mammograms, and flu vaccinations (Moya & Solis, 2016b). With the success of the HOPE fairs, Macro practice students began to directly impact individuals, families and the organization.

Continuing Impact

As partnerships solidified, so did the concern surrounding whether clients were receiving adequate aftercare and follow-up to the services provided by the HOPE fairs. Front-line OC staff and students began case management services to ensure access to aftercare, and reported back

major barriers to follow-up services that residents faced. The transference between policy and community involvement were shown to directly impact the needs of the clients on an individual level. In addition to fostering competence and expertise, this program highlighted the responsibility of social workers to support individuals' recovery goals.

This program brought to light how crucial sustained engagement, communication, and partnership building with communities are essential to build trust and confidence. Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people to address issues affecting their well-being. The linking of the term 'community' to 'engagement' serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective, with the associated implications for inclusiveness to ensure consideration is made of the diversity that exists within any community (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010).

Discussion

The MSW Macro Practice in Multicultural Settings course launched in 2014 at the OC became a community of learning where students, OC staff, and persons experiencing homelessness worked together as partners to shape a training course based on the dichotomy of 'case of cause' model. The experiences outside of the University classroom have provided great insights and practice wisdom of enormous value. In order for social work practitioners to understand organizational and structural contexts in which homelessness is perpetrated, it is imperative to examine the skills needed. According to Burghardt (2014), the pre-engagement phase is essential. This phase emphasizes the need for new practitioners to become engaged with an agency at its most outermost essence. For the professor and the Macro course students to effectively deliver services, pre-engagement with the center team was imperative. Understanding how the leadership of the OC framed their value and needs over time helped the professor and the students understand the contextual, political, and economic relationships, and power balances therein which impact homelessness on all levels (Burghardt, 2014).

Exposing the students to the organizational policies, structure of services, and populations served acted as a way of welcoming the class to the pre-engagement phase. The students were able to conduct community assessments on the various programs offered at the center. The engagement phase allowed students to identify the balances between systems of care and construct the interventions they believed would mitigate the ever-changing environment of the facilities. Seventy MSW macro students have participated in this community of learning process. Across their time at the OC, they have identified gaps in services and have created connections with outside agencies to establish community partnerships, avail additional resources and practice policy and advocacy skills.

Evaluation and Future Change

The leadership of the center allowed itself to be viewed from a critical perspective, and was receptive to structural changes and suggestions to raise awareness about homelessness, increase outreach to marginalized populations, integrate mental and health services, and launch university

and community based health fairs, brought forth by students. This engagement allowed for interventions to be developed based on community needs assessments conducted by students, effectively bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Students were moved from a University campus into a new venue of practice, wherein they influenced and engendered modest practice changes in a field setting to serve individuals experiencing homelessness. Balancing between manageable and meaningful macro intervention projects allowed for rich student creativity and learning. Moreover, the community of learning at the center built a learning platform for the identification of systems of oppression and the transference of those needs into opportunities, just as Ray's observations shared in the initial guest lecture transformed into the inception of the OC. This community of learning serves two purposes: (1) to provide critical support of organization staff, and (2) to develop community resources with a focus on retention and recovery of persons experiencing homelessness.

Macro students have studied the phenomenon of homelessness, analyzed the organizational structure of the OC, proposed systemic changes to management, and coordinated activities for homeless residents, and written proposals and grants to create new initiatives. This program allowed for the creation of an immersive learning environment, through the inclusion and empowerment of center residents, staff, and the students.

Next Steps

The OC and the Department of Social Work at UTEP are working on structuring a 'Center of Learning on and for Persons Experiencing Homelessness.' This concept will incorporate and expand on principles and skills that include short-term training like internships, fellowships, and professional continuing education. These practices will develop connections between theory and service within the setting of a homeless shelter, the concepts and principles taught in the classroom, and the internalized sense of professional identity that is continually evaluated and assessed. As such, students are able to think, feel, and act under the values and ethics of their field of study and practice. Communities of learning will assist the students and faculty in utilizing interventions that reflect a spirit of inquiry, based on structure of knowledge and theory pertinent to homelessness. Students will be encouraged to utilize specific, situation-applicable concepts and principles to seek new inquiry when needed in order to guide their profession. Seminars and field practice will engender personal and professional commitment to improve social functioning, affect change, and contribute to the research, knowledge, and skills needed to achieve these objectives.

Recommendations for Adaptations & Challenges

The needs identified initially by the center, which ultimately led to the development of this program, are not uncommon. Across the field of social work, grassroots community organizing, and nonprofit social services, funding cuts and scarcity of resources remain salient obstacles. As such, the model described in this narrative is well-suited for adaptation in other universities and with other community-based organizations, as it has shown to be beneficial to both student

learning, as well as to organizations with limited funding that require personnel assistance. Although the program described in this narrative was successful, it is important to recognize the challenges faced (or potentially faced) in the development and implementation of the program so that future adaptations of this model may be well-equipped to overcome these barriers.

First, within a university setting, liability and logistic concerns (e.g., transportation) surrounding off-campus teaching venues may create difficulties in garnering university administration support. Likewise, alternative teaching venues such as the OC may create concerns over safety, especially if these organizations are located in high-crime areas or neighborhoods that are perceived to be 'unsafe.' Within our program, students expressed discomfort or general concern related to the stigma of being seen entering a shelter for persons experiencing homelessness, or in a neighborhood considered to be 'poor.' I turned these concerns or challenges into teachable moments and encouraged students to further explore implicit and explicit biases.

Despite the challenges encountered and addressed, no students dropped the class due to these concerns. By holding classes at the OC rather than on campus, students were engaged in a rustic, humble setting that did not initially have all the tools and materials available in a traditional classroom. Lastly, maintaining a balance between the macro-level content of the course and the micro-level focus of individual residents' case focus was an important challenge to overcome; to address this potential issue, strict focus on how micro-level cases relate to and are affected by macro-level and policy issues is imperative. The social work mission is to help people in need and address social problems, to challenge social injustices, respect the dignity and worth of the individual, and recognize the central importance of human rights.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Ray Tullius for his ongoing support and commitment to this project. Ray holds a Master's degree in social work, is a veteran, and is a tireless advocate for social justice. He is the founder and director of the Opportunity Center for the Homeless. His personal experience gave him the insight to develop a system of support services to help persons experiencing homelessness get their lives together. In 2013 he received the UTEP College of Health Sciences Gold Nugget Award for his outstanding commitment to social justice. Our gratitude goes to John Martin, the OC team and the residents, MSW students, and participants of the Voices and Images Project for sharing their perspectives and hopes, and for enlightening us on their realities. We are appreciative of the students for bridging the gap between the professional and the homeless worlds. Thank you for commitment and dedication to social justice. The extraordinary support of Dr. Diana Natalicio, President of the University of Texas at El Paso, has been instrumental in this journey. We are grateful to the University administrators, faculty of the College of Health Sciences, School of Nursing, community based organizations, agencies, and philanthropic groups for their support.

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Bridging Case and Cause, Micro and Macro Through Fundraising

Barry Rosenberg

Abstract: A successful career in fundraising reveals it to be an honorable, value-based practice that is consistent with social work's case-to-cause perspective. Although most social work services rely on philanthropy, many social workers hold negative attitudes about fundraising. This narrative demonstrates how fundraising advances social justice while enriching the lives of clients and donors alike. A case example illustrates how fundraising integrates the use of micro and macro social work skills. The author's teaching has changed MSW social work student attitudes about fundraising and encouraged some to pursue fundraising careers.

Keywords: macro, micro, case-to-cause, fundraising

I obtained my MSW in 1975, intending to be a marriage and family counselor. However, a generous scholarship required that I devote two years after graduation to directing the regional office of a national leadership program for high school students. My position was primarily managerial: supervising chapter volunteers, managing budgets, and working with a local board of directors. However, what I enjoyed most was the close engagement with our top teen leaders. They were incredibly smart, creative, talented, and committed. Late afternoon or evening meetings were often followed by long hours just talking in the office or at a diner. Although just seven or eight years older than the graduating seniors, I was a mentor, advisor, counselor, teacher, and safe confidant. I rarely made it home before 10:00 p.m. They made me laugh, sometimes cry, and always challenged me to give my best. Subsequently, several became lifelong friends. And so my two years happily extended to four.

Although I worked out of several locations, the organization operated on a shoestring budget. One of my offices was in an old mortuary with a condemned third floor. Another was in the basement of a synagogue. Revenues just didn't match the quality and potential of the program.

As is all too common with many nonprofit boards, the board members wouldn't meaningfully take on fundraising responsibilities. After trying and failing to change the board culture, I left and moved into the world of federated fundraising, planning, and allocations. There the culture was completely different. Fundraising was at the center of the mission, and my new agency was very good at it. I received formal and informal training and lots of practice. After overcoming my early fear of donor rejection, I became quite skilled.

I recently completed a successful 33-year career in two Jewish federations, mostly as chief executive officer. In that position, I led the development of fundraising strategy and organizational management, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for a wide variety of human services for both the Jewish and larger populations. A major portion of my time was devoted to asking people for money. I cultivated dozens of top donors, conducted innumerable solicitations, and personally raised tens of millions of dollars. What may be surprising is that I can honestly

say that I love fundraising. I still do it on a volunteer basis. With fundraising, I have the satisfaction of seeing the direct impact of my work through the services provided. Moreover, it has afforded me the opportunity to work with and get to know some wonderfully generous people. It's interesting to note that I have not done one hour of marriage or family counseling since graduate school.

However, I am unusual. Ask any social worker or social work manager their biggest problem, and they will likely say funding. The social work profession recognizes the central role of fund development in the management of human services (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2011; Gronjberg 2008; Watson & Hoefer, 2014). Likewise, fundraising is identified as one of numerous management-focused, macro-practice skills (Netting, 2008), and an important management competency (Hassan & Wimpfheimer, 2016). Yet despite overwhelming reliance on philanthropy, there are few things more repulsive to social workers (and many others) than asking for money (Levy & Aubry, 2008). I'm not speaking about government or foundation grant-writing, I'm talking about person-to-person, individual fundraising. It is perceived as a process of taking from others and as antithetical to, or at least inconsistent with, social work norms and values (Abramson, 1977). Those negative attitudes often lead to avoidance, disparagement of the development staff, and failure to recognize fundraising as a legitimate social work management function that bridges micro and macro skills and case-to-cause impact.

In contrast, I was trained to understand and practice fundraising as a process of community building-actually a form of community organization. In my work, fundraising was seen not only as a means to an end but as a process that builds community in its own right (Abramson 1977; Dunham, 2003; Hurwitz, 1958; Kahn, 1978; Lauffer, 2013; Levy, 1973; Rosenthal, 1975). Organizing a broad, community-wide, annual campaign is about bringing people together to achieve a common purpose. One need only reflect on the sense of community that is created through a fundraising walk, a large fundraising gala, a social media campaign, or a global telethon following a natural disaster. Fundraising is a platform to advance values and outcomes that are central to social work. Fundraising is one of the prime methods we use to educate the public about social needs and what it takes to meet them. Done well, it builds social capital and is one of the major doorways to volunteer activity. These macro level outcomes are supplemented by micro level impacts for the donors themselves. Fundraising empowers people to make a difference in their own and others' lives. It gives them agency. It is about providing a vehicle for people to enact their noblest values, to give back, to honor parents, to observe religious strictures, to model for children, and to establish a legacy. And finally, evidence indicates that altruistic behavior also increases personal well-being (Post, 2005). So rather than taking, I view fundraising as giving to the clients, the community, society at large, and the individual donor as well.

Bridging Case and Cause

Abramovitz and Sherraden (2016) urged the profession to recommit to a case-to-cause framework. Although previously common, this perspective has been largely replaced by a micro focus within social work. The case-to-cause framework calls for social workers and social work agencies to simultaneously meet individual needs while addressing the organizational,

communal, and societal forces, structures, and policies that create or perpetuate those needs.

As a funder, I had the privilege of seeing the incredible impact of our beneficiary agencies on the lives of millions of people. Our funds cared for frail seniors, counseled troubled families, subsidized day care for low-income families, and supported dozens of other social, health, educational, cultural, and recreational programs.

At the same time, the Federation played a social planning role, researching and designing new strategies to meet needs. The organization and several of its funded agencies also addressed systemic issues and public policy. Several beneficiaries worked on fighting intolerance and hate. For example, the community's Holocaust center trained police officers and recruits to understand, recognize, and deal with bias, discrimination, and hate crimes. The organization maintained state and federal legislative offices, which advocated on diverse social service issues such as subsidized housing, nutrition, Medicaid expansion, and child care. During my tenure, a major success was the creation of a federal demonstration project that supported research on and the implementation of naturally occurring retirement communities. This innovative and widely replicated model enables seniors to age in place with dignity, and it enhances health and well-being while dramatically reducing societal costs.

The role that fundraising plays, at both the case and cause levels, should be obvious. Moreover, Abramovitz and Sherraden (2016) underscored the financial resource constraints that hamper ability to act on both the micro and macro levels. These realities pose an ever-growing fundraising challenge for social work professionals and leaders.

For me, case and cause, micro and macro, merged dramatically in the most powerful moment of my career. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Jewish community was intensely focused on obtaining the freedom of two groups of oppressed Jews. On one hand, there was a political and humanitarian effort on behalf of millions of Jews living in the Soviet Union, who were victims of severe discrimination and denied the right to emigrate. On the other, tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews were trapped in a situation where they endured a ruthless dictatorial regime, civil war, searing droughts, poverty, death, discrimination, and dislocation. Over decades, I participated in marches, including a massive rally in Washington, protests in front of the United Nations and the Russian embassy, and countless educational programs. In addition to both quiet and public advocacy, during those years Jewish Federations across the country mounted several huge fundraising campaigns to support the rescue and resettlement of most Ethiopian Jews and the release and resettlement of over one million Soviet Jews. In later years, I met hundreds of Ethiopian and Russian Jews, helped design programs to facilitate successful resettlement, and continued to advocate until the task was completed.

Under the case-and-cause perspective, we had a responsibility to provide direct relief and other services, but also to engage in policy advocacy and organizational and systemic change to alleviate the conditions that caused the problems and suffering. However, in both cases, alleviating the precipitating conditions was beyond our control. Our only solution was to get them out of the Soviet Union and Ethiopia and then help them rebuild their lives in Israel or Jewish communities around the world. The macro perspective shifted to advocating for Israeli

and United States funding and creating the human services infrastructure that would facilitate resettlement successfully and with dignity.

Through all these years of work, one moment remains indelible in my memory and still causes chills whenever I tell the story. It was Friday afternoon, May 24, 1991. Following years of clandestine, then exposed, and then disrupted rescue efforts and months of bargaining with the Mengistu regime, Israel conducted a miraculous 36-hour airlift that brought 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to freedom and a new life of possibility. The process of emigration and absorption was enormous and continues today. Although not perfect, it is a remarkable chapter in history. In writing about the first and subsequently disrupted phase of rescue, commentator William Safire (1985) said, "For the first time in history, thousands of black people are being brought into a country not in chains but in dignity, not as slaves but as citizens." That Friday, with the Jewish Sabbath approaching, I and peer CEOs around the country received a simple fax message. It informed us that the planes were flying and gave us a simple three-word directive, "Go raise money!"

Bridging Micro & Macro Skills

To many people, fundraisers are sleazy manipulators who use coercive or unethical tactics to shame individuals into giving, much akin to the stereotypical image of a used car salesperson. But the essence of successful individual fundraising is building enduring relationships of trust that create a framework to deeply understand the motivations, needs, and goals of potential donors and match them to organizations and programs that give expression to those aspirations (Tempel, Seiler, & Aldrich, 2011, p. 1). It is about starting where the donor is, listening carefully, exploring options, and gently and ethically overcoming barriers. It is about educating the potential donor on the nature of a problem and the evidence-based interventions that address it. It requires patience, creativity, respectful advocacy, and a commitment to confidentiality because these discussions often touch on deeply personal and family issues. I have found that the macro function of fundraising uses all the micro skills that I learned decades ago. Indeed, I am convinced that because of their knowledge, skills, values, and passion, social workers can be exceptionally good fundraisers. This idea was well-stated by fundraising consultant Paul Jolly (2016), who wrote:

> The Social Work side of fundraising is where all the skill is. Listening between the words, reading between the lines, recognizing patterns in conversation, sensing the moment to ask a provocative question, asking permission to broaden the range of a relationship—these are the Social Work skills that are essential to fundraising success.

An Example

A retired couple was a long-standing, five-figure donor to the organization. Partners in a successful, large family business that had been sold, the couple had substantial financial capacity. However, other charitable causes were more important to them.

Although I knew them, we had our first extended chat at a social occasion. Based on the warmth

of the conversation, I decided to begin working with them directly. I requested an appointment to speak about their annual contribution. They demurred, saying there was no need to meet and assuring me that they would repeat their prior gift. I politely told them that although they felt no need to meet, I did. I said that it was important, and a sign of respect, to brief them on organizational developments and to learn whether they had any concerns or questions about the organization. In addition, I wanted an opportunity to develop a relationship.

They agreed and that began a series of annual meetings at their home. They are delightful people, and our hour-long chats were always interesting, warm, and fun. I briefed them on developments; they asked pointed questions; at times, we debated Jewish issues; and we shared stories about our families and lives. Each year I asked them to consider increasing their gift to meet expanding needs. After several years they did, somewhat. However, they continually emphasized that they were very comfortable at their level of contribution. Although I hadn't been particularly successful, the door remained open.

Believing it unlikely that their annual contribution would increase dramatically, I began to explore their receptivity to an endowed legacy gift. This would be a one-time, very large contribution to perpetuate their support for our community. Each year, I suggested some important project or purpose for the gift, and each year they politely told me that an endowment was possible, but not just yet.

At one point in our relationship, I was able to provide a significant service to them, one that intensified our level of engagement and one they greatly appreciated. This cemented the relationship even more, but they were still not ready to say yes to the endowment. By then, I felt our relationship was strong enough that I could challenge them a bit. I asked why, if they believed an endowment was a good idea, they kept saying no. The wife, who possesses a very sharp wit, looked at me with a bit of a grin and said, "You just haven't wowed us yet!" Her comment immediately clarified my understanding of the situation, and I told her I would not raise the idea again until I had found "wow."

Shortly thereafter, an opportunity arose for a program that addressed a need related to their former business. I made an appointment to present a proposal, and within several days, they committed and wrote a very large six-figure check.

Why was this the "wow"? Like prior proposals, it was for a high priority, high impact program. This was different because it spoke to their life-long, personal and professional identities. Making this gift was natural for them. It was one more way for them to express themselves. We had finally made the connection between the donors' needs and those of the organization, truly a win-win result. Their gift will help maintain the facility used for a critically needed service that helps thousands of people each year.

The story could have ended differently. Maybe they would have granted me one meeting and then resisted further involvement. Maybe I wouldn't have earned their trust. Maybe I would have pushed too hard or given up too early. Maybe I wouldn't have understood them enough to find the right idea. Although I never did therapy with my MSW, that micro training equipped me to

succeed. Perhaps if I had done some counseling along the way, it would not have taken six years.

Since retiring, I have dedicated myself full-time to teaching leadership, management, and organizational behavior to MSW students. I firmly believe that as a profession we must celebrate macro practice, reestablish our claim to the management of human service organizations, and reestablish the relationship between micro and macro practice. We must ensure that our graduates develop relevant macro skills to complement their micro focus. We need to help them understand the relevance of micro skills to macro practice and vice versa.

I also believe that we must help them develop a new mental model of fundraising. My classes always include content on the importance and skill of fundraising. I begin by stating that I love fundraising and asking who else does. As expected, in a class of 25, I might get one or two tentative hands. I then challenge attitudes and the common image of fundraisers. I suggest multiple ways that social workers can support the fundraising function without ever asking for money. I encourage graduating students to consider a fundraising job. There are excellent job opportunities, and fundraising experience will position them well for career growth. Each semester I win several converts, a number of whom have gone on to obtain excellent jobs. More important is that attitudes are being changed. As social workers, who are so dependent on philanthropy, we need to recognize fundraising as a noble, empowering, value-based role in our profession. It advances social justice, helps millions of people, helps create systemic change, and enriches the lives of the donors, often as much as the lives of the recipients.

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Reflections on Social Work, Social History, and Practice Experience: "It Ain't the Same If You're Poor"

Alice Skirtz

Abstract: Reflection on more than four decades of social work practice with poor people and poverty-stricken communities reveals necessary and sufficient connections between micro and macro practice, but finds gaps in social work practice knowledge in settings where corporate interests obviate democratic participation in public policy decision-making. Practice experience is found to have surprising connections to both the author's social history and to socio-economic-political systems now stifled by privatization supported by diminishing democratic procedures at several levels of governance. Case illustrations from the author's practice provide richly detailed accounts of lived experiences from casework and advocacy practice in settings where social welfare policies reach deeply and effectively to meet human need, while at the same time revealing grave social-economic-political injustices. Mainstream powers and governance are inoculated from social work advocacy, and community organization is impotent. On behalf of clients and communities suffering social injustices of poverty, discrimination, and erasure from communities, the author calls for social workers, social work educators and researchers to refine and renew social work knowledge (including poverty knowledge) and practice knowledge (especially advocacy) to empower work for social justice.

Keywords: economic poverty, poverty-stricken communities, privatization, socio-economic-political injustices

The words were stunning. "We just want them, the residents, out of there." The "them" are single low-income women. The "out of there" refers to their permanent homes at Cincinnati's Anna Louise Inn (ALI) where some had lived for as long as 30 years (at the time the shortest tenancy was 11 months). The words are those of a high ranking official of the Western & Southern Financial Group (W&S) on the occasion of the company's initial opposition to City Council's unanimous decision to forward approval of Cincinnati Union Bethel's (CUB) request for Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) for renovation of the agency's ALI (United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio, 2013).

A four-year battle beginning in 2011 for ownership of the historic Anna Louise Inn residence was orchestrated by the powerful W&S privately held company in contentious public encounters concerning funding, zoning, historic preservation, and economic development. W&S launched strategically organized attempts not only to remove low-income women residents but also to nullify and undermine fully vetted democratic proceedings of City Council, the Historic Preservation Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Ohio Housing Finance Agency. In other strategies, W&S sought judicial overturn of public decisions in the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, and ALI women residents sought relief in the United States District Court United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio (2013). In simultaneous inflammatory public discourse through print and broadcast news media as well as public meetings, W&S launched a vigorous PR-style campaign demeaning both the residents and the owners of ALI to

advance the company's goal of purchasing the building for purposes of economic development, as if it was entitled to do so. The building was not for sale.

I was privileged to work with CUB in this unthinkable hostile takeover, providing some research for the residents' Fair Housing case. What I found crystallized both my affective and cognitive understandings of decades of social work practice, and surprising connections to my own social history. What follows here is a reflective review of those decades of social work practice. I ask readers' forbearance with the tedium of case detail, but know of no other way to convey the often unseen lived experiences of economically poor people and their communities found in casework and advocacy relationships and illustrative of broader injustices engendered by economic, racial, gendered, or political status.

By 2012, as the Anna Louise Inn (ALI) residence became the object of the aggressive takeover by the privately held Western & Southern Financial Services (W&S) the company had the audacity to spin public discourse to assert the building was essential to the economic development of the entire Downtown area, indeed for the economic vitality of the entire City of Cincinnati. This historic residence for single women was given to the City in 1909 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Taft (half-brother of the President), and it was named after their daughter Anna Louise Taft Semple and placed under the stewardship of Cincinnati's oldest social service agency, Cincinnati Union Bethel (CUB). For more than 100 years, CUB has provided permanent housing at the Anna Louise Inn located adjacent to the Taft homestead and the beloved publicly owned Lytle Park in the Downtown residential neighborhood. In recent years CUB added Off the Streets™ (OTS) permanent supportive housing for women recovering from prostitution. The Downtown residential neighborhood where ALI is located has been coveted for years by developers for upscale economic development, and it is especially attractive as the Taft's home is now the Taft Museum of Art adjacent to the public green space of the City's Lytle Park. Both are but a few yards from the George Grey Barnard 11' bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln known in the art world as the "Taft Lincoln" (Moffatt, 1998). The "spin" contrived and perpetuated by developers continued with the twisted narrative that this lovely, livable residential neighborhood adjacent to the Park was crime-filled due to the prostitutes who lived at ALI. Actually few documented police citations were for Part I crimes or felonies, most were for parking and traffic violations.

Such discourse ramping up "crime, drugs, and sex" narratives have plagued the City for decades, often aggressively directed at the neighboring Over-the-Rhine (OTR) community. This "Old World" community adjacent to Downtown is particularly attractive to developers, as it has the largest collection of Italianate architecture in the country as well as arts venues like the prestigious Music Hall built in 1895 for the May Festival choral music extravaganza and home for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. A major deterrent to development initiatives revolves around how to remove tenants from those historic Italianate buildings that have housed generations of economically poor people. Since the 1970's many lived in more than 1,000 apartments owned by a single landlord with HUD mortgages with project-based subsidies. OTR is the locus of much of my social work practice, and hence many of the stories that follow. Current iterations of economic development of OTR and erasure of poor residents are orchestrated by corporate interests including and led by those who sought and

acquired the Anna Louise Inn.

Resolution to the W&S hostile takeover of ALI was eventually achieved "out of court" in 2015. ALI was relocated to a new building providing permanent housing for low income women (including the prostitutes) with support of public and private funds; and, W&S promptly began renovation to make ALI a select service hotel. By virtue of timing and the social, civic, and political contexts surrounding the machinations of W&S v ALI case, it serves as a template for what I see as an implicit "disconnect" between lived realities for those who are economically poor and veritable realities of powerful mainstream, mostly corporate influences that openly and shamelessly steer socio-economic-political decisions in directions favoring those who are affluent.

Reflections on Social Work Practice at the "Disconnect"

Reflection on my social work practice, informed by the dynamics of the W&S v ALI case, reveals enduring variations of themes of exclusion and discrimination of poor people at the socio-economic-political "disconnect." This is a Cincinnati story with historic and current "disconnects" between those who experience economic poverty and mainstream powerful private corporate interests aided by increasing privatization of public responsibilities. The "disconnect" has deep historical roots related to local governance, neighborhoods and places like the public Fountain Square (permits available for seasonal events, civic celebrations, free speech and protests), the Anna Louise Inn, the now-demolished Wesley Chapel Methodist Church, SRO residential hotels, civic institutions, social agencies, and many women's civic institutions and clubs. In this story, I land firmly on the side of those who are poor, and on the other side of the "disconnect" are corporate giants like Procter & Gamble (P&G) and Western & Southern Financial Group (W&S), along with private developers and corporate/economic entities who are supported and enabled by public policies with insidious instigation and promotion of inequities, discrimination, and removal of poor people from their communities. Unfortunately, our local proclivity is to yield planning and decision-making to corporate and business interests over people interests, thus valuing a market economy over differences that make a community inclusive.

My acquaintance with this Cincinnati story begins in 4th grade when the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Church appointed my dad to pastor historic Wesley Chapel Methodist Church then located Downtown at 322 East 5th Street across from the Cincinnati Masonic Temple and Taft Auditorium (now the Taft Theatre). The huge Wesley Chapel church built in 1831, with a sanctuary seating 1,200 was demolished in 1972 for a garden and P&G's world headquarters encompassing most of two city blocks on Fifth Street, embraced by hi-rise office buildings housing corporate offices.

Wesley Chapel's huge 10-room parsonage adjacent to the church on 5th Street was not available for the pastor's family, as it had been leased to the Cincinnati Board of Education as an annex to the over-crowded Guilford Elementary School, which was just two blocks away on 4th Street at Lytle Park across the park from the Anna Louise Inn and the Taft Museum. Wesley Chapel's nearby institutional neighbors were: Allen Temple AME (the

building once the home of Bené Israel Cincinnati's first Jewish congregation), the AME congregation historically active in the Underground Railroad Movement (Works Progress Administration [WPA], 1987); Sacred Heart Italian Catholic Church; St. Xavier Church and High School; the American Red Cross Headquarters; and the Masonic Temple. Nearby were the Fenwick Residence for 200 single men, the Fontbonne Residence for 150 single women, and the Anna Louise Inn. All of those buildings, except St. Xavier Church and the Masonic Temple/ Taft Theatre are gone to economic development, eliminated through the City's use of powers of eminent domain and by private property acquisition for development by the City for highways and infrastructure, and by major corporations for office and world headquarters buildings.

My family had previously lived in Lima, Ohio (population 50,000), and coming to Cincinnati (population 504,000) and Wesley Chapel was a big deal, a much larger city and a larger, more diverse church. On Sundays, Wesley Chapel held proper Methodist formal worship complete with a large choir and paid soloists from the College Conservatory of Music, and a congregation that included families who lived in Downtown "slums" between the church and the Ohio River as well as nearby city neighborhoods who valued downtown church membership. They were joined by a large contingent of adults who lived in downtown residential hotels. These working folks (singles and couples) who lived in SRO hotels worshipped at Wesley Chapel with fellow church member the Gibson Art Company's poet Helen Steiner Rice known as "the poet laureate of greeting cards" (Brown, 2011). Mrs. Rice lived at the nearby prestigious Gibson Hotel as did a few other affluent professionals who were lifelong Downtown residential hotel dwellers and lifelong members of Wesley Chapel.

Sunday morning worship and Sunday School classes at Wesley Chapel were followed by evening worship when the congregation came from dense tenements between the Ohio River and 4th Street extending from the East End to the West End—including those many families whose children were "overcrowding" Guilford School, and several dozen women who lived at the Anna Louise Inn and worked in downtown offices and restaurants, or clerked in retail stores. Many of these evening congregants held a place in the city, but in their hearts they longed to go home to the mountains. They came for a less formal worship style of preaching and singing that reflected their mostly Appalachian heritage. They turned off the pipe organ and tuned stringed and acoustical instruments for pickin' and singin' good old country hymns reminiscent of home. I can still hear those haunting harmonies of country gospel songs in that huge Methodist Church sanctuary where President William Henry Harrison's funeral was held in 1841, and where former-President John Quincy Adams delivered the dedicatory address for the Observatory in 1843 (WPA, 1987).

Since the parsonage was used for school, Wesley Chapel's Official Board rented a house on Dana Avenue across from the Jesuit's Xavier University for the newly appointed pastor and his family, where we came to know religious diversity in the remarkable neighborhood of Evanston. Our neighbors to the west were the retired Groenemanns who had raised their seven children in their home and were members of St. Mark's Catholic Church. My Mother's deeply-rooted Protestant skepticism about the Papacy was confounded by the genuine faithfulness of Mrs. Groenemann's daily attendance at Mass on campus at Xavier University. Neighbors to the east were the Greenbaums: I don't remember which Jewish congregation claimed them as members,

but these friendly neighbors were a real delight for my younger brother and me because Fred and Fannie Greenbaum owned the F&F Pet Store Downtown on Court Street. On many weekends they brought animals to their home rather than leave them unattended in an empty Downtown store. We played with hamsters, kittens, purebred puppies, parakeets and gorgeous parrots, and sometimes adorable little monkeys. What kids wouldn't love that! My Dad and Mr. Greenbaum, both amateur historians, shared their love of history in many conversations over the side-yard fence working their way through major historical events like the Holocaust, the war in Korea, and current McCarthy era/Cold War scary things like nuclear testing and Communists. As Wesley Chapel was Downtown, we spent time Downtown, often in the main Cincinnati Public Library, and on one occasion when we went to the United States Post Office in the Federal Building near the church, we encountered a crowd of Presbyterians who were boldly singing that bastion of Protestant hymnody, "Faith of Our Fathers," while their fiercely pacifist pastor the Reverend Maurice McCrackin, was being sentenced to prison in Federal Court for income tax evasion in protest of the war—of all wars—and nuclear testing.

Fast forward twenty years to when I returned to Cincinnati as an adult and subsequently was hired by The Salvation Army as a social worker to work with a citywide clientele, many from Over-the-Rhine (OTR), refugees from Downtown slums that were cleared for highway and economic development. Clients in my family service caseload were astonishingly poor, most working, many poorly housed, and an emerging group at risk of homelessness, as affordable housing options had nearly vanished with highway and economic development. Part of my social work duties came to include supervision of the Salvation Army's Emergency Home for Women and Children, the City's oldest shelter in continuous operation Downtown since 1895. And there they were: many now-elderly folks from Wesley Chapel, their children and grandchildren joined by their former neighbors, African-American families who had been displaced from the West End just like Appalachian families had from Downtown for economic and highway development. And that was the beginning of practice experience with those who are economically poor and whose lived experiences were at what I came to know as "disconnect"—poor people and their communities at one side, powerful mainstream, mostly corporate interests colluding with legislative and regulatory entities of democratic governance at the other. Both sides provide cognitive and affective understandings of social welfare policy, social work practice and a myriad of unforeseeable challenges to the democratic process and civic participation as evidenced by the W&S v ALI case to remove the powerless, economically poor of our communities. I now know that relationships with economically poor people of my practice experience forthrightly provide powerful, disheartening insight into discrimination and social injustice emanating from the corporate interest side of the "disconnect," if I can listen well enough to "get it." Begging readers' tolerance, a few case examples reveal how this comes and goes.

Social Work Practice at the "Disconnect"

Leaving the Baby

My social work experience is richly and deeply informed by young moms like Maria who walked nearly two miles to my office wearing a cotton dress, a thin sweater covered by a denim

jacket, and flip-flop sandals protecting her from the 30-degree snowy weather. She had missed a Food Stamp recertification appointment and had neither bus fare nor a winter coat. She was hungry and had no food, nor milk for her baby. She was shaking with the cold, her shivering calmed in the warmth of the office as we talked of her plight. Tears rolled down her cheeks when she revealed she had left her infant in the care of a neighbor she barely knew to protect him from the bitter weather.

Three Meals Every Day

There was Desmond, whose "blended" family—her kids, his kids, and our kids numbering seven—had been served by our Family Service agency for years through intermittent emergencies, summer sleep-away camp and Christmas toys, marital counseling, utility assistance to prevent shut-off, purchase of a hearing aid for one child, and school truancy prevention serving their chaotic but mostly self-supporting circumstances. Desmond finished high school, turned 19, somehow found a day labor job, and soon had his own ramshackle car. For a boisterous encounter with the law that added 10 days to his sentence, he was sent to adult jail to serve 30 days. When he returned from doing time, he came to see me, revealing his self-described stupidity of mouthing off to the police officer who arrested him. But it was his poignant comment about jail that touched my heart. With genuine rather childlike astonishment he said "You know Miz [Author], at jail they have three meals every day…yes ma'am every day." In all of his 19 years, he had rarely had three meals every day.

Getting "Happy"

Marlene came to the Family Service agency in crisis precipitated by her husband William's accident on his laborer's job that landed him in the County Rehab Hospital with a broken back. His care was not covered by insurance, as his employer had been paying him "under the table" and had no insurance, not even state Workers Compensation coverage. To keep the family going, Marlene was trying desperately to retain her hourly wage employment at a nursing home and care for the couple's two children. The younger of the children was 10-year-old Danny, who often came to the office from his nearby school to meet his Mom and get a ride home instead of taking the school bus. The family's situation worsened when Marlene's nearly worn out car parked legally on the street (her sole transportation to work and hospital visits) was struck by a runaway truck, totaling it and instigating an insurance snafu of unimaginable complications. A previous owner had reported the old car stolen, a fact never corrected in the BMV database so the trucker's insurance company was refusing to pay the claim to Marlene. Somehow we got that resolved, William's condition improved, and by the time of discharge from hospital, he had been certified for disability benefits. Marlene got a replacement car, and the family was reunited. At our final visit Marlene advised that Danny would be joining us as he had something to give me—it was a delightful two-inch ceramic bearded elf bearing a yellow flower and tipping his pointy green hat. We had a round of hugs. Danny said he liked to come to the office with his Mom because "Well…she got like all, uh…peaceful and stopped crying." It was after Danny was gone that I realized the figurine is a characterization of the dwarf "Happy" from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. "Happy" sits on my desk to date.

The First 50 Years

There was elderly Mr. B. who came to my office on the occasion of his 55th wedding anniversary seeking "the fixin's for a cake" so he and his bed-ridden bride of 55 years could celebrate their anniversary. While I prepared a voucher for the local Kroger store, he revealed the troubling news that the building where he and his wife lived had been sold to developers, and he and his wife (and her home health aide's twice-weekly visits) would have to move out within 45 days from yesterday. They had rented their affordable apartment 20 years earlier in one of the first developments with HUD building-based subsidies and now needed to find another place to live as the landlord's mortgage was expiring, the building was to be purchased by a developer for upscale condominiums. As a condition of the sale, the building was to be vacated of all tenants, and no relocation assistance was included. Our casework plan required an assist from the Legal Aid Society housing attorneys, and we secured an appropriate apartment for Mr. and Mrs. B. On the visit for the "fixins," Mr. B. asked if I was married. To my affirmative response he lovingly shook his index finger in my direction admonishing me, "Little lady, just know that the first fifty years of marriage are easier than the second."

These case vignettes are not unique to my social work practice and are probably familiar to many practitioners. They provide exposure to lived experiences of poor people often in difficult circumstances that would rarely occur for those more affluent. These cases reflect essential, life-sustaining social welfare policies operative in real time, in real neighborhoods with related needs for assistance and authentic relationships - income maintenance eligibility from AFDC/TANF to Food Stamps; social insurance from Workers Compensation to Social Security; health care from CHIP and Medicaid to county rehabilitation care and Medicare; vouchers from child day care stipends to housing subsidies to job training.

Upon deeper reflection, I realize that others of my economically poor clients experienced nearly unbearable social injustices unreachable by social welfare policies, services, and programs. As casework relationships took me deeper into the lived experiences of my clients and our communities, so my outrage deepened at astonishing social injustices and exclusion of poor people from mainstream community, not only unreachable by social welfare policies and services, but immune to social work advocacy and community organization best practices.

Economic Poverty at the "Disconnect": It Ain't the Same When You're Poor

Yeah Right, Ambulatory Schizophrenic

Early on in my practice, nearing the end of "deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill" from state mental hospitals there was "Fifi," a flamboyantly dressed client my mental health colleagues diagnosed with the rubric "ambulatory schizophrenic." She was known around the neighborhood as a lovable, laughable "street character" for her unusual attire and ostentatious behavior that spared no one, especially those in power. Her outrageous wardrobe matched her behavior—white majorette boots, a red velvet mini-skirt, a lacy blouse, a trailing yards-long wedding dress veil, and a colorful wig topped off with a Cincinnati Reds baseball cap. Although never homeless, Fifi was a regular attendee at soup kitchens, Hamilton County Court

proceedings, political campaigns (she had attempted to enter the New Hampshire Presidential primary in 1968, running as Princess Running Waters Red Legs St. Swanee) (Freeman, 2007) and City Council meetings. Taking full advantage of "public comment" opportunities, she could bring an assembly to raucous laughter with her uncanny ability to point out foibles of elected officials or pompous language of proposed legislation.

To avoid arrest under then current municipal codes for "vagrancy" Fifi daily pinned a $1 bill on her blouse or coat lapel, accurately reasoning that as she was not impecunious she couldn't possibly be a vagrant. She enjoyed pointing this out by thumping her finger on her $1 clearly announcing, "Legal-tender-verified-by-the-Federal-Government." This proved to be important during the 1976 trial of Larry Flynt and *Hustler* magazine, of which the outcome was an indictment and a guilty verdict for obscenity and racketeering. Each day during several weeks of the trial in the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, Mr. Flynt parked his sporty white Corvette in the truck zone just outside my office window, opening the door for his wife, Althea Leasure, to escort her across the street to the courthouse. On each day of the trial, Fifi appeared near the Corvette with shopping bags filled with copies of *Hustler* magazines to follow the Flynts to the courthouse where she distributed his magazine. Legal tender pinned to her shirt seemed to protect Fifi from arrest for vagrancy, or perhaps because no uniformed Officer or Deputy dared risk being seen with a *Hustler* when on duty. Somehow her right to "distribute" obscene materials remained unchallenged; after all, she wasn't selling anything. Flynt was found guilty of obscenity and racketeering and was spared tickets for parking his Corvette in the truck zone and Fifi distributed her entire supply of magazines. Fifi told me after the trial, "Larry was a nice boy who should never have been tried like that because he never forced anyone to read his magazines."

Years later, Flynt was prosecuted again by Hamilton County for distribution of material harmful to juveniles (Ohio Revised Code [ORC] §2907.31), without Fifi's magazine distribution. Fifi's foresight and interpretation of the City's vagrancy code heralded community-wide attention to vagrancy and free speech when the City passed laws to prohibit panhandling and to establish drug exclusion zones in OTR, laws that voided vagrancy codes but stifled free speech and freedom to move about, and ultimately did not withstand judicial review.

Utilities Off and On

Long time Cincinnati residents Antonio and Bessie and their four school-age sons lived in OTR, each of their families of origin having been displaced from the historic African-American community of the West End during urban renewal (some say "negro removal") to build interstate highways. Antonio worked full-time in the scrap yard (now it would be called a recycling business) where his father had worked for a generation; his mother and Bessie's mother as many African-American women of their generation, were domestic workers for prominent, white Cincinnati families. Bessie worked part-time in a school cafeteria, part-time of a day and of the year so she could be at home when the boys came home from school, and during school holidays and summer vacation. I knew the family for seasonal services: sending the boys to summer camp, lots of sports-oriented Christmas toys, and a summer reading program for Antonio, Jr. when he was transitioning from elementary to junior high school. Their finances worked if

everything happened as planned: Antonio got to work his scheduled 40 hours each week, Bessie got to work her regularly scheduled 28 hours, and Bessie's documentation and papers for the county welfare worker's quarterly redetermination of eligibility for Food Stamps and CHIP came off with no problems—Bessie prayed, "Please Jesus, let there be nothing missing and the caseworker makes no mistakes!"

Financial catastrophe ravaged the budget when the scrap yard lost a huge contract selling scrap metal to foreign markets and Antonio lost hours. Bessie fainted at work and was not allowed to return without a doctor's note and had to wait for a standby clinic appointment waiting nearly three weeks, and three weeks with no pay. The landlord was willing to wait for rent, but then it happened—the utilities were shut-off. The weather was still cold but beyond the utility winter shut-off rule. The family unified efforts to raise cash for reconnection: Antonio, Sr. begged his boss for extra hours to no avail; he and Bessie tried to sell plasma at the local commercial "blood bank" (Bessie was rejected for high blood pressure, Antonio got $18), and Antonio, Jr. and his brothers collected aluminum cans to sell for a few dollars. Then it happened, Cincinnati Gas & Electric Co. (CG&E, now Duke Energy) shut-off both gas and electric service.

Antonio's desperation took hold. At nightfall, after a cold supper and a "game" with the boys to sleep in their sleeping bags for warmth, just like being at camp, he opened the window and crawled out to the metal fire escape to see if he could figure out the wiring and a way to bypass the meter to reconnect electric service, and tomorrow try to figure out something to restore gas services. With flashlight and tools in hand, Antonio went to work to "hotwire" the meter. An enormous bolt of electric current struck Antonio the instant he made contact and he was badly shocked and burned. The paramedics of the responding life squad thought he was dead. They raced him to the hospital and miraculously he lived.

Antonio, Sr. was hospitalized for long-term, intensive treatment for his severe burns and injuries from the electrical shock. Bessie and the boys were eventually evicted and came to the Emergency Home Shelter for Women and Children without Antonio, Jr., who at age 16 fled to stay with his cousins away from those little kids in the shelter, and so none of the guys at school would know he was in a homeless shelter. He handled these unbearable circumstances finding solace in break-dancing, and as Bessie later realized, he was "running with the wrong crowd" and skipping school. (Several years later Antonio, Jr. was killed in the cross fire of someone else's botched drug deal.)

Then this unbearably sad situation took an unexpected turn on the day of Antonio, Sr.'s release from hospital: the Deputy Sheriff appeared with a warrant for his arrest for felony utility fraud and took him directly to jail from the hospital. Bessie got word of the arrest at the shelter, crying out in disbelief, her agony palpable: "Oh dear Jesus, he was only trying to help us! He hurt no one but his-self!" Sobbing as she told the boys what happened, barely able to say what we all felt, "He paid the price in pain in that hospital bed…it was so scary...we know it was wrong, and it nearly killed him, but he did for us…for a few hundred dollars when we had nothing." We were all in tears. The next day there was a trial and Antonio was sent to jail for six months, convicted of utility fraud. A felony.

A few weeks later, a man from a prominent affluent Cincinnati family was also charged with utility fraud by the Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company for theft of electric services at the Riverfront Coliseum, built to be the home of professional basketball and hockey teams, and the venue for rock concerts and ice shows. He was a lawyer and majority owner-manager of the Coliseum and had successfully by-passed the electric meters of the Coliseum allowing his company to avoid paying for electric service for a period of time long enough to incur charges of more than $750,000. Investigation also revealed a similar theft of water from the Cincinnati Water Works during the same period bringing the total of the thieveries to nearly $1m. He was convicted of both thefts committed by tinkering with the meters. His *modus operandi* was later revealed when the Coliseum was sold to new owners, a sports writer noted "the former Coliseum president spent six years ripping off CG&E stealing $750,000 worth of electricity…at first he stuck magnets on the meters, when that didn't work, he simply turned the meters off." (Daugherty, 1993). He was defended before the Court by a law firm as prominent as his own family and their company. He was found guilty of both thefts, his company repaid CG&E, and he avoided jail as the judge reduced his five-year sentence to probation for utility fraud. A felony.

Prostitution and Principle

Under the headline, "Dead prostitute testified against cop," the *Cincinnati Post* news account begins, "Nikia Mapp's short, sad life was mostly spent in the dark corners of Over-the-Rhine" (Garretson, 2003). Although I knew several members of Nikia's extended family, I had not met Nikia, but wept with her kin and most of our OTR community at her tragic and complicated death. My despair deepened when I found "RIP Nikia" signs scrawled on several buildings on Elm Street near where Nikia lived: Huge block letters spray painted by neighborhood teens bringing me a visceral understanding of both "Rest in Peace - RIP" and realities of life in the 'hood. The most poignant of the "RIP Nikia" signs was at the Pool Room, 1737 Elm Street: painted-over fading but perfectly executed graphics of a scantily clad woman in stylized bondage superimposed on top of a male figure, somewhere between S&M and *Hustler* magazine, but 13 blocks north of Larry Flynt's Books, Magazines & Gifts on Elm Street. As the agonizing realities of Nikia's death began to sink in, I began to "git da' message" of our hip-hop generation graffiti artists and their lived experiences in OTR's 'dark corners' and the emerging gentrification of residential streets and disappearing affordable housing.

The "RIP Nikia" signs were but six blocks from where youthful OTR artists had scribed "The Rose that Grew from Concrete 2 Produce RIP, M.T.A."—artistically scripted on a vacant building on McMicken Street, paraphrasing legendary Tupac Shakur's famous poem "The Rose that Grew from Concrete...when no one else even cared" (Shaw & Shakur, 1996). It was autographed not with initials, but hip-hop lingo MTA - "More Than Anything." And another 'message' nearby, perhaps more explicative of Nikia's life and death, was more excruciating: "All Good Niggas Die in Violence."

Nikia's body was found in the dark of a bitterly cold night on January 12, 2003, set afire under a construction shed on Stark Street, so badly burned the responding police officers had difficulty determining if it was a woman or man. It was Nikia, age 30, lifelong resident of OTR who was

brave enough to testify against a cop who offered to accept sex *in lieu* of arresting her for prostitution. She had consented to avoid jail; he threatened to kill her if she talked. Nikia was strong enough and brave enough to testify against former Police Officer Patrick Knight, who was indicted and convicted on two counts of bribery and one of sexual battery for his actions.

We will never know how Nikia found the courage to testify to three occasions that Officer Knight demanded sex *in lieu* of arrest, threatening to kill her and her family if word got out. County Prosecutor Chris McEvilley pressed the charges against him. Judge Robert S. Kraft found him guilty on all counts with Nikia as witness. Ms. McEvilley spoke to the press of her respect for Nikia, "She got nothing out of it…recognize her courage to stand up and tell what happened against a respected Police Officer…regardless of her lifestyle, recognize her as a principled and courageous person." The prosecutor and the poet would have been in agreement on this one, as Tupac's words paraphrased by the OTR hip-hop artists were, "All good niggers, all the niggers who change the world die in violence. They don't die in regular ways." (Shaw & Shakur, 1996). Nikia did not die in 'a regular way.' If only the Anna Louise Inn Off the Streets™ program for recovering prostitutes had been available then!

Nikia's murder remained unsolved for a decade until Jessie Collins was indicted in 2013 on two counts of murder, one each for felonious assault, gross abuse of a corpse, and tampering with evidence. Knight was still incarcerated. RIP Nikia.

Violating Nellie, but Not the Law

Teenager Nellie came to the Emergency Shelter for Women and Children, but a few days after her thirteenth birthday, holding her newborn infant daughter for us to see, as if showing off a new pair of shoes. She and baby Samantha were referred by University Hospital social workers who had been unable to find a responsible adult for Nellie's discharge from the Maternity Ward and were stunned when the father of the baby appeared. His name was Harold, and he proudly proclaimed paternity, asked to sign the birth certificate, saying, "Pretty good for an old guy of 53 years." As the hospital social workers couldn't find a parent or guardian for Nellie and the baby, they made a referral to Children's Protective Services, and brought both to the shelter so together we could sort out this heartbreaking case. When I searched the shelter records, I found that Nellie and her mother had been in the shelter several years earlier after an eviction from an OTR apartment that was the only place then-10 year-old Nellie had ever lived. We found a new apartment in a six-unit building, Mom went to work second shift, Nellie went back to school to begin the fifth grade, but now at 13 she had not yet finished the sixth grade. It was at this new apartment that Nellie met next door neighbor Harold whom she visited nightly while her Mom went to work, first sharing pizzas and cheeseburgers, eventually Harold's bed.

Nellie still looked like a child: Her strawberry blond curly hair fell over her eyes in long ringlets that she repeatedly tried to pull behind her ears, her freckles darkened from time spent during the summer at the recreation center swimming pool, and just six weeks before Samantha was born. There is something gut-wrenching with each admission of a minor mother cum-newborn to the shelter, but this one was extraordinarily disquieting. Nellie was just thirteen and Harold was 53, a 40-year age difference that meant Nellie was impregnated when she was 12, 40-years age

difference! This case was finally sorted out, Nellie and Samantha were "placed" in protective care with Nellie's mother —not Harold—who moved to another county away from Harold under court-ordered supervision by that county's protective services for both minor mother and child.

This case continued to haunt me, especially when I learned Harold could not be charged with anything illegal, not even statutory rape, as the "age of consent for sexual activity" in Ohio at the time was 13 (ORC §2907.02 - ORC §2907.04). A commonplace notion of "statutory rape" that having sex with anyone under age 16 is rape - victimizing by the "status" of age - was a myth, a misconception, NOT the law. In Ohio, the "age of consent" was 13, and as Samantha's birth was to a 13 year-old mother, Harold escaped the law. I had to say it out loud to believe it, and then say it again. This meant that Harold's sexual contact with 12 year-old Nellie did not violate the law, he had only violated Nellie. By Ohio statute, that was okay. No, it couldn't be!

My growing indignation about this case propelled me to call together ten of my women colleagues in social work and public service, each with expertise and interest in direct service for teenagers, health care and/or public policy administration. We were broadly representative of several points of view, especially "hot button" matters like teenage sex, abortion, minor mothers, sex education, "illegitimate" births to the unwed, etc. We included representation from our local Planned Parenthood Association and its nemesis, Crisis Pregnancy Center, developed by local Right-to-Life followers. We agreed to advocate for teen pregnancy prevention, directing our advocacy toward social and legal policies, not toward forming new social or health care services. We called ourselves Tackling Teen Pregnancy through Prevention (T2P2). Before we could get to work on teen pregnancy prevention and the Ohio Code on age of consent for sexual activity, an absurd scrap with the Mattel Toy Company brought us visibility, even some credibility in the community. Mattel's toy catalog for the upcoming Christmas shopping season introduced a new toy doll they named "My Baby Bundle," a baby doll sold in a soft fabric pouch for a child to strap around her waist simulating pregnancy, popping open a Velcro fastener for the birth of the baby complete with a birth announcement card to reveal "It's a Boy!," or "It's a Girl!," or miraculously for some, "It's Twins!" Mattel marketed the doll as an educational toy; T2P2 viewed it as about playing pregnancy and marketing pregnancy to latency-age children. Local broadcast media picked up our T2P2 press conference to protest the doll, several outlets airing it out of disbelief that Crisis Pregnancy Centers and Planned Parenthood were in agreement. A local talk show host branded us as "a motley crew of women on a mission being silly and naive about sex education." *Cincinnati Post* reporter Laurie Petrie, writing under the headline, "Women fight pregnancy doll as tide of teen parents rises," added "The women object to Mattel's new toy because they believe it gives children the message that pregnancy is a game" (1992). The context for Ms. Petrie's article was then-current in-depth coverage on prevention of teen pregnancy that was emerging in national conversation leading up to the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (PRWORA). The local and national conversations were promulgated by ideological arguments that preventing teenage pregnancy (by abstinence from sexual activity prior to marriage) would reduce the unwed mothers of single parent families who had no "personal responsibility," and thereby reduce spending on Federal programs and eliminate Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Mattel responded by sending two bright, sharply dressed women executives to meet with our group to explain the psychological research the company used to develop the doll, inexplicably asking for our endorsement! Without

endorsement, the executives returned to California, and within a few weeks a local merchant advised that "My Baby Bundle" was no longer available from the distributor.

We soon went to work on Ohio's "age of consent for sexual activity," joining with nearly a dozen advocacy groups from other locations in Ohio and were successful in repealing a part of the Ohio Code to restore "age of consent for sexual activity" to 16 (ORC §2907.04) and a related but more important revision to include "sexual contact with anyone under age 13" as a felony in the Code defining Rape (ORC §2907.02).

Forty Five Years Later...It Still Ain't the Same if You're Poor

Preparing this reflective review of my years of social work practice with those who are economically poor is a humbling exercise that I find both exhilarating and painful. It has deepened my respect for the hundreds of poor people who dared trust me enough to participate in casework and community relationships, who shared their life stories and lived experiences, both heartwarming and heartbreaking, on matters ranging from: having food every day to the First Amendment; from prostitution to principled testimony; from child violation to child protection; and even insights from "Happy" to Tupac...M.T.A.

From Maria and her baby, Desmond and Mr. B., I learned that our social work services and tools undergirded by public social welfare policies and regulatory procedures reach profound needs and require vigilant protection from capricious legislators who "reform welfare" and threaten to "privatize Social Security," and shamelessly support erasure of poor people from communities to advance corporate-driven economic development.

From Marlene and Antonio, Sr. I learned about the depth and frequency of local social injustices unseen and unknown by mainstream society: employers with 'off the grid' payroll practices and no insurance protections; inequity in sentencing for felons of poverty and affluence.

From Fifi and hip-hop graffiti artists I learned more about the 1st Amendment and freedom of expression, no matter how outrageous or disquieting, than found in textbooks, continuing education seminars, or legal documents.

From Nikia and Nellie I learned about women's rights, sexism and abuse in real time, in ways that provide stunning clarity to feminist theory and bring startling urgency to advocacy of women's movements; from Nikia and the prostitute residents of ALI, I learned of the profound courage of women to protect our rights and rectify injustice; and from Nellie we (as advocacy is not solo, this requires first person plural) found the determination to change the Ohio Revised Code.

As I own my social work practice history and this reflection, I recognize that our shared social work knowledge (especially our poverty knowledge), however well researched and well tested in practice, is ill-equipped to respond to current socio-economic-political realities where corporate powers obviate democratic participation in public decision-making. When social policy decisions are driven by corporate interests, "research" comes from ideological "think tanks"

rather than social science; when communities are denied access to policy decisions on social welfare and community development, our advocacy practice and community organization capacities are effectively impotent. Similarly, public policy decisions made "in private" without grievance procedures and recourse are not contestable and hence are immunized from traditional advocacy and community organization. Recent examples are found in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, and closer to home in the privatization of the authority of our City Planning Department for purposes of corporate driven economic development. My hope is that as a matter of urgency, the present generation of social workers, social work educators, and researchers can research and refine social work best practices to recoup our powers to work for social and economic justice for all of our clients and communities.

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Integrating Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Practice in Interdisciplinary Work with Rhode Island's Homeless Community

Megan Christine Smith

Abstract: The interrelatedness of micro and macro practice has been a pervasive theme in my decade of work with Rhode Island's homeless community. Lessons learned along my professional journey and several current practice examples highlight how these spheres of practice are inseparable. Integrated practice elicits philosophical and logistical questions, including how to balance systems-level and client-level work, respect epistemic privilege, acknowledge commonality with our clients, navigate ethical challenges, cultivate frustration tolerance, and maintain multiple accountabilities. It has ramifications for how we teach, manage programs, and practice as individuals and as a profession. I have found that embracing the opportunities and challenges presented by integrated micro and macro practice can lead us to be more impactful in our client- and systems-level work and more creative and fulfilled as practitioners.

Keywords: homelessness, social justice, integrated (micro-macro) practice, experiential learning, interdisciplinary learning, social work education

This year marks my tenth year of doing work with the homeless community and my first as a newly minted MSW graduate. While my degree is recent, I feel that the whole of this past decade has contributed to my worldview and practice as a social worker. My career thus far has reinforced time and time again that finding ways to integrate micro, mezzo, and macro practice leads to clients and communities that are more connected and better served and to practitioners who are able to practice more creatively and sustainably. To me, these benefits make it well worth navigating the unique practical and ethical challenges that come with melding the two.

This reflection considers how my focus on the interconnectedness of the micro and macro spheres has emerged organically from my personal and professional trajectory and is highlighted in my current position. I then consider several themes emerging from those interconnections and discuss how these have shaped my thinking about social work education, program development, and our roles individually and as a profession.

A Natural Progression Toward Social Work

Hindsight has a way of filtering out what is relevant from the background noise. When I look back on my undergraduate years, I remember few things as clearly as my first interactions with Rhode Island's homeless community: I remember my first visit to a shelter, my first evening of outreach, my first rally, and my first time mourning someone who died on the streets. While I knew immediately that I was in love with this population and wanted to work with the homeless community for the long haul, figuring out how to do so was a longer process that ultimately led me to social work.

When I was a student at Brown University, I belonged to a student group, Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE), that did a range of work in the homeless community in close coordination with people experiencing homelessness. HOPE did (and continues to do) a range of work, including outreach, coordinating a soup kitchen, and participating in advocacy and organizing campaigns. HOPE was founded by Catholics of the liberation theology tradition, who believed that charity alone is insufficient, and that, instead, the goal should be solidarity with those who are poor and oppressed. This philosophy and practice model led me to naturally see homelessness more from the perspective of those experiencing it and through a mezzo/macro frame, something further reinforced by my coursework in Urban Studies. This helped me to become attuned to the lived realities of those on the street and the systemic oppressions manifest in those narratives. It also forced me to learn how to communicate this information to providers and others for whom this was not a natural perspective.

These two streams of knowledge—what I had learned from individuals who were experiencing homelessness and what I had learned through my academic studies of community organizing and public policy—came together during my junior year when I was involved in the creation, maintenance, and public relations of the visible tent cities in Rhode Island. This experience was jarring for me; it threw philosophy and practice and hypothesis and reality into stark relief. There were dramatic contrasts between moments of great collectivity and mutual care within the homeless community and moments of equally great violence and degradation. There were times when society rose to the occasion, sharing of spirit and material resources with the tent cities, and times when people screamed obscenities, threw trash, and physically, legally, and politically attacked our leaders. When I talked about what I had seen with others, I was hesitant to discuss the breadth of my experiences in the tent cities for fear of reinforcing negative stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness. These events left me with deep questions about my role in this work and its sustainability, and a deep appreciation for the importance of having communities of support with whom we can discuss our deepest concerns.

After graduating, I worked in paid positions in mainly direct service capacities, including as a shelter coordinator and case manager. While I loved the client contact these positions offered, I was frustrated by the systemic constraints faced by our clients and, by extension, us as workers. I remained involved as a volunteer in homeless organizing and advocacy work, including the formation of a largely peer-run advocacy group, the Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project (RIHAP) and the advocacy for and ultimate passage of the Hate Crimes Against the Homeless bill and the Homeless Bill of Rights. While I witnessed successes large and small, it was during this interval that I felt most burned out. I questioned deeply whether I had any value as an outsider and as a novice, and whether I had the capacity to daily witness the trauma perpetuated against individuals experiencing homelessness and the apathy with which it is often met by broader society.

My closest collaborator in this work at the time was John Joyce, my partner and a person who had experienced homelessness. We had met while organizing the tent city, at which time he was still homeless. Our four-year relationship was a time of tremendous personal and professional growth for me: I had the opportunity to be with someone as he soared in the face of tremendous

odds. John had to fight through the layers of stigma that come with being homeless, having a substance use disorder, and having a criminal record. He had to fight through the logistics of rebuilding a life: a work history with long gaps in it due to homelessness and incarceration, a driver's license suspended because of unpaid child support, and a dismal credit score due to divorce and unemployment. He also had to navigate layers of trauma: guilt over how he had left things with his ex-wife and children, shame about past things he had done, and grief for the friends he had lost while homeless. Despite these odds, he was hired as an outreach worker and case manager and did amazing direct practice and advocacy work until his death from lung cancer in 2013 at the age of fifty. Experiencing these processes as a partner before navigating them as a case manager gave me a deeper understanding of how society treats those who have experienced homelessness. It also gave me insight into the notion of "choice," and how that concept loses meaning when an individual's options are constricted to a singularity.

I also discovered that I could not sustainably approach the issue of homelessness from only a macro or micro perspective. When I did just the former, I felt disconnected, elitist, and useless. When I did just the latter, I felt swamped, complacent, and helpless. The ability to approach social justice issues from both the individual and systemic perspective drew me to social work, and my time as an MSW student reinforced for me my love of the profession. I love how few absolutes there are, and how much emphasis there is on process and context. The field gives me a space to critically consider my role and goals as a person and as a professional, and to see how our system of social work education simultaneously divides and attempts to connect micro and macro practice.

All of this figuring out has taken place in Rhode Island. Working in the same community in a small state for a decade allowed me—forced me—to learn many things. I learned geographies, resources and resource gaps, the system and its quirks, and personalities. I learned what is static and what is dynamic. I also learned the importance of cultivating humility and frustration tolerance, because doing the same work with the same people for so long means that I have done a lot of learning in public. I have made mistakes in public, changed my opinions in public, mourned in public, and grown in public. I made (and continue to make) the conscious decision to continue to practice in the same place, which means that I am required to find ways to integrate the weight of this history into my practice. This is something that I have attempted to do in my current position.

Building Advocacy into Direct Service Work

At the end of 2014 I was approached by the House of Hope about writing a proposal for the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) grant. PATH is a program of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that provides outreach-based services to adults experiencing homelessness and serious mental illness or co-occurring disorders (SAMHSA, 2016). In writing the proposal, we intentionally incorporated a systems change component into the work. This came both from a philosophical commitment to social justice and a practical realization that a small staff will never be able to meaningfully serve this population without a dramatic change in the ways in which mainstream resources are

accessed and allocated.

We were awarded the grant, and with subsequent expansion the outreach program now comprises five full-time outreach case managers (myself included), a part-time psychiatrist, peer mentors, and interns from several academic programs. I am the program manager, and divide my time among outreach, case management, program management, and organizing and policy work. Our direct practice included over 3,000 outreach contacts with 324 individuals between July 2015 (when the grant started) and June 2016. These individuals were connected with a variety of internal and external resources, including intensive case management, housing through the high acuity placement committee and other channels, mental health care and substance use treatment (both emergency and community-based), income through the SOAR program, training through the peer mentor program, and day services at multiple sites.

Our macro-level work includes increasing on-ramps to services in non-traditional settings (streets, municipal courts, libraries, parks), combating the criminalization of homelessness and behavioral health challenges (including anti-panhandling and anti-loitering ordinances), and enhancing resource provision to underserved and especially vulnerable populations (transition-age youth, medically complicated individuals, individuals who identify as LGBTQ, older adults). This takes the form of education (of peer mentors, medical, nursing, and social work students), accompaniment (cop watches, on-call panhandling observation), community organizing (press conferences and actions against the Providence Downtown Improvement District's attempts to move the visibly poor out of the downtown area), policy advocacy (for more resources for transition-age youth and enhanced coordination of care with community mental health centers), political advocacy (for the provision of counsel in municipal court and for shelter standards), litigation (against anti-homeless laws and uninformed sex offender registration policies), and research (about synthetic cannabinoid use and emergency room treatment).

These spheres of work are inherently interrelated, and a few stories illustrate how inseparable they are. In each case, the intersectionality provides an opportunity both to improve individual-level outcomes and highlight systems-level barriers in our structures of service provision.

Sarah

Sarah (name changed) is a young woman diagnosed with an intellectual disability and bipolar disorder who was experiencing street homelessness when she was engaged through outreach. She had a history of violent interpersonal relationships following her discharge from a residential program as a youth. She was connected with student navigators through the Rhode Island Medical Navigator Partnership (RIMNP), a collaboration among the House of Hope, the Alpert Medical School, the Rhode Island College School of Social Work, and Brown University that links teams of students with a client with complex care needs to assist her or him in navigating the healthcare system.

Given her history of residential placement, the team advocated for her to receive care through the state's Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals. In the process of reviewing her medical records, the students noticed that she had marked cognitive decline. They were then able to advocate to her primary care provider to conduct further testing, which revealed a surgically correctable condition. This allowed her to receive needed medical treatment and to be found eligible for more intensive community-based supports. While she is now closed to services, she remains in contact with her former case manager and navigators. Without the added level of care she received through RIMNP, she would have continued to be seen only as a snapshot by emergency treatment providers and, in all likelihood, would have continued to be street homeless. Her story emphasizes the importance of outreach, longitudinal care, and interprofessional collaboration, and demonstrates how easily very vulnerable individuals can slip through the cracks of our community mental healthcare system.

Allen

Allen (name changed) is a middle-aged man with a severe alcohol use disorder who was engaged through outreach. He was frequently arrested and charged with open container violations. Prior to the advocacy that created a public defender position in Providence municipal court, he had served time in jail for these violations. In collaboration with the public defender, the city solicitor, and the House of Hope, he was diverted from jail and instead was offered detox and an apartment upon completion of a treatment program, equal in length to the time he would have served in jail.

He tells us he appreciates having an apartment; he also prefers to spend the majority of his time outside with his friends who are homeless, and continues to use alcohol. He has challenged us to base our metrics of success on his own perception of his quality of life, not on our objective measures. On the systems level, he has challenged us to revisit policies, such as no alcohol use in permanent supportive housing, that place people who are actively using substances into no-win situations, and the potentially coercive nature of post-booking diversion programs.

Ivan

Ivan (name changed) is a middle-aged man who panhandles as a way to supplement his social security income. When first engaged during outreach, he stated that he prefers to stay "outside the system." Nonetheless, he would regularly check in with outreach workers. He reached out to the PATH team when he was harassed by an officer and threatened with arrest for panhandling, something that advocates had recently worked to decriminalize in Providence. PATH staff and interns acted as observers for him, accompanying him while panhandling and capturing video of the police harassing him.

This had an empowering effect on Ivan and a deterrent effect on the police department. It also strengthened the rapport between us. He consented to an intake and assessment, and we were able to work together on replacing his documentation and referring him to housing, which he has recently obtained. He still panhandles and checks in regularly with outreach workers. He also

periodically attends Rhode Island Homeless Bill of Rights Defense Committee meetings, the clearinghouse for the state's work on the decriminalization of homelessness and poverty.

Themes Emerging from Integrated Practice

As these vignettes highlight, when we look at our work with an eye to both micro and macro factors, it is nearly impossible to think of a practice example that does not cross the perceived divide between these spheres of practice. Literature on the topic emphasizes the importance of integrating micro and macro practice for the health of the social work profession as a whole (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005), to be able to "adequately pursue social justice…in the clinical context" (Vodde & Gallant, 2002, p. 439), and to legitimize macro practice, the "stepchild" of social work (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014, p. 92). Multiple models of practice have been identified to bridge this divide: these include narrative-deconstructive practice (Vodde & Gallant, 2002), anti-oppressive practices and critical consciousness (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005), the life course perspective (Hutchinson, 2005), and community-centered clinical practice (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005). In reviewing the literature on these models, I found many aspects of them to resonate with my philosophy and practice as a social worker.

Respect for Epistemic Privilege

The first people who taught me about homelessness and intersecting issues were people who had experienced them. I learned from people staying in the street what the barriers are to housing, from people seeing healthcare what prevents them from getting treatment, and from people charged with crimes what the context of those charges are. This way of gaining knowledge made it natural for me to see the person experiencing homelessness as the expert, and when I heard a provider or policymaker say something disconsonant from what I had heard on the street, I would assume the professional (not the individual experiencing homelessness) to be misguided. While a social work student, I heard this called "epistemic privilege": While those who are experiencing homelessness, like other vulnerable and marginalized populations, lack many forms of privilege, by definition they are the experts in their own lives, experiences, and situations (Payne, 2014).

In my daily practice, I try to maintain this focus on client as expert. Sakamoto & Pitner (2005) emphasize our role as listeners and learners: "The social worker becomes a naive investigator, making the service user the narrator of his or her own experiences" (p. 443). This means giving clients the space to frame their own narratives and advocating for them when others attempt to discredit those narratives, as in the case of Allen. Allen sees himself as a vital part of a community of people who are experiencing homelessness and who in many cases use substances. Some elements of our system see Allen as a habitual drunkard who shows his lack of gratitude for his housing by loitering in public spaces. As a social worker, it is my responsibility to frame my advocacy for him in a way that is based on his view of his reality. This example also demonstrates how considering "local knowledge" and "lived experience" is also crucial to the systems-level aspect of the work, as these individual frames impact the "macro narratives" that shape how homelessness is perceived and thus addressed (Vodde & Gallant, 2002, p. 442).

As a supervisor and as a teacher, respect for epistemic privilege has led me to place a high value on experiential learning. Just as I first learned by doing work in and speaking with the homeless community and then applying an academic vocabulary to what I saw, it is important to me that the students and interns with whom I work have this opportunity for firsthand learning. It also means incorporating peers into our outreach team as equal members with valuable expertise and supporting them in their personal and professional advancement within our field.

Recognition That We Are Like Our Clients Far More Than We Are Unlike Them

A corollary to recognizing the unique epistemic privilege of those with whom we work is the realization that we have far more uniting us than we do dividing us. While I have not experienced homelessness - and I in no way wish to minimize the importance of this experience—not a week goes by when I cannot identify a shared experience with a client: growing up with a single parent, experiencing the death of a loved one, managing symptoms of anxiety and depression. More fundamentally, however, I am continually reminded that we all have intersecting identities that include positions of privilege and positions of oppression, and that we all interact with systems that are weighted by institutionalized injustice.

Adopting a stance of togetherness with clients and communities experiencing oppression can liberate us to engage collaboratively. Rather than being forced into the stance of being an apologist for the system and a broker of nonexistent resources for the client, we are able to critically consider how together we can navigate and change an unjust system. One of the ways this emerges most commonly is in regard to our housing system. Like many states, Rhode Island is moving toward a system that prioritizes housing based on acuity, the idea being that those most at risk of dying on the street should be the first to receive housing and services. While philosophically sound, this system can foment extreme frustration. At least monthly I have a client express some variation of, "So you're telling me that if I'm a crazy junkie I'll get housing, but since I'm trying to do the right thing, I'm out of luck." Rather than defending our system, I instead try to validate their frustrations and talk with them about how unjust the system is in that there are not sufficient resources for everyone. On good days, this conversation leads to a discussion of how we can work together as people constrained by the same system to overcome the person-specific and broader barriers to housing.

Balancing Fitting Client to System and System to Client

Since I began working in the homeless community, I have felt the tension between working with an individual client to help him or her navigate our system and working on the system to make it responsive to the needs of that client. When I learned about the person-in-situation frame that is so central to social work, I was gratified to learn that this dynamic is one that is explicitly considered within the profession and has been throughout its history (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005; Lundy & van Wormer, 2007). It acknowledges that we are faced with a continuous balancing act between supporting individuals in navigating our system as it is and fighting to make that system what it needs to be. I have come to believe that the point along this continuum at which we feel maximally effective in our work is unique to each of us.

What has helped me feel sustained is to find modes of practice that integrate these two aims: what my colleagues and I see and hear during outreach informs both our client-level case management and our organizing and policy change efforts. Our knowledge of what the homeless community is experiencing guides our advocacy, while our increased knowledge of the system as it is and the rationale (or lack thereof) for these structures helps us better navigate clients within its current constraints. Bridging this divide - and helping clients to bridge it - causes "the split between micro and macro…to dissolve as separate clients migrate to a community of resistance" (Vodde & Gallant, 2002, p. 445).

Consideration of Ethical Challenges

Similar to the issues described above, I felt the pull of ethical challenges long before I had a shared social work language with which to articulate them. What I first felt as internal unease I now know as managing dual/multiple relationships and boundary challenges. These include engaging with the same individuals as clients, organizing partners, and professional colleagues; navigating conflicts between case-level and cause-level advocacy; considering issues of paternalism versus self-determination; and balancing the needs of clients versus learners as we incorporate peers and students into the work (Reamer, 2003; Hardina, 2004).

The reality that I was already deeply immersed in these ethical challenges before I had a professional code of ethics to help guide me through them has led me to approach them with curiosity and critical reason rather than trepidation (Reamer, 2013). I come to my role as a social worker having had a romantic relationship with someone who had experienced homeless while I was a community organizer, having provided case management to several people who are now my colleagues, and having recently been a student in a program for which I now teach. These experiences have led me to believe that when successfully navigated, attunement to these issues leads to more considered decision-making and thoughtful practice. It forces us to eschew oversimplified perceptions and critically evaluate the deep "how" and "why" questions of our work.

However, when not attended to, bad outcomes result: clients are forced to deal with unclear roles and expectations and are tokenized and exploited for the "greater good." I have seen this happen several times, most particularly when peers are invited to participate only in a proscriptive capacity, and are not encouraged to remain connected to formal and informal supports. Having a

process for working through the ethical challenges inherent in this work and a culture that welcomes rather than fears such exploration is critical, and it is something I try to cultivate.

Cultivation of Frustration Tolerance, Acceptance of Ambiguity, and Trust In One's Gut

As practitioners (and human beings), it is tempting to try to manage uncertainty and change through attempts to control it. In my experience, this can be a recipe for intense stress and burnout. We are neither able to control clients nor systems, much less the complex interplay between and amongst them. All aspects of our work can engender frustration, from clients not

keeping appointments or following up on agreed-upon tasks, to agency or funder policies that hamper our ability to do our jobs, to laws and regulations that deny our clients life-sustaining benefits. Like most of my colleagues, I have experienced periods of feeling depressed, anxious, and uncertain about my worth and competence as a person and as a professional. Our system can put intense pressure on us to "figure it out" or "make the client understand the importance of doing X." This belies the reality that few of the issues we encounter are simple or have clear solutions, and that even fewer of those solutions are within our capacity to effect.

Instead, it is important to cultivate frustration tolerance, embrace ambivalence, trust our gut and conscience, and rely on our communities of support. I have tried to adopt a stance of "I have what I need to navigate this" rather than "I need to have the solution to this." Doing so helps move me toward feeling calm, curious, and connected. Such a position also allows us as social workers to model healthy interdependence and problem-solving, and stops us from falling into the trap of being seen by self or others as expert. Wong (2004) states that rather than rejecting discomfort, we should welcome it as a tool for growth. At the same time, we should ensure that taking this stance does not lead us to discount or diminish the importance of ethical standards, policies, laws, and standards of practice. Cultivating these qualities should not mean that we fight any less hard, hold ourselves any less accountable, or become complacent with an unacceptable status quo.

Practice with Multiple Accountabilities

With the exception of my first year of working with the homeless community as an undergraduate, I have never had a single mentor upon whom I have based my work, and I have never had a single supervisor or boss who has overseen all aspects of my job. This has led me to grow professionally through learning and receiving feedback from a wide range of intra- and interdisciplinary collaborators. Similarly, interdisciplinary work requires ongoing input from a broad range of stakeholders. This multiple accountability forces me as a practitioner, and us as a movement, to remain constantly attentive to the varied and shifting needs of many collaborators. It also requires that we are intentional about keeping the "big picture" in view: For me this has meant seeking external supervision, and for our collaborative work, this has meant a network of implementation working groups, constituent advisory boards, and other mechanisms for community accountability.

When done well, having these multiple accountabilities shields us as individuals and collectives from operating in an echo chamber, where all we hear from others is what we ourselves have said. It offers us a constant diversity of perspectives and forces these to be critically considered, synthesized, and collectively processed. When poorly implemented, conflicting input can result in paralysis and gridlock at the personal and organizational levels. Doing the work of integrating this chaos into our practice can also give us insight into our clients' experiences of trying to navigate a fragmented and convoluted system.

Integrating These Themes into Teaching, Program Management, and Professional Identity

As I continue my professional trajectory, I am intensely interested in how to integrate micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level work within our systems of education, our programs, our work as practitioners, and within the social work profession as a whole.

For Social Work Education

While social work programs may articulate a commitment to the integration of micro and macro practice, I have been struck by how difficult this is to operationalize in classroom material and field placements. I am particularly interested in how to create undergraduate and graduate social work curricula that provide students not only with direct practice and policy-level experience, but spaces to see, participate in, and discuss their interplay.

Multiple authors have noted that the structures of social work education can silo micro and macro practice, creating artificial divides between the two and the perception that the same practitioners cannot do substantive work in both spheres (Vodde & Gallant, 2002; Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005). This makes it difficult for social work education to achieve its stated aim to "meld personal, political and professional intentions, so that students can fight injustice while doing social work" (Rossiter, 2005, para. 5). Perpetuating this division may also contribute to oppressive systems though the "compartmentalisation" of social justice to the realm of macro practice (Vodde & Gallant, 2002, p. 455).

A modest attempt to overcome this divide is SWRK 580: Interdisciplinary Practice in the Homeless Community, a masters-level elective that I co-teach at the Rhode Island College School of Social Work. The course includes both classroom components (social work seminar and interdisciplinary lecture) and experiential education components (doing street outreach with a psychiatrist and case manager, attending a community meeting, participating in the RIMNP). Students are asked to write monthly reflections on their experiences, and there is time in seminar to discuss micro-macro crossover. It has been a joy to teach, and while it is only in its first year, students have become more engaged in both the clinical and policy aspects of homelessness and are aware of their interplay, as shown in their written work and community and class participation.

Both as a student and now as a faculty member, I have also seen the value of students being exposed to interdisciplinary work. Inter-professional education days—such as the one jointly facilitated by the University of Rhode Island, the Alpert Medical School, Rhode Island College, and Salve Regina University—provide students with an opportunity to do patient simulation and team building with peers from companion professions. Bringing such work into the community and providing for longitudinal patient engagement offers opportunities to build upon this work while also magnifying the logistical complexities of it. The RIMNP, which I help to facilitate, aims to build these kinds of networks by connecting a team of students with a client experiencing homelessness who has complex care needs and his or her community-based service providers. As a coordinator, I have the privilege of listening to and engaging with students who

are considering their experiences in relationship to their own and their colleagues' developing professional identities and to their future areas of professional focus.

In exploring how to link social work education to other programs and to the community, it is critical to consider how to best provide educational and professional advancement opportunities for peers and those with lived experience with homelessness and intersecting issues. In my experience, far too often peers hit a glass ceiling that makes unavailable or disincentivizes continued education beyond peer certifications. Any collaborations between social work programs and community partners should explore ways to invite and support peers in pursuing social work, case management, and advocacy and policy degrees.

For Program Development

As employees, it seems that we are constantly under pressure to align ourselves in horizontal layers, with those at the bottom doing the direct service work and those nearer to the top having progressively less direct client contact and more programmatic and policy responsibilities. I argue that this is a detriment to both client and social worker. For clients it means that once case managers become experienced, they often advance out of that role, and that those in positions to make policy decisions are often uninformed about clients' lived reality. For us as social workers, it leads to feelings of being trapped in one's role and the sense either that policy work is "above" one's scope of work, or that direct service work is "beneath" it.

In contrast to this, each member of the outreach program that I manage is involved in components of direct practice (both outreach and intensive case management/clinical service provision) and macro work (organizing, policy development and advocacy, program development, and research). That we as staff and interns have "vertical" slices of the pie, rather than the traditional "horizontal" slices, is meant to ensure that each of us is rooted in the ground truth of the homeless community and has the opportunity to work for systems-level change.

I want to continue to explore ways to structure our programs and funding sources in ways that allow and encourage workers to have this "vertical" slice. This includes finding ways to legitimize and document work at both the client and community level by building in flexibility, training, mentorship, and joint case-cause consultation, and implementing "new forms of accountability and managerial support" to support integrated practice (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005, p. 17).

One way to expand this work is through partnerships with academic programs such as those described above. The expectation that students have access to placements that offer integrated micro and macro work requires that community organizations take on this full scope of practice. This offers a more natural philosophical fit, as traditional funding sources often segregate direct practice from policy-focused work. This is of particular interest to me as someone who gravitates toward work in both the academic and nonprofit sectors.

For Us as Social Workers and for Social Work as a Profession

To act competently in environments that are chaotic, and where both our clients and we ourselves are considered outsiders, it is critical that we work from a place of confidence in our identities. I want to be part of creating and implementing educational and program management structures that support social workers who feel empowered to stand up for our clients and against those forces (agency policies, healthcare networks, the criminal legal system) that are damaging to them both individually and systemically.

Analogous to the importance of confidence for us as social workers, social work as a profession needs to be more comfortable with its own identity so that it can work more effectively with other disciplines. Pushes such as the medicalization of social work (Howard & Jenson, 1999) show attention to best practices, but also demonstrate a lack of self-perceived legitimacy as a profession. While social work's breadth has led it to be accused of lacking coherence (Specht & Courtney, 1995), I strongly believe that this flexibility allows it to remain nimble and relevant in ever-evolving clinical, policy, and research initiatives. The more closely we tailor our work to be relevant to the individuals and communities we serve, and the more we collaborate with other professions, the more closely we must hold our own sense of identity as a profession.

While I am confident in my practice and professional identity, I do not see myself as an expert. As discussed above, our clients and organizing partners are inherently the subject matter experts on their own lives, and we have the sacred obligation to take our lead from them. I always have been and always will be a learner, and I have and will continue to make countless mistakes. Rossiter (2005) states that these should be welcomed as a sign of innovation: workers ought to be lauded for their "willingness to think, self-reflect, and…uphold the primacy of question over answer" (para. 12). As I move forward in my practice, I am attempting to remember this and to be generous with myself and my colleagues as we continue to collectively learn by doing.

Looking Forward

Finding ways to integrate my micro, mezzo, and macro work has been a source of sustenance and inspiration, and I feel tremendous optimism about how social work and social workers will continue to find ways to bridge this perceived divide. In my experience, working in this manner benefits all involved: Clients are not defined by their problems but are recognized in their context and invited to join in changing it; social workers have opportunities for sustained practice and professional growth; and academic and community partners are able to share experience and resources. I also believe that it is fundamentally intuitive: If we invite ourselves, our clients, and our coworkers to think in this way, we do so naturally; it is our systems that push us to do otherwise. At my core, I feel strongly enough about this approach that I would rather fail at practicing in this way than succeed in doing so any other way.

A tremendous thank you to everyone who inspired, contributed to, and gave feedback to me throughout my career and in drafting this reflection.

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Confessions of a Reluctant Macro Practitioner

Joseph Walsh

Abstract: While social work education emphasizes the importance of practice at the macro and micro (or generalist) levels, most social workers choose direct practice roles rather than macro (administrative, policy, and planning) roles. As a long-time direct services provider, it has seemed to me that different skills are required for each type of practice. In my case, I have always been passionate about direct practice with persons who have serious mental illnesses. Early in my career, I was quick to become frustrated with my macro peers who, it seemed to me, lacked a full awareness of my clients' needs and thus failed to provide adequate resources for them. Gradually, however, I became aware that I needed to occasionally "step up" into macro practice roles to ensure that my clients were well served. The process was stressful for me, though, and I experienced several failures before coming to feel competent as a part-time macro practitioner. This is the story of my clumsy evolution.

Keywords: micro practice, macro practice, community mental health, social work administration

Confessions of a Reluctant Macro Practitioner

For more than 40 years I have enjoyed life as a direct social work practitioner in a variety of public agencies. My enthusiasm for practice emerged when I was fresh out of college (pre-MSW) and a minimum-wage-earning inpatient psychiatric technician; it was then that I discovered that I loved working with people who had severe mental disorders. After receiving my MSW degree, I became a community mental health social worker so that I could earn a living in that line of work. I enjoyed developing relationships with my clients and helping them find stability and meaning in their lives. It never bothered me, as it did many of my colleagues, that the pace of change for my clients was usually slow, or that their goals might seem modest.

Yes, direct practice was my passion, but along my professional path I reluctantly developed an appreciation for macro social work and, to my surprise, did some significant work in that capacity. I always knew that macro practice was important, but for years I thought I wasn't cut out for it, given my introversion, disdain for conflict, and limited ability to sit through long meetings. My macro peers seemed cut from a different cloth, eager to engage in organizational practice, community development, and political activity. They impressed and intimidated me.

The administrators at my agencies, many of whom were social workers, were of course essential, developing the policies and procedures that guided my work. We got along well on a personal level but it seemed to me that they were a different breed than those of us on the front lines. Being removed from face-to-face contact with clients, they didn't always seem to understand their needs or what life was like for us as we tried to advance our clients' interests with limited resources. In turn, they thought we did not understand the constraints on services related to policy and budgeting realities. They also had to dress much better than I wanted, which, rightly or wrongly, represented to me an innate conservatism on their part. At my worst moments I naively thought how much more enjoyable my job would be if I could avoid administrators

altogether and be left alone with my clients.

First Call to Action

My negative attitude about engaging in macro practice began to change during my 7th year in community mental health. A few years earlier I had developed the first psychoeducation group in our city for the family members of persons with psychotic disorders. The program was quite popular, making me a bit of a "name" in the regional social work community. Based on that reputation, I was contacted one summer by the Mental Health Association (MHA) to see if I would help to implement a local branch of a Schizophrenics Anonymous self-help program. The group was to be led by and for persons with schizophrenia, but as a sponsoring agency, the MHA wanted a professional practitioner to serve as a co-leader to help with its organization and be present in case crisis intervention was needed. I agreed. It sounded like a great program and was right down my alley.

When asked if I could help find a location for the weekly meetings, I offered my own agency since I would be attending the groups and we had space. I thought our director (a social worker) would be pleased with my initiative because of the positive publicity our agency would receive. Due to a vacation, I was not able to inform him of this development until one week before the advertised start date, so of course I was stunned when he said no. He explained that most of the participants would not be agency clients, and thus the agency would be liable for damages if anything negative happened to them. I was furious and objected on the grounds that "non-clients" regularly came to the agency, including the families who attended my psychoeducation group, but he stuck by his decision. I panicked, having promised a meeting place to a regionally advertised group with ten people already signed up. I spent five days frantically calling local organizations until finally a Methodist Church agreed to host the group. That was close!

The new program was a success, but more to the point, my concern about our director's reaction convinced me that I should try to participate in agency policy-making to advocate for my preferred client population. I explained to him that the agency's growing number of clients with major mental illness merited administrative representation. I asked for an appointment to meet with the Management Team, our policy-making body that consisted of the executive, assistant, support staff, and clinical directors. He agreed, and I became a part-time macro practitioner, retaining a 70% direct practice assignment.

For the first few months the experience was everything I had dreaded. Every Monday for two hours I sat through discussions about budgets, salaries, insurance providers, strategic planning, and staffing concerns. I had little patience for the long conversations and the drafting and redrafting of dull documents that occurred with every issue, and spent much of my time stifling yawns. Once, I seriously suggested that we place time limits on the amount of attention we could

devote to any single topic, but the others thought I was kidding. Finally, however, an issue emerged that excited me.

Social Workers and Case Managers

It was the late 1980s, and the county community services board (CSB) informed us (we were one of its five contract agencies) that it would be making a major investment in the promotion of services to persons with mental illness. It was prepared to earmark most of its resources toward the development of case management in all of its agencies. Five-member teams for assertive community treatment are now commonplace, but they were new at that time. The Board wanted my agency to staff one team of five staff (four case managers and a nurse) as well as two designated case managers (DCMs) who would work independently with the same population.

This was good news to me because of the client population involved, but I quickly became aware of two problems with the initiative. First, while my agency had always hired experienced staff with broad intervention skills and appropriate licensure, the CSB designated the new case management positions as non-clinical and encouraged the hiring of staff with only bachelor's degrees. The case managers would be expected to engage in referral and service coordination, but not psychotherapy. I could imagine a team of case managers providing a full range of services with a shared caseload, but I thought that the DCMs would need therapy skills because of their independent work with higher-functioning clients. I believed then, as I do now, that it was naive to consider the long-term case manager/client relationship as lacking therapeutic elements. Second, the other direct service staff at the agency, most of whom were my friends, had a heavy investment in the agency's reputation as a provider of high-quality clinical work and believed the new program would damage that reputation. I disagreed with them, but I also didn't want to risk damaging my friendships. I could foresee the emergence of programming and staffing conflicts with them, and I didn't like the feeling. Did I mention that I don't like conflict?

I was upset. I wanted the agency to hire licensed, graduate-level social workers as DCMs so that our clients with serious mental illness would get the best, most comprehensive interventions social work could offer. I expressed my concerns to the full staff at a weekly meeting (they respectfully disagreed with the philosophy of the case management initiative) and then privately to the director (who did not share my concerns, being most intent on cooperating with the board). The director did expand my macro roles, however. He acknowledged that he did not understand mental illness as well as he should and asked me to accompany him to the CSB's program planning meetings, which were normally restricted to agency directors. I was being drawn into macro practice in a more substantive way. I knew I should be there but I was uncomfortable walking into that massive downtown lair with a group of (I imagined) high-salaried administrators whom I didn't know well. I didn't feel ready for this. I'd rather have spent time with my clients.

Trying To Fit In

For the next three years I attended to part-time macro responsibilities at the agency and downtown. In Management Team meetings I was given the responsibility of writing job descriptions and hiring and supervising case managers. I felt adequate to those tasks, even though I could sense the displeasure of my agency peers each time we hired a new case manager or I organized another case management training opportunity. My visits to the CSB were far

more harrowing. Every two weeks I walked into the large, lavishly furnished office building, teeming with computers at every workstation. (Computers were not yet common, and none of us at my agency had one.) My director and I would be escorted in to a conference room as large as the entire first floor of our agency and seated at a semi-circular table across from what seemed like twenty CSB staff (there were probably six or seven), all of whom exuded (to me) airs of superiority and sophistication. I made a point of passively acting out my displeasure by wearing jeans and sneakers which, granted, wasn't very mature. Administrative staff from other mental health agencies were present as well. Everyone was cordial with one another, but not particularly friendly. I perceived a consistent atmosphere of mutual suspicion as the board staff and agency administrators negotiated their positions on case management programming. I didn't make any efforts to bridge those divides because of my insecurity in the setting. Looking back, though, I might have constructively used my "in the trenches" case manager perspective to help keep the focus on our clients' needs.

I didn't say much, and any efforts I made to show expertise were cancelled out by my low status among the group around the table. Since I was one agency-based social worker interacting with administrators of the large county mental health system, my arguments did not carry much weight. My discomfort escalated when I came into conflict with Board administration in delineating the range of necessary case management skills for working with clients who have long-term psychotic disorders. They pointed out, with justification (tending to speak to my supervisor instead of to me), the historically failed efforts of office-based practitioners to help those clients with "talk therapy." They believed that clients with mental illness benefitted from action, from participation in rehabilitative programs where they could learn and apply functional skills. Therapy-minded professionals would be reluctant to provide interventions that required referral, brokerage, and advocacy skills. I, in turn, cited literature advocating a practice model known as clinical case management, which asserted that the most effective case managers were able to combine clinical skills along with attention to environmental supports. Social workers, I argued, could do both effectively. The Board disagreed with me, not quite as respectfully as my peers did. My director also became less supportive of my position when it became clear that the agency could function more economically with lower-salaried case managers. Not surprisingly, the CSB's position carried the day. We got our team and designated case managers as they had directed. Interestingly, a CSB-sponsored study of the effectiveness of the new programs conducted several years later concluded that their use had not significantly improved client levels of social functioning. The Board interpreted these findings as pointing to a need for more environmental supports rather than a change in intervention philosophy.

Several years earlier I had returned to school to pursue a doctoral degree in social work so that I could teach and write, and after graduation I left the agency for a university job. I had never become comfortable in my macro roles during the past five years, but I could look back at a few accomplishments. While CSB administration had never considered my positions on case management to be sound, by virtue of my visibility there I developed a reputation in the county among some practitioners as an "expert" on case management and social work. By the time I left my job, I was making regular presentations on those topics at various agencies, arguing among friendlier audiences for the development of well-rounded clinical case managers, and perhaps I had some positive influence in those ways. One of the lessons I have learned over the years is

that it's often difficult to know as a macro practitioner if and how one is having influence.

After entering academia in another state, I continued providing direct services on a volunteer basis to individuals, families, and groups with mental illness. And, because my academic position required service activity, I joined two state mental health organizations and two local agency boards of directors, thinking that I might be able to help them with research and program development. One thing that prepared me well for those positions was my rapid accumulation of experience sitting on faculty committees, where the likelihood of resolving any issue quickly, and the likelihood of generating widespread agreement about anything, was remote. I got used to having my points of view respectfully invited and then dismissed, with no hard feelings. It was the same for all of my faculty colleagues.

The results of my first macro service activities in the new city were mixed. I appreciated the opportunity to participate in agency-based research, but the board experiences were frustrating. One board was primarily interested in fundraising (I had no money and no contacts), and the other, which had recruited me to help with program development, never gave me anything to do because I was a new and relatively young member among an established group of business persons. I still felt out of my element. I quit those boards and focused more on my academic work when, finally, a macro opportunity came along that excited even me!

Finally, A Good Fit

The State Social Work Board (SSWB) consisted of six social workers and three citizen members who were responsible for directing the process of licensure for social workers. The Board had seldom included a representative from the academic community, so one year I was nominated for an open seat by a group of regional social work leaders. I didn't know what to expect but while the idea of serving on the SSWB was anxiety-provoking it seemed like a good opportunity for me. Unfortunately, my fears intensified when, after my appointment, I attended an orientation for new members of the various state boards that included dozens of high-ranking professionals from medical and other health disciplines as well as several well-known politicians. These people seemed to know what they were doing!

Once the SSWB meetings got underway, though, I realized, to my astonishment, that at last I was in a macro role that might begin to feel comfortable. Finally! The daylong orientation was a confidence booster, and the organized format of the meetings (the full board met quarterly, with additional subcommittee and other special meetings) included clear expectations for all members, which I appreciated. Private citizens and representatives of social work organizations were free to attend meetings and provide testimony about any issues of concern, and they usually did. Board members came from around the state and had different practice backgrounds, so there were no apparent factions. At each meeting we were all greeted with handsome name placards, handouts, pens, notebooks, and even computers. I had never seen such thorough meeting preparations. I was in a macro setting where I actually felt welcome.

I was relatively quiet during my first year as I took time (perhaps too much time, given my macro insecurities) to learn the ropes of state board work and its relationship to legislative

activity. A major Board issue that arose shortly afterward, however, was the possibility of amending the state's definition of clinical social work practice. I was especially interested in that! It brought me full-circle to the situation 25 years earlier when I tried to advocate for the significance of therapeutic social work services for persons with serious mental illness. This time I was, to my surprise, more effective. Over time I successfully advocated, along with some peers, that the definition of clinical social work should be broadened to include the term "psychosocial interventions." Many social workers in case management roles were previously prohibited from getting licensed in the state because their services hadn't been consistent with the more restrictive previous definition, but with the change they might be license-eligible, depending on their educational backgrounds.

So how did it happen? Initially there was only modest support for the change among the members, and some state organizations opposed it, asserting that the practice of clinical social work should require the ability to provide diagnostic and psychotherapy services. Otherwise, it was argued, its skills would be "watered down" and insurance companies might not be willing to cover clinical social work. As I did two decades ago, I provided research to support my position (this time having better access to it) and articulated the uniqueness of the profession's person-in-environment perspective. The eventual acceptance of the change was probably in large part a result of compromise, agreeing to keep "psychotherapy" in the definition.

But another question remains: How did I rise to the occasion? In the past I had always doubted myself in these situations. This time I was more persistent and more comfortable with the process. I've spent a lot of time thinking about this, and a variety of factors were important. Some of them might seem silly, but all of these (in no particular order) contributed to my resolve:

The support staff was outstanding. They had excellent institutional memories, knew precisely what existed in the state laws, and kept such good minutes that they could always accurately report what had been said and done in previous meetings. (I have always been frustrated with people who erroneously recall what they have said or done previously, sometimes trying to change their stories to confuse me.)

The structure of the meetings assured that everyone would be heard. The Chair called on all members to talk, prevented spontaneous arguments from gathering momentum, and prevented side conversations. I can't say enough how frustrated I become in meetings where one party shouts over another in an effort to bully or dominate. I'm not good at shouting, so this tactic puts me at a disadvantage. All of us were generally able to finish our sentences before someone else took the floor.

Members were always asked to provide evidence for their points of view and given until the next meeting to do so. Being at the university, I had access to a lot of data, so I appreciated this feature of the process. I realize that people (including me) do not always let facts get in the way of their opinions, but the expectation of providing supporting evidence helps to minimize that problem.

Meetings had strict starting and ending times, partly because of the long distances some members traveled, and this kept the process moving along. I should mention that another of my frustrations is group participants who use 50 words where five would suffice, or feel the need to make the same point multiple times. (Okay, I admit, I'm guilty of the latter.)

The chair reminded board members at the beginning of every meeting what our purpose was. This is almost never done in other meetings I attend, but it helps to promote a spirit of collaboration and respect, even when feelings become hard. I must mention, too, that fresh coffee was always available and we took breaks halfway through each meeting to enjoy boxed lunches and some social time. (My crossing the room for refills in the middle of a discussion was a common sight.) These were modest benefits, but they helped me feel more nurtured in this macro setting than what I typically felt in my day-to-day life as a micro practitioner. I have often observed that macro practitioners are more thoughtful about tending to these small tokens of mutual support than comparable meetings of direct practitioners or administrators and practitioners. To me, this is one sign that direct practitioners are often taken for granted, which may be due to their relatively larger numbers, differing roles, or lower status within many organizations.

Aside from the eventual outcome, the best part of this experience for me was participating in a macro process that was inclusive of persons at all levels of social work practice. It occurred to me that, with age and some experience, I had developed greater confidence as a macro-focused social worker, able to comfortably articulate my opinions and accept that the people involved in the change process would always disagree. But that was okay. I wasn't concerned as much about my own image, and I hadn't lost any passion for my clients. During that year I often thought back to my days as a full-time practitioner—and the reduced respect for the work of this population by my former peers—and I felt gratified. There was much more that happened during my years on the social work board, and all of it made me feel better about myself as an all-around social worker, even though it's still more fun to spend time with clients.

Lessons Learned

From my first class as an MSW student, I have known that the social work profession needs all types of practitioners—micro, macro, and generalist—to thrive. Several charismatic professors and peers had even made me feel guilty at times about wanting to be a direct services practitioner, as they modeled the importance of administrative, community, and political social work. Still, I didn't have the motivation, skill, or, perhaps most of all, the confidence to practice in that realm until I dabbled in it several times, trying and failing. The sad truth is, I probably had, like every other direct services practitioner, more macro ability than I thought all along. As examples, I have always been: an articulate speaker and writer, able to summarize differing points of view concisely; calm when engaged in heated exchanges; able to lighten situations with inoffensive humor; and task focused. None of these qualities is adequate for effective macro practice, but they served me well. I wish someone (a supervisor, peer, or teacher) had pointed this out to me much earlier, but it wasn't anyone else's fault. I had needlessly de-emphasized the macro side of the profession once I made my commitment to direct practice. It was my mistake!

I am aware, too, that my macro practice capabilities were only revealed when I had a cause about which I felt passionate. Perhaps a direct practitioner merely needs to feel inspired about an issue in order to effectively make the role transition and straddle both areas. Direct practitioners really do know better than anyone else, except their clients, what policies and procedures work and don't work with regard to providing quality services and upholding the values of the profession. Even when organizational roles are rigidly structured, there are ways for direct practitioners to make known their views about administrative matters and advocate for change. I should have done that more often. From now on, I will.

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