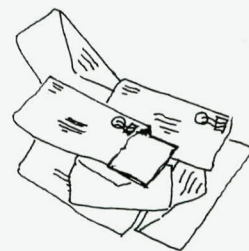


Letters to the Editor



I read with great interest and enthusiasm your first copy of REFLECTIONS. I want to thank you for publishing this journal. Those of us in the helping professions need to remember that we too have stories to tell that may help others. Through the appreciation of stories we keep in touch with our essential shared humanness. Narratives remind us that we are more alike than different in our human need for the connection and sharing that enhances our lives. It is also useful for us to remember that knowledge is not only advanced with quantitative methods. Yes, they are important, but so are the qualitative methods that often have been devalued because of their use by marginalized groups such as women and people of color. As we strive to appreciate the richness that minority groups have to offer our understanding of the human condition it is necessary to respect the methods that they have perfected.

Thank you again for your contribution of a journal with a research focus that values the process of reflection in a chaotic society.

Jennifer L. Hipp, Ph.D.,
BCD. Social Work Program
Director, Shepherd College, WV.



In response to Ted Ernst's, "... A Personal Account of Institutional Sexism"

Ted Ernst's piece (Vol. 1, # 1, January 1995) which he describes as women discriminating against women, provokes me to comment. This article seems to me something of a self-congratulatory reflection that certainly could use a "coda." The reader is left with the impression that, surprise, women too are guilty of sexism against other women. Well, of course! Women as well as men internalize the rampant sexism in this society. They know what is valued. Why does he think women might discriminate against women? Why might a school of social work want to attract more men to its program and to the field of social work, even men less qualified than many of the women who apply? It is not the institutional sexism in his program that is as remarkable as the powerful gender biases in the social surround that can blind even women in social work to the ways they disempower other women.

Joan Laird, MSW, LICSW
Joan Laird is Professor,
Smith College, School for Social
Work and just "retired" as editor
of the *Smith Studies*



Ernst's Response

It was easy then, as now, for both men and women to be blind to sexism. At the time, some versions were almost socially approved. The profession proudly applauded the influx of men into its ranks.

After World War II and the GI Bill and the large number of State and Federal traineeships, it was thought beneficial to have more men, even as we hear today comments about the favorable impact of more women in law and medicine. Male applicants were in enough supply at that school, especially from public and child welfare and corrections that it had become easy to accept many of them and not see what this might mean for women applicants in terms of equity, at the very least. ☐

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