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Contents

Editorial

- Editorial: My Experience with Artificial Intelligence 4
Stephen M. Marson, Editor
- Commentary from Russia/Ukraine: Part 2 9
Anonymous
- Letter to the Editor 25
Stephen M. Marson & Donna DeAngelis, Editors
- Changes at IJSWVE and Thank You 50
Stephen M. Marson, Editor, & Laura Gibson, Book Review Editor

Articles

- Artificial Intelligence in Social Work: Emerging Ethical Issues 52
Frederic G. Reamer
- Animal Ethics, Animal Welfare, and Speciesism: Considerations for Social Work 72
Paul J. Silberberg
- Social Workers in the Social Housing Assistance Sector: Building the Ideal Housing Policy Principles 112
Ahmad Sururi
- Social Workers, Regulation, and Social Justice: Tensions in Canadian Social Work 144
Ian G. Rice

- Critical Conversations in Compensating Social Work Field Education: A Systematic Review** 169
Katherine Drechsler, Candice C. Beasley & Melissa Indera Singh

Forum

- Forum: Incorporating the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models into Publication Standards: A Call for Editorial Policy Based on Social Work Values** 200
Dawn Appgar

Book Reviews

- Androff, D. (2022). Refugee solutions in the age of global crisis: Human rights, integration, and sustainable development. Oxford University Press.** 206
Reviewed by Joan M. Groessl
- Murray, S. (2022). Community justice centres: New trajectories in law. Routledge.** 209
Reviewed by MaryAnn Thrush
- Reamer, F. G. (2023). Risk management in the behavioral health professions: A practical guide to preventing malpractice and licensing-board complaints. Columbia University Press.** 213
Reviewed by Jeffrey Steen

Editorial: My Experience with Artificial Intelligence

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Stephen M. Marson, Ph.D., Editor

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Like all of us, I have been deeply concerned about ethical issues regarding social work scholarship and publications. As you might have noticed, the *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* instituted a manuscript submission policy regarding the use of artificial intelligence [see <https://jswve.org/manuscript-policy/>]. Dr. Dawn Apgar is the author of the artificial intelligence section of our manuscript policy. In addition, Dr. Apgar submitted a forum article entitled “Incorporating the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models into Publication Standards: A Call for Editorial Policy Based on Social Work Values” which is included in this issue. We also have Dr. Reamer’s article entitled “Artificial Intelligence in Social Work: Emerging Ethical Issues.” I hope you have time to read both of these critically important articles. For now, I want to share my personal experience with artificial intelligence.

Last March, I had a conversation with Dr. Dawn Apgar regarding artificial intelligence and the ethical issues related to social work scholarship and social work education. At that time, we negotiated a forum article for IJSWVE. Since that time, I have been literally *playing* with artificial intelligence. I wanted to get a feel for how it worked. It was like doing a google search but more personal. I heartily admit that I had fun playing with it.

After playing, I decided to put it to work. During this time period, I was deeply entrenched in a complex manuscript addressing linking social structure theory to personality theory. This subject was the centerpiece of my presentation at an international conference.¹ A major part of my research included the employment of role theory as a bridge between micro (psychology) and macro (sociology) theory. For the project, it was critically important that I uncover the evolutionary process by which role theory emerged.

With my doctoral education, I knew that Talcott Parsons produced a role theory with the influence of various sources including the Chicago School with scholars such as George Herbert Mead. In addition, I knew that there were various streams of thought that produced a role theory. I wanted to know the historical pathways that produced the various versions of role theory. The artificial intelligence did not seem to understand the difference between a theory (as an organic whole) and theoretical concepts. My conversation with artificial intelligence evolved into an intellectual argument. From my perspective, I began to feel like I was arguing with an undergraduate who had just successfully completed a sociological theory course.

Time after time I continued to ask the artificial intelligence for authors (other than Parsons) who had produced a role theory that could be conceptualized as an organic whole. Time after time, artificial intelligence would offer authors who made important conceptual contributions but none of them offered a theory. Each time I responded by stating these contributions do not constitute a theory but were theoretical concepts. Artificial intelligence replied by insisting that concepts are “important.” This back-and-forth discussion continued to the point when I realized that I was debating with an entity who could not understand the abstract notions embedded

¹ [Marson, S.M. \(2023\). Recommendations for the Study of Human Diversity. Presented at the 39th National and 5th International Congress of National Day of Social Workers. March 9 \(online hosted in Iran\).](#)

within theory construction and design. Artificial intelligence was simply unsophisticated when addressing abstract theoretical processes.

At this point, I pulled myself out of my fantasy world² and realized that I was *not* speaking to a human being. I began to ask less complex questions about theory. Mostly I asked about authors who wrote about contemporary theory. I received, what I thought to be impressive citations. I began to search for the specific references in libraries and on Amazon. At least one of the citations did *not* seem to exist. When I reported this back to artificial intelligence, I received an apology and other references that were accessible by both the library and Amazon. I learned that when I work with artificial intelligence, I must verify the output I receive.

Continuing with my project, I needed to define role theory concepts. I asked artificial intelligence to create 61 definitions for role theory concepts. I was impressed with the results and the speed of the output. In my studies, I developed a role theory concept, but no word that captured the essence of it. I asked artificial intelligence to search for a concept within role theory that encapsulated the idea that role occupants were impressed by and admired the role skills of another. Artificial intelligence replied by acknowledging that no such concept existed. I asked it to create a new role theory concept that would encapsulate the meaning of my idea. This is how artificial intelligence responded:

Question: Can you make up a new term for role theory that includes the idea of admiration that peers have for the role performance of a friend or colleague?

Answer: That's a creative challenge. How about this term:

Role admiration is the positive evaluation and appreciation that peers have for the role performance of a friend or colleague. Role admiration reflects the recognition and respect that a person earns by demonstrating competence, skill, and excellence in their role. Role admiration can

² In using artificial intelligence, it was too easy for me to fall into the trap of feeling that I was interacting with a person.

enhance the self-esteem, motivation, and satisfaction of the role performer, as well as inspire others to emulate their behavior or seek their guidance. Role admiration can also foster social cohesion, trust, and collaboration among peers who share a common role or goal.

What do you think of this term?

I was impressed with the answer and also the evaluative question artificial intelligence asked at the end. It wanted me to evaluate the answer. I wrote “GREAT!!!!” The artificial intelligence responded with “Thank you! I'm glad you like it.”

Let us delve deeper into the process of creating the definition of “role admiration” by artificial intelligence. In high school, I learned the process by which dictionaries construct a definition. For me, it was immediately apparent that artificial intelligence complied with these standards. Most importantly, I could have constructed a definition with the same level of quality as artificial intelligence. However, the process of constructing *my definition* would take much longer than 30 seconds. The amazing aspect of artificial intelligence is *not* the output but rather the speed of the output. Clearly, the speed and accuracy of this definitional construction is nothing less than amazing. Nevertheless, in playing with artificial intelligence, I learned that all outputs cannot be trusted. Artificial intelligence's output must be critically assessed prior to actually using it.

Currently, there is no word that encapsulates the process by which an acronym becomes a unique word which can be found in the dictionary. For example, scuba was originally an acronym for “self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.” Scuba is now a word that can be found in any English dictionary. I worked with artificial intelligence to create a new word for this process, and we agreed on the term “acronymergence (AL).” Through the process of acronymergence, the use of AL will evolve into a word as an independent entity. AL is also short version for a man's name and through the progression of time personification will emerge. Interaction with AI will be like talking to a colleague. Hereafter, I will cease using the acronym, but rather will spell out *artificial intelligence*. I recommend the same for other writers. Using the acronym, AI, is an easy trap to personify artificial intelligence.

The final part of my excursion in examining artificial intelligence will be a qualitative analysis. I have derived 61 classical concept definitions of role theory plus “role admiration” which is not included within the role theory literature. Through the use of a colleague who specializes in qualitative analysis, we will seek out patterns of how artificial intelligence constructs definitions. WHY?

I began this editorial with a vague understanding of what artificial intelligence is and the possible ethical implications for social work scholarship and education. My curiosity got the best of me, and I wanted to come up with answers for vague questions that were generating in my mind. At the end of my excursion into the world of artificial intelligence, I am startled because I have more questions than answers. I am going to diligently read current and upcoming articles addressing artificial intelligence within the pages of *The International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*. Hopefully doing additional reading will bring a level of closure to my skepticism of artificial intelligence.

If you have questions or comments about artificial intelligence, I would be interested in hearing from you and publishing your commentary in our letters to the editor section. I cordially invite you to send emails to:

journal@ifsw.org

Commentary from Russia/Ukraine: Part 2

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Anonymous

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Editor's Note: Following is part two of an anonymous commentary written by a friend of our journal. Part one can be found at <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-102>. Anonymity is required as a safeguard for this person. Because of the political situation, it is not safe to include any names or gender identification. The author is a professor of human services in Russia but is Ukrainian. The person's family lives in Kiev and it is an emotionally troubling time for all of them. This letter has not been copy edited and is a translation from Russian by the use of Google translator.

Vacation

Two years later, after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, in 1988 I graduated from high school and in the summer, in July, I arrived in Kyiv. Angelina and I again sat on the banks of the Dnieper, on a rocky wild beach. Obolon (one of the most beautiful districts of the city of Kyiv) was flooded with sunlight and warmth, happy smiling people walked along the clean spacious streets, there was a clear blue sky above us. It was a sweltering July heat. Sunbeams, reflected in the water, sparkled in the sun. In the clear clean water of the Dnieper, near the shore, right above the small algae, small coastal fish swam. At first we wanted to swim, but when we got to the shore, we decided to just sit on the rocks and get our feet wet. We have been waiting for a meeting with each other for a whole year, writing letters to each other in which we expressed our feelings and desire to meet each other

as soon as possible. And now, finally, we were sitting together on a coastal rocky area, on a wild beach on the banks of the Dnieper, holding hands, looking at each other, talking excitedly about everything that happened during the time we were not together.

I told Angelina that after finishing school I wanted to go to law school to become a lawyer, serve in law enforcement and fight crime. But in the USSR, school graduates, before entering higher educational institutions, had to work for 2 years at any enterprise, preferably close in work activity to the education they wanted to receive, or serve in the Soviet army. It was such a kind of help from young people to their state, to people of middle and old age, because the taxes that were deducted from the wages of young workers were used to pay pensions, build good roads, housing stock, apartments from which were distributed free of charge to all those in need. There were no homeless and hungry people in the USSR, and young healthy guys and girls who graduated from high school took on part of this social care. But I decided to go to serve in the Soviet army. The term of service was 2 years, and after it I would just be able to enter my law school. I always dreamed of military service and was very glad that such an opportunity turned up for me.

My dad dreamed of having a boy, but God gave me to him, and from childhood I was brought up as a warrior. I knew martial arts, I knew how to shoot perfectly, in the USSR, at the lessons of the NVP (initial military training), they taught me to throw anti-tank grenades, handle a Kalashnikov assault rifle, taught me to march, explained the basics of military discipline and tactics. After good results in shooting at a shooting range, which was also in almost every school in the USSR, I was invited to the DOSAAF shooting club (a voluntary society for the assistance of the army, aviation and navy), and I began to participate in shooting competitions. In all the competitions in which my team and I took part, we won prizes.

Gradually, the weapon for me became something ordinary, normal, something without which I did not spend a single day. Here it is necessary to deviate a little from the context and explain that due to certain events in childhood, children in our yards, in the village where I grew up, walked with

knives. Everyone knew about it, it was normal, we played "knives" in children's sandboxes, and when we grew up a little, these games migrated to wastelands remote from residential buildings. Almost all children and teenagers in our village carried knives for self-defense. Our fathers gave us knives for our birthdays, and we proudly showed them to each other when we came to play "knives"³. So such games were the absolute norm in my childhood, which is simply unimaginable these days. And we, children born in the USSR, could easily stop a tired worker going home after a work shift and ask him to sharpen a dull knife on the protruding basement of a brick house. Literally, it looked like this: a child, both a boy and a girl, could run up to any man walking home from work in the evening, put his knife in his hands and ask - "Uncle, uncle, sharpen the knife, please!" - and no one refused. A wave of rape of children aged 5-10 years swept through our village, which, most likely, provoked such a tolerant attitude towards edged weapons, as well as the fact that children learned to use them, and, of course, left a vivid imprint in my childhood memory. This shaped my motivation to confront sexual crimes, including those against children. Therefore, I connected my further life with this profession.

So, we were sitting in July 1988 on the banks of the Dnieper, and I told Angelina that I would go to serve in the army. And she shared with me that she is graduating from college and will work in the financial field. Together we visited her college and the base of her practice, one of the stores in the city of Kyiv where she worked, and I met some of her fellow students. One girl behaved very aggressively with both me and Angelina. I showed her with my appearance that if she continues in the same spirit, she will deal

³ A popular children's game in the USSR, the rules of which are that children, performing various tasks, try to throw a knife into the ground or a tree in such a way that it sticks with a sharp sharpened blade into a hard surface. According to the rules of the game, each participant must have his own knife, but in a joint team game, one player's knife could be used if he had the highest performance for convenient throwing.

with me, and then she will have problems. And the girl left. I did not understand then why some teenagers behave like that, because we lived together, a single Soviet family, and did not know what happened in the past of the Ukrainian people. Many years later, I learned about the Holodomor, Lenin's communist agenda in relation to Ukraine, collaborators who met fascist thugs with bread and salt during the Great Patriotic War, and how they were executed after the liberation of Kiev from fascist invaders, and much more that politicians usually taken out of their "bins" and placed on the scales of Anubis, anticipating his funeral rituals, inevitable as a result of their unleashing wars and enmity.

At that time, the reaction of this aggressive girl to me, who came from the Russian outback, seemed inadequate. But now, given the recent events that have taken place between Russia and Ukraine, I would understand her. It is possible that someone in her family once suffered from the Bolshevik invasion of Ukraine and some kind of terrible story was passed down from generation to generation. Or maybe it was simple teenage stupidity - who knows, teenagers are often not restrained, right? In any case, there are people who live only in the past, and there are those who are purposefully taught this. Both are easy to manipulate. Both those and others inadequately perceive reality, and this is a very sad story. After all, all bad things come to an end, in any case, ahead is a peaceful calm future, new achievements, cities, countries, acquaintances, new adventures, new sunsets and sunrises, a fresh breeze! But no, their "train" will go to a dead end, and, moreover, backing back there. And everyone who needs to go ahead will either have to leave it forever and get on their own, or reconcile themselves and be trapped!

I mean that this Ukrainian girl and I could become friends, but from an early age she was forced to imagine those who live in Russia as someone who personifies evil, and this was a fatal mistake, because I lived in Russia, but did not represent any evil. I loved Ukraine very much, I loved Kyiv, the Ukrainian people with all my heart. I have always admired my Ukrainian family and, embracing with my mind and heart all their talents: hospitality, solidarity, kindness, mercy, love, spirituality, I realized that Russia lacked

this. For example, we did not know our cousins and sisters living in Russia. Some we met, others we lost touch with. There was no such thing in the Ukrainian family! When my dad and I came to Kiev, at the same time, our distant relatives from Vinnitsa and Lvov came to visit Angelina, Bogdan, their mom and dad, while he was still living with them, before the divorce. Other relatives who also lived in Kyiv came to see us. Aunt Tanya gathered a big feast, everyone gathered at the same table, celebrated, had fun, sang songs, played the guitar and piano, walked around Kiev, rode a boat along the Dnieper and so on. In Russia, we also sometimes got together with relatives for some significant events, but it was not so festive and large-scale. Therefore, how could you think such a thing about me, supposedly I hated my family and Ukraine? Only a very downtrodden and ignorant person could argue like that, who was intimidated by the fact that only bad things can come from Russia! But it's not!

That summer, Angelina and I spent a wonderful month: we went to the beaches of Obolon, sunbathed, swam, walked around Kiev at night, rode the subway, on a boat along the Dnieper, even got to a concert at the Kiev Operetta Theater. We saw Kyiv in the summer of 1988 in the rain, under the hot July sun, in fog and in the rays of the morning dawn; old and young; mysterious religious and perky, with open-air concerts that regularly took place on Khreshchatyk. Kyiv is always so different! If you ever have the opportunity to visit this city - do it, I ask you, do not dare to deprive your spirituality, you must be enriched by this heritage of human civilization.

At the end of July, I went home to the Tambov region. I was called to the military office. Well, my dream came true - I took the oath and I was officially awarded a military ID. I walked proudly from the military registration and enlistment office along the main street of my city, anticipating an interesting, rich life that lay ahead. In 2 years I will enter my law school, become a detective, and I will solve dangerous and terrible crimes ... Naive, right? But it is precisely this immediacy that pushes young people to active life, inspires, gives hope and helps to live on, despite the severe trials that fall to the lot of each of us. It happened to me as well. My life has not been an easy, happy stroll through the sun-drenched Emerald City. But all the

trials that fell to my lot only strengthened my faith and gave me strength in the fight against evil. Let me explain.

Military service

I was assigned to a military unit of the VVS (air force), which served a strategic military airfield. For a military position as a mechanic-radio telegraph operator of high-power shortwave radio stations. We were taught the speed of receiving / transmitting Morse code on a telegraph key and a code sensor. The telegraph key was designed to manually respond to received encrypted messages. And with the help of a sensor, which was like a typewriter, it was possible to transmit a large amount of encrypted codes in a very short period of time. The point was that even if the codes were copied and written down, they could not be decoded at high speed, since you would receive crickets chirping in a language you did not know when you received them. Even if you slow down the code transmitted by the sensor on the recording, somehow change the playback speed of the received auditory information, then to decipher it you will have to write down each letter from the code, singing it in Russian.

Moreover, these tunes can be as different as the Russian language is rich, and the one who will decipher this code must hear these words from childhood, know them and be able to replace them with similar ones in terms of stress and pronunciation. In addition, if at high reception speed you cannot distinguish between dots and dashes or short pauses (between codes), then all this cacophony will merge into a single trill. In general, in order to decipher the Russian code, your radio operator must be either ethnically Russian, which is preferable, or a representative of another ethnic group who grew up in a Russian-speaking environment. But that is not all. After you decipher each letter of the code, consisting of 3-4 letters, you will get a confusion from a combination of symbols that you do not understand, which are a collection of Cyrillic characters. Well, for example, as in Fig. 1:



Figure 1: Code of Radio Operators of the USSR Air Force (fragment)

And now, after deciphering the code, the most interesting thing comes you cannot know what exactly the combination of these letters means. For further decoding, you will need a radiotelegraph operator who knows what is hidden under these combinations of three Cyrillic letters. Oh, yes, I forgot to write that this radiotelegraph operator must be from the military unit whose code you want to decipher. Why? Yes, because in each military unit the combination of Cyrillic letters in the codes is different. And there is no single universal key that would give you the opportunity to use the once opened and decrypted code for all military units. So, if you wanted to decipher what I, as a radio operator, transmitted to my colleagues on the radio station at a certain frequency (and, oh yes, this frequency still had to be found on the air, since information about it was secret and the channel, according to which it was posted was closed) - you would need: a Russian radio operator, trained, successfully passed the exam, from the military unit that broadcast important strategic data. For example, as in Table 1:

№ military unit	ЩСА	ЩСВ
25458	I hear you well	How can you hear me?
25542	How is the situation?	I call headquarters
25432	I'm transmitting important data, be prepared!	I'm calling the airfield
25430	Data accepted, no questions	Garrison on alert
25511	Garrison on alert	Data reception is over, I have no questions
25523	End of data transfer	End of alarm for the garrison
25549	End of sleep by the garrison	I'm transmitting important data, be prepared!

Table 1: Examples of Differences in Decoding the same Codes for Different Military Units

From the table that I cite as an example of the difference in the decoding of the same codes, it can be seen that the combination of Cyrillic letters for military unit No. 24458 means completely different than for military unit No. 25432; as well as for military unit No. 25542, military unit No. 25523, and so

on. And only those military units that were united by one strategic task worked with a single decoding of codes. But what kind of units these were, none of the radiotelegraph operators themselves knew. We only heard each other on the air, communicated, received and transmitted data, but we did not know to which military unit this or that radio operator who went on the air belongs. We received some data blindly, without decryption, and transmitted them in the same way, without decryption. Where and to whom - we did not know, we only knew that it was important strategic data.

After 12 months of service, the best radio operators began to prepare for participation in republican competitions. The essence of the task was to find the so-called "fox" by the participants of the competition - a radio operator-saboteur who sat down somewhere in the forest and transmitted data from there to his liaison. The participants of the competitions were divided into different teams representing different military units and garrisons. After that, they were allocated a forest belt, in which a radio operator-saboteur sat down. On the first day of the competition, each team had its own section of the forest belt, and on the second day all these sections were combined, and representatives of all teams had to find several "fox" saboteurs as quickly as possible. The victory was awarded to the team with the most points. Awards and prizes for individual achievements were also awarded.

I was also invited to these competitions as a participant from my military unit. I went there with my boyfriend, whom I met recently. He served with me, was also a radiotelegraph operator, and taught me everything he knew. He was a handsome tall athletic guy, brave, with a big kind heart and a broad disinterested soul. He was devoted to me, my hero and protector, and you know what? I'll correct myself a little so that it doesn't sound like it was only in the past. He still takes care of me. We played a wedding with him in 1992, immediately after demobilization, when we "went to the

reserve”⁴. And we are still together. Congratulate us on our joint 30th anniversary! In the third part of this article, you will find out why and to whom our marriage has remained so strong to this day.

So, my future husband and I spent two wonderful weeks at the competitions in the Tyoply Stan military camp near Moscow in the forests, in the CSKA sports complex (Central Army Sports Club). Our morning began with a cross-country run, then we took a shower, had breakfast, went to the training ground, hunted “foxes” - looked for the saboteur’s transmitter, then we were all taken together, in platoons, for lunch to specialized canteens, tasty and fed a lot, after which we could spend time in the city or in nature, in a sports complex, left to ourselves until the next morning. The only condition was to return to the barracks before 23:00 (11:00 PM). After the harsh army regime, it was just some kind of sanatorium, everyone was in a good mood, we played basketball, volleyball, swam in the local river, sunbathed and even went to the cinema on the weekends. As a result, our team took first place in the team standings, and some radio operators from our team received prizes for various achievements.

But in our military unit, not everything was safe. The 90s began, and the first “alarm bell” was a high-profile crime that shook our entire city. There was a scuffle in our military unit, as a result of which an 18-year-old guy, an Uzbek by nationality, stabbed to death a 20-year-old Russian soldier. Interracial and interethnic conflicts grew, aggression poured out not only on the streets, but also in those places that were considered the standard of order and regime. My boyfriend was also beaten by the Uzbeks, but after that almost every one of them was found one by one and punished in such a way that they were forced to flee from the military unit before they

⁴ The expression “go to the reserve” means that the servicemen, after completing compulsory military service by conscription, are demobilized (dismissed from the army), but attached to the military registration and enlistment office at the place of residence, and they can be called up again for military service if general mobilization is announced.

reached the demobilization period. To stop such riots, the military units located on the territory of the Tambov, Oryol, Ryazan, Voronezh regions stopped recruiting young men from the Union republics.

In the same turbulent time, another incident occurred that alarmed me very much. Guys from Ukraine served in our military unit. They were handsome, tall, blue-eyed, blond, athletic, and I sympathized with them. I like these types. And then one day, when my friend and I came to our military unit to a disco, we stood in a crowd at the entrance to the ballroom, smoked and told each other funny anecdotes and stories from life. The guys were in military uniform, ironed and smart, smart, they were all wearing classic-style military trousers with carefully ironed arrows and military shirts with ties and tunics with gold buttons sparkling in the darkness of a summer evening. The boots also sparkled - they know how to take care of leather army shoes. The girls came to the dance in chic dresses, skirts and blouses in the "new-look" style (in our city this style was in vogue in the early 90s), with high beautiful hairstyles, in stilettos and with small elegant clutches in their hands. So, we stood together: Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Moldavians - we laughed, smoked: everyone was fine!

And then someone noticed a pendant in the form of a trident around the neck of one of the guys from Ukraine. He was taken aside and forced to take it off. Then the second, and the third, and a few more guys showed the same trident pendant - they all showed the others the same gold pendants and said that this would be the new coat of arms of Ukraine. The other guys took them aside as well, and also made them remove the pendants from their necks and put them in their pockets. Nothing terrible happened, we just stood there and had a pleasant evening, and then we all went to the dance floor together. But this incident somehow sunk into my soul. I remember this moment as clearly as if it was yesterday. For the first time I confess this to you, dear readers, after this incident, for some reason I felt very sorry for those guys, and for all of us, and I kept thinking: what if mom or dad give me something expensive, that I will wear around my neck, for example, a golden cross or other image, and suddenly someone does not like

it, and he asks me to take it off and put it in my pocket? Why on earth??? I wouldn't do this!!!

I understood the feelings of these Ukrainian guys, they just didn't want to spoil the holiday for anyone, because showdowns, raids, word for word, then a fight would begin, and so on. They just gave in to others. But I did not understand those who began to consider what others wear around their necks. What do they care? That is, I want to say: what do they care about something intimate, which is located at the heart, on the chest, something very expensive? How dare they interfere? Moreover, the case concerned some ideological issues - only the person himself has the right to make a decision - this is self-identification! Everyone needs it, how can one live without it? To remain a man without a clan and without a tribe? And as soon as these Ukrainians joyfully announced that their country, which is now completely legally gaining independence, will have its own coat of arms, they immediately came under pressure. FOR WHAT??? Uzbekistan can do it, Tajikistan can do it, Kazakhstan can do it, Moldova can do it, but it was possible for all 13 republics, no one considered the representatives of these republics what was hanging around their necks, but the Ukrainians weren't allowed??? I still can't figure it out! WHAT WAS IT?..

Farewell USSR!

I remember that incident throughout all these past years. Is it really just because of a chain with a pendant around his neck that contained some kind of wrong image - some of our colleagues could beat up completely innocent good guys who were considered our Slav brothers? This event scared me. Again, as after the Chernobyl accident, I felt how metaphysical evil breaks out. It was unthinkable and inexplicable. There was no motivation for this act! When I began to ask those guys who did it, WHY? They replied: "Well, you see, they (Ukrainians with a trident around their necks) act like traitors, betray us." I tried to explain in response that now all 15 republics will have their own coats of arms, banners, and this is normal. Why don't you consider others traitors, Belarusians, for example? And the Ukrainians-do you

think??? No one could give me a reasonable answer. The motivation of Uzbeks and Tajiks, as well as other Asians, was clear - they are just different, it has been known to everyone since prehistoric times that their Muslim faith in many ways does not allow them to live and assimilate with Christians, they either always live in their closed enclaves, or leave back to their lands. The motivation of the Kazakhs was also understandable - they wanted independence, although not without impudence on their part when they began to threaten physical harm against Russians living in Kazakhstan. The Russians rebuilt their cities, installed engineering infrastructure, improved resorts such as Aktau on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The Russians taught their children to read and write, taught them at their universities, made them teachers, doctors, programmers, engineers, military men, and so on. The Russians took care of all 15 republics, and now not only have they become useless to anyone, but they have also been subjected to aggressive attacks by ethnic radical groups, lost their property, became refugees in their own country - and all thanks to such "independence". In itself, it is not criminal - the method by which this very independence is achieved is criminal.

Russians began to be humiliated, beaten, and persecuted throughout the entire territory of the former USSR, and everyone did this, from representatives of the North Caucasus to the farthest village somewhere on the border with Afghanistan. Our compatriots, coming with nothing after many years of work at the enterprises of the Union republics, received the status of refugees and lived in poverty. Both in the Caucasus and in Asian countries, their apartments, houses, jobs were taken away from them, their relatives were killed or maimed, and they were humiliated physically and morally. Many were raped, robbed, left with nothing. And now, when I watch hot reports from the front, I understand where these atrocities come from: sowing chaos, you get chaos as a reward. So, those who were involved in the collapse of the USSR, think about it: didn't you get a logical result when these raped, robbed, killed and maimed Russians grew up their children and grandchildren? This is not an excuse for violence. This is an attempt to stop him. As it is said in the book of the preacher Ecclesiastes: "The judgment of evil deeds is not soon done, therefore the heart of the sons of men

is not afraid to do evil!" (Bible, Ecclesiastes 8 chapter 11 verse). Those who planned and carried out the collapse of a world power simply did not understand the consequences that this collapse would lead to. They could not foresee that people would not only lose social and economic stability, but, more importantly, they would lose their identity, spirituality and the ideological basis of existentiality. After the collapse of the USSR, a wave of banditry, local wars, and terrorist acts swept through all the countries of the former Soviet Union. Impoverished people sold themselves and their children in order to survive. Sexual perverts, pedophiles poured into large cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Samara, Kazan, etc. Directors of social shelters, without any hesitation, began to sell orphans into sexual slavery. Elderly people who lived alone, gangs of "black realtors"⁵ took away apartments.

In the markets, where some enterprising people tried to make money by selling some kind of goods, gangs of young fighters-athletes appeared who took "tribute" from the merchants for the opportunity to trade in this place. Refusal to pay such a duty threatened with beating and murder, as well as damage to the goods that merchants usually brought with their last money. Children were abducted, the level of crime grew so much that problems were not solved in any yard or district without a "watcher"⁶. On top of that, gangster structures from the former republics of the USSR poured into large cities, especially Moscow and St. Petersburg, as big money was spinning there. A gang war has begun for spheres of influence in the markets. In this war, young boys and girls died en masse, who were buried by heartbroken parents - often the same ones who returned from the union republics of

⁵ After the collapse of the USSR in Russia, bandits began to be called that, who, using the services of district police and housing and communal services (HUS), sought out elderly lonely people, forcibly took them out of the city, to abandoned dachas, and forced them to rewrite an apartment for them, threatening physical violence. When the old people signed contracts (usually it was a donation contract for an apartment), they were still killed so as not to leave witnesses.

⁶ The gangster, who enjoyed authority and could solve the problem, the name of money and connections, much faster than the police and government agencies

the Caucasus and Central Asia to their place in Russia. When this war was over, and the money was earned, many people died, and bandits crept into power. This is the result of the fact that it occurred to someone that the USSR should no longer exist. Before destroying a stable state system, it was necessary to think carefully about the consequences. Today we are dealing with them.

After the collapse of the USSR, we saw only evil everywhere, it settled in this country, and you, who today scold Russians and Russia, are also involved in this. There are no innocents! If you have any doubts about this, imagine yourself in the place of my good friend, who, after working for 40 years as an engineer at one of the enterprises in Georgia, retired and stayed to live there in her service apartment, which she earned with her labor. Imagine that your husband is a builder who rebuilt cities in Georgia so that people could live there. So, when you got old, and your husband was paralyzed due to hard work at a construction site, those same Georgians for whom you built cities and invested money in their budget, working at their enterprises, came to your house and said: "Take your husband and get out of here tomorrow. We give you 24 hours, and if you do not leave, tomorrow we will come and slaughter you!". All night after this threat, you do not sleep, I don't even mention the morale, through the tears of despair and resentment that cover your eyes, you try to pack your things in a hurry, and then look for those who could take you with your paralyzed husband to the border with Russia. And oh, yes, do not forget that there was no Internet at that time, and not everyone had a landline phone. And imagine, everyone refuses you, because the paralyzed person is not just put into the car, but the morning along with your killers is already approaching.

After that, you, a tired, elderly woman, exhausted, go home, running around all your friends and neighbors, realizing that everyone has the same problems, no one has places in cars, and now they will simply kill you along with your husband. You just go and think: who will die in front of whom - my husband is in front of my eyes, and then they will kill me, or will they first kill me in front of my husband, and then it will be his turn?.. At this time, you see the following picture: right in broad daylight, two Georgians approach a

couple of young Russians walking on the street, a girl and her boyfriend, and begin to harass a Russian girl right in the presence of her boyfriend. The guy, of course, stands up for his girlfriend, but immediately gets a knife in the ribs. He is cut right in front of the girl's eyes, in the presence of passers-by, who simply remain silent and do not interfere. Some of the Russians who witnessed such an attack are trying to call the police, but we all understand who works there - of course, the Georgians will not go to arrest a Georgian for attacking a Russian. The police never arrived.

So you understand that you will really be slaughtered today, along with your family - this is not a joke. But you have no options, you just go home. In the evening, those who threatened you yesterday come to you. And you are trying to explain that you could not persuade anyone to take you to the border. Then one of your killers offers you to give everything you have, all the property: the money accumulated in your bank account, apartment, furniture, kitchen utensils, and everything else in exchange for the fact that he himself will take you. Of course you are scared. After all, it's not a fact that this person will keep his word, and will not throw you along with your husband somewhere into a roadside ditch with your throat cut (as, by the way, in many cases it happened - in Dagestan, in Chechnya, in Ingushetia, in Georgia, in Asia). But you agree, because there are no options.

And at the end of your anxious journey, you, gray-haired, exhausted, robbed, exhausted, humiliated, are met at the border by your children. I have only one question: how would YOU feel in the place of these children? And what would you, if you were this woman, tell YOUR children about Georgians? And what do you think: what would be the consequences of what these children would learn from your mouth? I think we all understand what it's about. And in the end, I would like to add that a lot of refugees told us about such cases, it happened in all the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asian region, and this is a fact. Should we be surprised at the aggression that we see now? I do not know the answer to this question. He is rhetorical. I understand only one thing: every act has its consequences. And every action creates a reaction.

All those who today condemn Russia's actions regarding Afghanistan, Georgia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Syria and similar countries - think about it: are you sailing past the iceberg on the Titanic, seeing only its tip? If so, beware of what is hidden under the muddy water! The Titanic is a clumsy ship. But while it is afloat, there is at least some hope! And keep an eye on the waterlines.

Letter to the Editor

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Stephen M. Marson & Donna DeAngelis, Editors

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*Social location note: This letter was originally created by Dr. Stasha Huntingford (they/she) in March 2023, I am a white, cis, settler, queer woman, living with chronic health conditions, PTSD and hidden disabilities. I have diverse experience with class, including experience living in poverty and sometimes having access to intergenerational wealth. I only speak one language, and have always lived with the Rocky Mountains. I currently make more than a living wage, which I have not experienced since 2018/2019. As a settler, social worker, and someone who benefits from white privilege, I have an ethical imperative to interrupt colonialism, racism and other forms of oppression. I tried to find a way to translate this letter into French, but I have neither the skills, nor the resources to do so. Ro Averin provided anti-racist supervision: <https://www.unlrnrjct.com/meet-ro>

In regard to the matter of social work practicum placements at Crisis Pregnancy Centers/Pregnancy Care Centres

Below I provide evidence to support the following points:

- Practicums at Crisis Pregnancy Centers/Pregnancy Care Centres are in violation of social work Codes of Ethics, due to a dishonest approach to blocking access to self-determination for people making informed health choices

- Social work schools need to be accountable for the match or mismatch between practicum placements and our Codes of ethics
- Social work has much to make up for in terms of causing past and current harm by blocking marginalized peoples' access to self-determination to make informed health choices

We, the signatories of this letter, request that the Field Education Committee ***consider and discuss the connections and disconnections between our* stated values and our actions, specifically in regards to practicum placements at Crisis Pregnancy Centers/Pregnancy Care Centres*** across Canada.

*Our' refers to all of us social workers and social work students, as we have all committed to uphold our Code of ethics (CASW, 2005; CASW, 2022; IFSW, 2019; NASW, 2021), including working for social justice, and respecting the self-determination of the people who we work with.

We request this of the Field Education Committee, as you are the primary decision makers when it comes to *determining if a practicum placement is an appropriate place for social work teaching and learning*. In addition, as social workers whose reputations are connected with the institutions that we work for, and learn at, we feel entitled to accountability and transparency about these choices. Of course, the Field Education Committee can request that other social workers assist in this work; recognizing that the Field Directors are the most powerful decision makers on this issue, so we have asked you to lead us.

Our request includes sharing the Field Education Committee *commitments to action* on this matter. The work of the Field committee is to determine if you commit to the four **THEN** statements in this letter. The sharing of your chosen, or created, commitments will take the form of a motion to be voted on by the larger group at our CASWE-ACFTS annual meeting (May 30-June 2nd, 2023).

We also request a *publicly available written report* reconciling our knowledge, and our commitments, with our actions (linking the **SINCE...**with the **THEN...**) on this topic, before our 2024 CASWE annual meeting. As illustrated below, this is a timely issue that *must* be attended to in 2023.

I present this ethical dilemma starting with *what we social workers know*, and *what we social workers have ethically committed to* [represented by **SINCE...**]; followed by *how these truths inform our social work actions* [represented by **THEN...**].

SINCE...We understand providing access to accurate information and reproductive health services as fundamental to ethical social work practice (Alzate, 2009; Beddoe, 2022; CASW, 2005; CASW, 2022; Ekoh, & Agbawodikeizu, 2022; Ely, et al., 2012; Filiatreault, 2019; Gomez, et al., 2020; IFSW, 2019; NASW, 2021; Shaw, 2013; TRC, 2015; Witt, et al., 2012).

SINCE...We support this statement by CASW (2022), including recognizing that abortion rights are under threat in this country (Browne, 2019), and that stigma is a major barrier to people accessing abortion:

The CASW Code of Ethics privileges self-determination, and the Association affirms that timely, accessible abortion is not only health care, but a human right [emphasis added]. We must do more to ensure that all those in Canada have access to timely, appropriate, and affordable health care services, which include abortion.

SINCE...We have evidence that Crisis Pregnancy Centers/Pregnancy Care Centres [CPC/PCCs] provide medically inaccurate information, engage in deceptive practices, and are not transparent about their goal to prevent abortions (Arthur et al., 2023; Boucher, 2004; Bourgeois, 2014; Browne, 2019; Bryant, & Swartz, 2018; Burns-Pieper, 2022; Canadians for Choice, 2008; Ho, 2022; Humphreys, 2021; Khandaker, 2013; LaRoche, & Foster, 2015; Li, 2019; Mitchell, 2019; Montoya, Judge-Golden, & Swartz, 2022; Murdoch, 2020; NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut Foundation, 2018; Oliver et al.,

2018; Polcyn, et al., 2020; Pompilii, 2022; Raab, 2020; Rudrum, 2023; Shaw, 2006; Shaw, 2013; Smith, 2010; The Alliance, 2021; The Charity Report, 2022; Tilley, 2011; Upshaw, 2022; Weeks, 2022).

As Sarah Rudrum (2023) found in their analysis of students' experiences with an on-campus CPC/PCC at a Canadian University: "Participants contacting the CPC sought testing, counselling, and referral to abortion; instead, they encountered religious, anti-choice messages, and were left distressed and with delayed access to health care" (p. 53).

The examples of misinformation provided by CPC/PCCs are extreme. For example, in their research for the report *Reality check: A closer look at Accessing Abortion Services in Canadian Hospitals* Shaw (2006) was told by CPC/PCCs that if you had an abortion:

- And ever get pregnant again in the future, your cervix will have to be sewn shut, and you will have to be in bed rest the entire nine months of your pregnancy, with your feet above your head, so that the baby doesn't fall out.
- You will be drawn to abusive men, because subconsciously, you will know that you deserve punishment.
- You will get breast cancer.
- Any future children you have are at a higher risk of developing cerebral palsy.
- You are likely to turn to drugs or alcohol and develop an addiction. You know you are already a mother. (as cited in Shaw, 2013, p. 11)

Appendix A at the end of this document provides other examples of misinformation from CPC/PCCs websites across Canada. This list was compiled by the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada for use as an internal document (which I have permission to share), in conjunction with their report *Examining the Websites of Anti-Choice Crisis Pregnancy Centres* (Arthur, et al., 2023). <https://www.arcc-cdac.ca/cpcstudy-2023/>

SINCE...We know that white middle class cis women have centered our/their perspectives and needs when it comes to issues of access to informed consent for reproductive choices (Action Canada, 2020; Beddoe, 2022; Campo, 2022; Cattapan, et al., 2021; Coen-Sanchez, 2022; Coen-Sanchez, et al., 2022; El-Mowafi, et al., 2021; Idriss-Wheeler, et al., 2021; Kidd, 2022; Jacobs, & Sherman, 2023; LEAF, 2022; Valdez, & Deomampo, 2019).

We know that, due to racism, middle class white women are

- overrepresented in social work in North America (Badwall 2014; Jeyapal 2017);
- benefit from oppressions such as colonialism, and racism;
- have often benefited from access to informed reproductive choices, while at the same time interfering with other peoples' access to the same right;
- all while not acknowledging the impact of oppressions other than patriarchy (Action Canada, 2020; Beddoe, 2022; Campo, 2022; Cattapan, et al., 2021; Coen-Sanchez, 2022; Coen-Sanchez, et al., 2022; El-Mowafi, et al., 2021; Idriss-Wheeler, et al., 2021; Kidd, 2022; Jacobs, & Sherman, 2023; LEAF, 2022; Valdez, & Deomampo, 2019).

SINCE...Social work and social workers have enabled and enacted forced sterilization of immigrants, people from BIPOC* [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] communities, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, and other groups (Action Canada, 2020; Akbari, 2021; Cattapan, et al., 2021; Clarke, 2021; Grekul, 2008 as cited in Williams, 2020; Johnstone, 2016). The oppression of sterilization is not limited to the past, and is not criminalized in Canada (CBC Radio, 2022; Fournier, 2021; Rutherford, 2022; Standing Senate Committee, 2022).

*I use this term based on this advice (Clarke, 2020; Merle and Fiona, 2020), but I understand there is debate about who this term includes and excludes/if it reinforces oppression. For

example, some scholars advise to include M for multi-racial people (A. Foggin, personal communication, August, 2022; SFU, 2023). Other people object to the use of this term, based on the belief that it reinforces concepts such as blood quantum (Apihtawikosisan, 2020). Others define the M in BIMPOC as 'Middle Eastern' (Florida State University, 2023).

SINCE...We are working on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action* (2015), including the 18th call about access to health services:

18: We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

We know that social work and social workers owe reparations in this area. We know that we have caused harm, and continue to cause harm. For example, CASW recommended residential schools to the House of Commons in 1946 (CASW, 2019). Currently, racism from social workers remains a major barrier for BIPOC people accessing health services (Fante-Coleman, & Jackson-Best, 2020; Filiatreault, 2019; Monchalin, et al., 2020).

SINCE...We are working on the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls report (2019) *Calls for Justice*, including call 3.1:

3.1: We call upon all governments to ensure that the rights to health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples, and specifically of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, are recognized and protected on an equitable basis.

We know that social work and social workers owe reparations in this area. We know that we have, and often continue to, *cause harm through our inactions as much as our actions*. We have blocked access to informed consent for the reproductive choices of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people (Campbell, & Lawford, 2021; Filiatreault, 2019). Current harm includes

social workers continuing birth alerts, despite these being a practice that has been identified as unconstitutional, illegal, and at the very least unethical, in most provinces and territories (Hyslop, 2019; Vikander & Marelj, 2021).

SINCE...We know that stigma is a barrier to people accessing abortion services (CASW, 2022; Davies, 2022; Dineley, et al., 2020; LaRoche, & Foster, 2015; Rudrum, 2023; Sethna, et al., 2013; Shaw, 2013; Steinberg, et al., 2016). We know that CPC/PCCs provide inaccurate information, which is *designed to create stigma* (Arthur, et al., 2023; Boucher, 2004; Bourgeois, 2014; Burns-Pieper, 2022; Canadians for Choice, 2008; Ho, 2022; Khandaker, 2013; Li, 2019; Mitchell, 2019; Montoya, Judge-Golden, & Swartz, 2022; Murdoch, 2020; NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut Foundation, 2018; Oliver et al., Pompili, 2022; Shaw, 2006; Shaw, 2013; The Alliance, 2021; The Charity Report, 2022; Upshaw, 2022).

SINCE...We know that reproductive justice (Ross, 2006; Ross, & Solinger, 2017; Sister Song, 1994) requires recognition of the role of oppression in the accessibility of health services (Action Canada, 2020; Beddoe, 2022; Campo, 2022; Cattapan, et al., 2021; Coen-Sanchez, 2022; Coen-Sanchez, et al., 2022; El-Mowafi, et al., 2021; Idriss-Wheeler, et al., 2021; Kidd, 2022; Jacobs, & Sherman, 2023; LEAF, 2022; Ross, 2006; Valdez, & Deomampo, 2019). In the words of Beddoe (2021), “An intersectional approach positions reproductive health as a dimension of health in which multiple intersecting identities and social locations – gender, race, class, sexualities, geography, culture, health and disabilities – situate some people in a precarious position” (p. 9). As Coen-Sanchez (2022) reminds us “Reproductive justice isn’t just a [pregnant person’s] issue, it’s a racial one” (p. 1); for example reproductive justice includes the right to raise children free from state violence, and in a healthy environment (Ross, 2006; Ross, & Solinger, 2017).

THEN...

THEN...We commit to endorsing ethical practice, as well as learning opportunities, by refusing to offer practicum placements at CPC/PCCs.

THEN...We commit to err on the side of *extreme transparency* about access to informed consent in reproductive choices, for all of the people who we work with. This commitment may require education/supervision, which emphasizes that when social workers interfere with reproductive choices, we are violating our commitments to social justice, and our commitments to protect the self-determination of the people who we work with (CASW, 2005).

THEN...We commit to working to address barriers to people accessing abortion services across Canada, including *stigma*, unequal ability to travel, and being given inaccurate information when making health decisions (Dineley, et al., 2020; Ryan, et al., 2021; Sethna, et al., 2013; Shaw, 2013). This includes recognizing the role of oppression in the accessibility of health services, and how social workers contribute to, or challenge, stigma through our decisions about practicum placements.

THEN...*At the very least*, we commit to creating, and developing partnerships with, organizations who advocate for access to informed consent in reproductive health, in order to be, and to become, social workers who respect the self-determination of the people who we work with (CASW, 2005; CASW, 2022; IFSW, 2019; NASW, 2021).

Here is the link for social workers and social work students who wish to endorse the letter by signing:

<https://forms.gle/TThcTDUCdz9uwhyj6>

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Appendix A

Examples of misinformation from CPC/PCCs websites across Canada.

This list was compiled by the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada for use as an internal document (which I have permission to share), in conjunction with their report *Examining the Websites of Anti-Choice Crisis Pregnancy Centres* (Arthur, et al., 2023).

www.arcc-cdac.ca/media/crisis-pregnancy-centres/cpc-website-review-2023.pdf

PROVINCE	1-2 WORST QUOTES FROM CPC WEBSITES
<p>Alberta</p>	<p>“Our goal is to promote the sanctity of human life, and protect the unborn as well as to help the mother/father who may be in distress.”</p> <p>“Referrals to: Pro-life doctors”</p> <p>Gianna Centre - Calgary, AB – https://www.cssalberta.ca/Gianna-Centre</p> <p>Problem: fetus-first mentality, pregnant person an after-thought</p> <p>“An abortion may increase the risk of infertility and the ability to carry the baby full-term. Multiple abortions increase the risk of infertility due to the potential uterine and cervical damage.”</p> <p>The Back Porch - Edmonton, AB – http://www.thebackporch.info/faq/abortion-edmonton</p> <p>Problem: scientifically false (illegal unsafe abortion can cause these problems)</p>
<p>Saskatchewan</p>	<p>“Women come to us hoping to resolve feelings of guilt, anxiety and depression. Women also inform us of secondary symptoms such as flashbacks of the abortion procedure, addictions, eating disorders, self-harm, anniversary syndrome, spiritual disconnection, preoccupation with becoming pregnant again, and interruption of bonding with future</p>

	<p>children.” Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Centre - Saskatoon, SK - https://www.saskatoonpregnancy.com/post-abortion.php Problem: greatly exaggerates emotional risks and paints in lurid terms. Implies major distress after abortion is common but it’s rare.</p>
<p>Ontario</p>	<p>“If you find someone considering an abortion suggest they talk to us first.” “We have seen first hand the difference prayer makes. We pray for the end of abortion, the staff at the abortion clinic beside ATW, our clients facing a crisis pregnancy, the unborn and young families!” Aid To Women Crisis Pregnancy Centre - Toronto, ON - https://e9532cb6-2d57-4ddd-a209910e3171b1a3.filesusr.com/ugd/64072d_93adff221185451b9c27d95228455d26.pdf Problem: Shows religious anti-choice zeal, they don’t prioritize client welfare</p> <p>“Biology shows that estrogen, without the balancing effects of the other pregnancy hormones, is a factor in increased breast cancer risk. Induced abortion increases a woman’s total estrogen exposure, ultimately increasing her risk for breast cancer.” Goderich Life Centre - Goderich, ON – https://goderichlifecentre.com/Abortion.html Problem: Scientifically false, the estrogen hypothesis has been debunked, it’s long-proven that abortion does not increase risk of breast cancer.</p>
<p>Manitoba</p>	<p>“We envision a community where every life has value and no one faces pregnancy or parenting alone” Pregnancy Support Centre of Westman - Brandon, MB - https://www.pregnancysupportcentre.ca/about-psc Problem: Code language for prioritizing fetuses over the needs/interests of pregnant people.</p>

	<p>“Women have self-identified a wide range of feelings and responses to their abortion decision. Sometimes women feel regrets right away. Some women have said they are fine after their abortion. Other women have said it was years later that the unsettling feelings began to surface. Women have reported these experiences after having an abortion: Guilt, Grief, Anger, Anxiety, Depression, Suicidal Thoughts, Difficulty Bonding with Partner or Children, Eating Disorders.”</p> <p>Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre (Winkler, Morden, Altona) - https://www.pvpcc.com/post-abortion-care/</p> <p>Problem: Almost all are fine after their abortion, not “some.” Gratuitous listing of serious emotional symptoms is designed to scare.</p>
<p>N.B.</p>	<p>“It is our desire that every woman in Southeastern N.B. who is facing ambivalence around an abortion decision has a place to go for accurate information.”</p> <p>Pregnancy and Wellness Centre of Moncton - Moncton, NB - https://www.monctonwellness.ca/about.php</p> <p>Problem: The info is not accurate (factually and/or because it’s given out of context)</p>
<p>Nova Scotia</p>	<p>“Countless women and men have shared with us their deep, long-term, unwanted feelings of regret, sorrow, guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts and behavior which they say are directly linked to their abortion experience... A local abortion provider told us that in his experience ‘there aren’t any women who are glad they had an abortion.’”</p> <p>Problem: Grossly overstated, almost all people are fine after their abortion. Gratuitous listing of serious emotional symptoms is designed to scare. Quote taken out of context - no-one’s happy to have to undergo a medical procedure, but are grateful it was available to them and for abortion it gives them back their lives.</p>

	<p>“You may be interested to know that in Nova Scotia, there are many, many families waiting to adopt infants. There are older children in Foster Care who are available for adoption in Nova Scotia, but the fact is that there are very many families in Nova Scotia looking to adopt infants today, but a lack of infants available for adoption in this province. As the Department of Community Services' website states, "There are fewer infants available for adoption than in the past and there is a lengthy waiting period to adopt infants."</p> <p>Valley Care Pregnancy Centre - Kentville, NS - https://www.asafeplaceforme.com/abortion</p> <p>Problem: Guilt-inducing over adoption, and treats babies as a commodity that should be produced by women.</p>
<p>P.E.I.</p>	<p>“An essential part of the work we do at the Island Pregnancy Centre is coming alongside moms who choose to parent their child.”</p> <p>Problem: So no support for those who need abortions?</p> <p>“We also offer post abortion support - although many women feel some relief after an abortion, others may have negative emotions. These reactions may be immediate or may occur years later. We provide one-on-one and group support for those suffering emotional distress after having an abortion.”</p> <p>Island Pregnancy Centre - Charlottetown/Summerside, PEI - https://www.islandpregnancycentre.com/mothershome https://www.islandpregnancycentre.com/overviewof-services</p> <p>Problem: Relief is the predominant emotion after abortion, and lasting negative emotions are rare.</p>
<p>N.&L.</p>	<p>“The Centre for Life operates a pregnancy resource service offering life affirming support to women in unplanned pregnancies.”</p> <p>Centre for Life - St. John's, NL – https://www.centreforlife.ca/main/services/</p> <p>Problem: “Life affirming” for the fetus, they mean.</p>

<p>B.C.</p>	<p>Hope for Women Pregnancy Services in Abbotsford, BC (#66) states it “is not a medical facility. We do not perform or refer for abortions but provide nonjudgemental, compassionate support, and accurate information on all pregnancy options, including abortions.”</p>
<p>Quebec</p>	<p>« L'avortement comporte le risque de complications significatives telles que l'hémorragie, l'infection, et des dommages aux organes. De graves complications médicales se produisent rarement dans les avortements précoces, mais augmentent avec les avortements tardifs 16, 17. Obtenir des informations complètes sur les risques reliés à l'avortement est limité en raison de déclarations incomplètes et le manque de tenue des dossiers se rapportant à des complications d'avortements. L'information qui est disponible signale les risques suivants. »</p> <p><i>Translation: Abortion carries the risk of significant complications such as hemorrhage, infection, and organ damage. Serious medical complications rarely occur in early abortions, but increase with late abortions. Obtaining complete information on abortion-related risks is limited due to incomplete reporting and lack of record keeping related to abortion complications. The information that is available points to the following risks.</i></p> <p>Enceinte et Inquiète ? - Montréal - https://www.enceinteinquiete.org/tu_envisages_un_avortement_2</p> <p>Problem: Grossly overstated risks that really only occur with illegal unsafe abortion. Implies without evidence that reporting problems hide complications. Actually, complications of later abortions are mostly reported because hospitals do most of them and are required to report complications. Clinics don't report complications but overwhelmingly do early abortions that are very safe.</p> <p>“Some women experience acute or lingering grief after an abortion, some suffer other consequences such as broken relationships. Many don't get a space to heal. Healing Sessions is a post-abortion support group for women seeking</p>

	<p>spiritual recovery, freedom and restoration from their abortion experience, no matter how long ago the abortion happened.”</p> <p>Options Pregnancy Centre - Lennoxville - https://www.optionslennox.com/</p> <p>Problem: Out of context. Very few people regret their abortion or have these symptoms.</p>
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Changes at IJSWVE and Thank You

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Stephen M. Marson, Editor, & Laura Gibson, Book Review Editor

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Normally, within this section of the journal, we announce staff changes. That is, we acknowledge individuals who joined one of our three boards. We also announce individuals who are leaving one of our boards. This current issue represents the first time we have no new individual joining or leaving one of our boards.

A great deal of work goes into each issue of the *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*. All work on our journal is completed by volunteers and *no one* — including our publisher IFSW — makes a financial profit from the publication. In addition, we have unsung heroes on our editorial board who contribute to the existence of our journal. Because we have a rule that requires our manuscripts to be assessed anonymously, I cannot offer public recognition of their names. I thank them! However, I can publicly announce the names of our hard-working copy editors. Their work is not confidential. For their major contributions to this issue, I must publicly thank:

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Artificial Intelligence in Social Work: Emerging Ethical Issues

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly prevalent in social work. AI is being used to conduct risk assessments, assist people in crisis, strengthen prevention efforts, identify systemic biases in the delivery of social services, provide social work education, and predict social worker burn-out and service outcomes, among other uses. There is now considerable literature on the ways in which social workers and other human service professionals can use AI to assist vulnerable people. Yet social work's literature does not include in-depth examination of the ethical implications of practitioners' use of AI. The purpose of this article is to examine ethical issues related to social workers' use of AI; apply relevant ethical standards; and outline elements of a strategy for social workers' ethical use of AI. Key ethical

issues addressed include informed consent and client autonomy; privacy and confidentiality; transparency; client misdiagnosis; client abandonment; client surveillance; plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation; algorithmic bias and unfairness; and use of evidence-based AI tools.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, ethics, machine learning, technology, values

Artificial intelligence (AI) has come of age. AI has the potential to transform social work and enhance the profession's ability to serve clients, organizations, and communities. AI can be used in clinical, administrative, advocacy, and policy contexts in social work. It can enable social workers to analyze data quickly in ways that lead to meaningful services and interventions, risk assessment, outcomes forecasting, and efforts to address systemic bias in the delivery of social services.

At the same time, AI comes with noteworthy ethical challenges, especially related to issues of informed consent and client autonomy; privacy and confidentiality; transparency; client misdiagnosis; client abandonment; client surveillance; plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation; algorithmic bias and unfairness; and use of evidence-based AI tools (Frackiewicz, 2023; Plante, 2023; Rubeis, 2022; Tambe & Rice, 2018; Terra, et al., 2023).

Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, social work does not yet offer practitioners and educators an in-depth exploration of key ethical challenges related to the use of AI. The purpose of this article is to examine ethical issues related to social workers' use of AI; apply relevant ethical standards; and outline a strategy for social workers' ethical use of AI.

The History and Nature of Artificial Intelligence

The term artificial intelligence was coined in 1955 by Stanford University professor John McCarthy. AI combines computer science and datasets to stimulate human intelligence and enable problem-solving in diverse contexts. AI includes what is known as machine learning, which uses historical data to predict and shape new output. The term "generative AI" refers to the

creation of images, videos, audio, text, and 3D models by using learning patterns from existing data to generate new outputs. The European Commission (2019) has defined AI as follows:

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals. AI-based systems can be purely software-based, acting in the virtual world (e.g. voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones or Internet of Things applications). (p. 1)

AI can take the form of expert systems, natural language processing, speech recognition, and machine vision. AI depends on algorithms to enhance machine learning, reasoning, self-correction, and creativity. In health care generally, AI has been used to diagnose disease, facilitate patient treatment, automate redundant tasks, manage medical records, provide customer service using chatbots, reduce dosage errors, provide robot-assisted services, analyze patient scans, and detect fraud (Rong, et al., 2020).

More specifically related to social work, the field of affective computing, also commonly referred to as emotion AI, is a subfield of computer science originating in the 1990s (Luxton, 2016; Royer, 2021). AI relies primarily on machine learning, computer vision, and natural language processing. Machine learning software is designed to enhance accuracy in diagnosing mental health conditions and predicting client outcomes. Computer vision analyzes images and nonverbal cues generated by clients, such as facial expression, gestures, eye gaze, and human pose to analyze clients' communications. Natural language processing entails speech recognition and text analysis to simulate human conversations via chatbot computer programs, and to create and understand clinical documentation.

Uses of Artificial Intelligence in Social Work

To develop ethics guidelines specifically for social workers, it is important to appreciate the diverse ways in which AI is being used in the profession and

in allied behavioral health professions. This context will inform the development of ethics-based protocols. In clinical social work, the context in which AI has been especially prominent, this technology is being used to conduct risk assessments, assist people in crisis, strengthen prevention efforts, identify systemic biases in the delivery of social and behavioral health services, provide social work education, and predict social worker burnout and service outcomes (Asakura, et al., 2020; Frackiewicz, 2023; Gillingham, 2019; Grządzielewska, 2021; Jacobi & Christensen, 2023; Keddell, 2019; Lannier, et al., 2020; Liedgren, et al., 2016; Molala & Mbaya, 2023; Rice, et al., 2018; Schneider & Seelmeyer, 2019; Sobjerg, 2022; Tambe & Rice, 2018). For example, the Trevor Project has partnered with Google.org to launch The Crisis Contact Simulator, a counselor training tool powered by AI. The model simulates digital conversations with LGBTQ youths in crisis and enables counselors to experience realistic practice conversations before taking live ones.

Woebot, a therapeutic chatbot that offers an automated therapist, is another AI behavioral health tool. Woebot uses natural language processing and learned responses to simulate therapeutic conversation, remember the content of past sessions, and deliver advice around mood and other struggles.

Wysa is an AI service that responds to the emotions individuals express using evidence-based cognitive behavioral techniques, DBT, meditation, breathing, yoga, and motivational interviewing to assist people. Pyx Health offers an app that is designed to communicate with people who feel chronically lonely. The Heyy app gives users access to self-assessments, research-backed resources on emotional well-being as well as links to behavioral health professionals for intensive therapy. ChatGPT offers people nearly instant suggestions of ways to address their distress, such as ways to increase relaxation, focus on sleep, reduce caffeine and alcohol consumption, challenge negative thoughts, reduce high-risk behaviors, and seek the support of friends and family.

Social workers who serve military personnel and veterans have access to AI tools designed specifically for these unique client populations. For

example, the PTSD Coach app is a mobile application designed to help veterans and service members manage symptoms of PTSD. The app provides a variety of tools and resources to assist users in coping with PTSD symptoms associated with military service, including anxiety, depression, and sleep issues. It offers an interactive self-assessment tool that helps users track their symptoms over time, and it provides strategies to manage symptoms when they occur. The app also includes audio-guided relaxation exercises and a virtual coach that can help users develop coping skills and set personal goals. In addition, it provides access to resources such as crisis hotlines, support groups, and other helpful websites.

The AIMS (Anger and Irritability Management Skills) app is a mobile application designed to help veterans and military service members manage feelings of anger and irritability. The app provides a variety of tools and resources to help users identify triggers for anger and develop strategies for managing their emotions. It offers a self-assessment tool to track anger symptoms over time, as well as interactive exercises to teach relaxation techniques and problem-solving skills. Users can also create a personalized anger management plan, setting goals and strategies to manage their anger in specific situations. The app also provides a journaling feature to track progress and identify areas for improvement. Users can learn skills to improve communication, strengthen relationships, and reduce stress levels.

Mindfulness Coach is an app that provides a variety of guided mindfulness exercises that can be tailored to individual needs and preferences. It offers a range of exercises, including body scans, breathing exercises, and guided meditations, which can help users reduce stress, manage anxiety, and improve overall well-being. Users can set reminders to practice mindfulness throughout the day, track progress over time, and customize exercises to suit their needs. The app can customize mindfulness exercises to specific needs, such as managing symptoms of PTSD, depression, or anxiety. The app also provides resources and guidance to help users develop a mindfulness practice that can be incorporated into their daily routine.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Annie mobile app is a Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging tool that promotes self-care for

veterans. Clients using Annie receive automated prompts to track and monitor their own health and motivational/educational messages. The Annie App for Clinicians allows social workers and other behavioral health professionals to use and create care protocols that allow clients to submit their health readings back to Annie. Messages and patient data are stored in the Annie system where clinicians can view the texts and readings as needed.

At the programmatic level, predictive analytics, or the use of data for forecasting service successes and challenges, can help agencies understand how best to allocate scarce resources. For example, DataKind, a data science volunteer corps, has worked with food pantries to use historical data and machine learning algorithms to predict a client's level of dependency on the pantry. By mining data, the organization can prioritize resources to avert a crisis of food insecurity before it escalates (Goldkind, 2021). As another example, the Chicago Data Collaborative mines data to understand the inner workings of the criminal justice system by pooling data from participating institutions and organizations in the Chicago metropolitan area. Members and partners seek out data from public agencies to create a public portrait of the criminal justice system, which the collaborative makes available on its Web site (Goldkind, 2021).

Core Ethical Challenges and Resources

Several core ethics-informed resources addressing social workers' use of technology are available to guide practitioners' use of AI in various workplace contexts. These guidelines focus on three distinct, albeit related, domains: (1) practice standards, (2) regulatory and licensing standards, and (3) code of ethics standards. In 2013 the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) board of directors appointed an international task force to develop model regulatory standards for technology and social work practice. ASWB embarked on development of new ethics-related standards in response to demand from regulatory bodies around the globe for guidance concerning social workers' evolving use of technology. The ASWB task force included representatives from prominent social work practice, regulation, and

education organizations throughout the world. The task force developed standards for social workers who use digital and other electronic technology to provide information to the public, deliver services to clients, communicate with and about clients, manage confidential information and case records, and store and access information about clients. The group developed model standards, including extensive ethics guidelines related to technology use, addressing seven key ethics-related concepts: practitioner competence; informed consent; privacy and confidentiality; boundaries, dual relationships, and conflicts of interest; records and documentation; collegial relationships; and social work practice across jurisdictional boundaries. These model standards, formally adopted in 2015, are now influencing the development of licensing and regulatory laws around the world (López Peláez & Kirwan, 2023), along with various efforts in other nations (British Association of Social Workers, 2018; Diez, 2023; Pascoe, 2023).

In 2017, following unprecedented collaboration among key social work organizations in the U.S.—the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA)—the profession formally adopted new, comprehensive practice standards, including extensive ethics guidelines that focused on social workers' and social work educators' use of technology (NASW, CSWE, ASWB, & CSWA, 2017). Approved by these respective organizations' boards of directors, these transformational, comprehensive standards address a wide range of compelling ethical issues related to social workers' use of technology to provide information to the public; design and deliver services; gather, manage, and store information; and educate social workers. Further, in 2017, NASW adopted a revised code that includes extensive technology-related additions pertaining to informed consent; competent practice; conflicts of interest; privacy and confidentiality; sexual relationships; interruption of services; unethical conduct of colleagues; supervision and consultation; education and training; client records; and evaluation and research.

Social workers who use or are contemplating using AI should draw on these prominent guidelines and address a number of key ethical

considerations related to informed consent and client autonomy; privacy and confidentiality; transparency; client misdiagnosis; client abandonment; client surveillance; plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation; algorithmic bias and unfairness; and use of evidence-based AI tools. These key ethics concepts should be reflected in ethics-informed protocols guiding social workers' use of AI.

Informed consent and client autonomy

Social workers have always understood their duty to explain the potential benefits and risks of services as part of the informed consent process (Barsky, 2019; Reamer, 2018a, 2018b, 2023a). When using AI, practitioners should inform clients of relevant benefits and risks and respect clients' judgment about whether to accept or decline the use of AI. According to the *NASW Code of Ethics* (2021), "social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients" (standard 1.03[f]).

Privacy and confidentiality

Data gathered from clients by social workers using AI must be protected. Social workers have a duty to ensure that the AI software they are using is properly encrypted and protected from data breaches to the greatest extent possible. Social workers must take steps to prevent inappropriate access to AI-generated data by third-parties, for example, vendors who sponsor the AI software social workers use. According to the *NASW Code of Ethics* (2021), "social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications

such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages” (standard 1.07[f]).

Transparency

Consistent with the time-honored concept of informed consent in social work, social workers who use AI should inform clients of any unauthorized disclosure of clients’ protected health information, for example, as a result of computer hacking or failed online or digital security. According to the technology standards adopted by NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA (2017), “regardless of the precautions that social workers take to ensure that client records are gathered, managed, and stored in a secure manner, confidential electronic records may be breached. Social workers should comply with ethical standards and relevant federal and state laws regarding any duty to inform clients about possible breaches of confidentiality. Social workers should also develop policies and procedures detailing how they would inform clients regarding breaches of confidentiality” (standard 3.05).

Client misdiagnosis

Clinical social workers who rely on AI to assess clients’ behavioral health challenges must take steps to minimize the likelihood that their digital protocols will generate misdiagnoses. This may occur when social workers do not supplement their AI-generated assessments with their own independent assessments and judgment. Misdiagnosis may lead to inappropriate or unwarranted interventions which, in turn, may cause significant harm to clients and expose social workers to the risk of malpractice lawsuits and licensing board complaints (Reamer, 2023a). According to Yan, Ruan, and Jiang (2023), “current AI is still far from effectively recognizing mental disorders and cannot replace clinicians’ diagnoses in the near future” (p. 2).

Client abandonment

Social workers who rely on AI to connect with clients must take steps to respond to their messages and postings in a timely fashion, when warranted.

To use the legal term, social workers must take steps to avoid “abandoning” clients who use AI to communicate significant distress. In malpractice litigation, abandonment occurs when practitioners do not respond to clients in a timely fashion or terminate services in a manner inconsistent with standards in the profession. For example, a client who communicates suicidal ideation via AI, does not receive a timely response from their social worker, and attempts to die by suicide yet lives, may have grounds for a malpractice claim. According to the NASW *Code of Ethics* (2021), “social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary” (standard 1.17[b]).

Client surveillance

One of the inherent risks of AI is the possibility that third parties will use available data inappropriately and without authorization for surveillance purposes. For example, social workers who provide reproductive health services to clients in states where abortion is illegal must be cognizant of the possibility that prosecutors will subpoena electronically stored information (ESI) generated by AI to prosecute pregnant people who seek abortion services and the practitioners who assist them in their decision making. Although ESI in social workers’ possession has always been discoverable during legal proceedings, there is a newer challenge when ESI includes information generated by AI (for example, information about reproductive health generated by chatbots used by clients and social workers). A client or social worker who uses AI to search online for abortion-related information services creates a digital trail (Reamer, 2023b). According to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, ESI is defined as any documents or information that are stored in electronic form (Yeazell, et al., 2022).

Plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation

One advantage of AI is that it enables social workers to generate useful job-related information quickly. For example, social workers may use ChatGPT to produce content that may be useful in grant applications, program evaluations, advocacy efforts, and fundraising appeals. Social workers who take advantage of this powerful AI tool must be sure to cite their sources and comply with “fair use” doctrine to avoid allegations of plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation (Keegan, 2023). Although using content from ChatGPT is not necessarily plagiarism, it is possible that ChatGPT incorporates content from other authors whose work should be cited (Pocock, 2023). Social workers who use AI should comply with prevailing ethical standards (NASW, 2021):

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception. (standard 4.04)

Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed. (standard 4.08[a])

Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others. (standard 4.08[b])

Algorithmic bias and unfairness

AI's dependence on machine learning, which draws from large volumes of available data that may not be entirely representative of social workers' clients, comes with a risk that algorithms used to assess clients and develop interventions and treatment plans will incorporate significant bias related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, and other vulnerable or protected categories. Algorithmic bias can manifest itself when AI is used as part of social service agency recruitment, online marketing, and facial recognition, among other tools. According to Lee, Resnick, and Barton (2019), “because machines can treat similarly-situated people and objects differently, research is starting to reveal some troubling examples in which the reality of algorithmic decision-making falls short of our

expectations. Given this, some algorithms run the risk of replicating and even amplifying human biases, particularly those affecting protected groups.”

Ethical use of evidence-based AI tools

AI technology is developing rapidly. Best practices are evolving at blinding speed. Social workers who incorporate AI into their practice have an ethical duty to keep pace with research-informed developments and adjust their protocols accordingly. A key resource is the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence. This organization’s code of ethics is consistent with traditional social work values. According to the technology standards adopted by NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA (2017), “technology is constantly evolving, as is its use in various forms of social work practice. Social workers should keep apprised of the types of technology that are available and research best practices, risks, ethical challenges, and ways of managing them” (standard 2.23).

A Protocol for Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence

In recent years, AI experts have developed protocols to design and implement ethics-based use of AI. These include a series of concrete steps social workers can take to increase the likelihood of compliance with prevailing ethical standards (Gattadahalli, 2020):

Establish ethics-based governing principles

Artificial intelligence initiatives should adhere to prominent ethics-informed principles to ensure these efforts are designed and implemented responsibly. Key principles include:

- The AI technology does no harm. AI developers should take steps to protect clients and other members of the public they serve.
- The AI technology is designed and developed using transparent protocols and auditable methodologies.

- That AI tools collect and treat client data to reduce biases against population groups based on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, and other potential sources of bias.
- Clients are informed of known risks and benefits of AI technologies so they can make informed decisions about its use.

Establish a digital ethics steering committee

Ideally, organizations that employ social workers and use AI would create a digital ethics steering committee comprised of key staff who are familiar with digital technology in general, AI technology, and prevailing ethical standards and best practices. This committee would have oversight responsibilities related to the design and implementation of AI.

Convene diverse focus groups

Focus groups that include individuals from the diverse populations from whom datasets used in AI may be collected can help reduce and prevent algorithmic bias. Focus groups may include clients, client advocates, practitioners, researchers, educators, community leaders, agency administrators, and policymakers. They can review current AI protocols and suggest modifications to address risks related to algorithmic bias.

Subject algorithms to peer review

Rigorous peer review processes can help identify and address blind spots and weaknesses in AI protocols. Peer reviewers may include social workers familiar with AI, researchers, educators, and diverse groups of data scientists.

Conduct AI model simulations

It can be useful to develop simulation models that test scenarios in which AI tools are susceptible to bias in an effort to reduce risk and address possible

algorithmic bias. Feedback generated by simulations can identify potential ethics-related problems associated with AI.

Develop social worker-focused guidance for accessing and using AI results

Social workers must be trained to give appropriate weight to AI tools to supplement—and not replace—their professional judgement. It is essential that social workers understand distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate use of AI.

Develop external change communication and training strategies

As applications of AI in health care evolve, creating a carefully designed messaging strategy is important to ensure that the key benefits and risks of AI used in social work will be understood by clients and can be clearly and coherently communicated by their practitioners. An effective communication and training protocol directed to all relevant parties, both within and outside of social workers' employing organizations, is essential.

Maintain a log of tests

Ideally, organizations that employ social workers and use AI will maintain a comprehensive database summarizing the results of periodic tests to identify the strengths and limitations of their AI protocols. Over time, this database can be monitored to enhance the effectiveness of AI and compliance with relevant ethical standards.

Conclusion

Practitioners in a variety of professions, including social work, are rapidly increasing their use of AI. Along with a wide range of potential benefits of AI in social work come a number of compelling ethics-related challenges and risks, especially related to informed consent and client autonomy; privacy and confidentiality; transparency; client misdiagnosis; client abandon-

ment; client surveillance; plagiarism, dishonesty, fraud, and misrepresentation; algorithmic bias and unfairness; and use of evidence-based AI tools.

To protect clients and themselves, social workers should take a number of proactive steps. First, they should familiarize themselves with AI protocols and the various ways in which they can be used in their social work practice settings. Second, social workers should review relevant ethical standards and practice standards pertaining to their use of AI and ensure that their practice settings are in compliance. Third, social workers in positions of authority should design and implement training for staffers regarding the appropriate and ethical use of AI in their work setting. Fourth, social work education programs should incorporate content on AI in their curricula to ensure that the next generation of social workers uses AI responsibly. Social work organizations that sponsor continuing education should also offer workshops and webinars for practitioners who may not have been introduced to this content during their formal social work education. Finally, social work educators, researchers, and practitioners should take diligent steps to evaluate the impact of AI in the profession, focusing especially on evidence of effectiveness, limitations, algorithmic bias, and compliance with pertinent ethical standards.

The profession's earliest practitioners could not have imagined that today's social workers would use technology to serve clients remotely, enter client information in electronic records stored in the "cloud," and address clients' needs using AI, among other digital and electronic tools. The emergence and proliferation of AI is yet another reminder that social work ethics challenges and related standards evolve.

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Animal Ethics, Animal Welfare, and Speciesism: Considerations for Social Work

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Abstract

Social work is a human-centric social science that by design does not traditionally look beyond an anthropocentric perspective of practice, and this has consequences for nonhuman animals. Indeed, certain aspects of social service are oppressive towards nonhuman animals by advocating for the primacy of human rights and self-determination, which in a number of instances actively discriminates against nonhuman species through various forms of exploitation including (but not limited to) factory farming, hunting, entertainment, and ritual slaughter. This paper is a review of the curious relationship that social work has in regards to nonhuman animals in the United States, and how this dynamic can encourage and engender widespread forms of discrimination towards these sentient beings. Animal ethics, animal welfare, and speciesism are examined in the context of social work ethics, principles, and practice. Considerations are proposed and discussed for finding common ground between the NASW Social Work Code of Ethics and animal ethics, with the purpose of allowing for the social work profession to develop a more inclusive value system, one which

is not limited to that of just our own species. Such a change would allow for a more just and complete value system within the social work profession in the U.S., which in turn could help to advance the cause for the rights and wellbeing of nonhuman animals on a wider national as well as international scale.

Keywords: Animal ethics, animal rights, animal welfare, anthropocentrism, anthropogenic, ethics, human rights, oppression, NASW, self-determination, sentience, social work ethics, speciesism, posthumanism, utilitarianism

Introduction

We are living in an age of incredible social change and upheaval in which society (particularly Western Society) is reevaluating its past and present relationship with oppressed groups. Certainly, here in the United States, the late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen this progressive societal evolution with traditionally disenfranchised minorities. This societal evolution has also extended into the world of nonhuman animals, albeit in a far less decisive and uniformed manner (Fraser, Taylor, & Riggs, 2021; Milligan, 2015; Ryan, 2014). Many of the pro-environmental groups and animal rights organizations advocating for nonhuman animals are rooted in the social activism and revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, and this growing movement has become part of mainstream public discourse over subsequent decades in the West and beyond (Bright, 2021; Fraser, Taylor, & Riggs, 2021; Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Milligan, 2015; Ryan, 2014; Wolf, 2000). Indeed, as a deeper understanding of oppression has seeped into the greater collective human consciousness, it has become clear that its existence is not a phenomenon which is unique to just our own species, *Homo sapiens* (Fraser et al., 2021; Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Jones, 2014; Ryan, 2014; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Ryan, 2011; Moore, 2009; Singer, 1990).

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest social work professional organization in the world (NASW 2023; NASW, 2021; Kopeikin Brill, 2001). The NASW Code of Ethics is the document that provides the moral and professional framework by which social workers are to

conduct themselves in the United States (NASW, 2021; Kopeikin Brill, 2001). The NASW Code of Ethics essentially describes the mission statement of the social work profession and this is (in short) to enhance and improve the *human condition*. It can therefore be said by extension that social work holds an *anthropocentric* or human-centric value system (Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019; Ryan 2014; Ryan, 2011; Shaw, 2011; Wolf, 2000). Thus, that is to say, there is no mention in the NASW Code of Ethics of nonhuman animals nor how or if their existence means anything in the context of these principles of professional conduct (it is nonetheless glaring that they are *omitted*). It is far too easy to forget that we humans are animals as well; in this regard the social work profession; like so many others, is guilty of promoting human exceptionalism, espousing a species-based dichotomy or “othering” between ourselves and the rest of the animal kingdom (Caviola, Everett, & Faber, 2019; Peggs, 2016; Ryan 2014; Hanrahan, 2011; Ryan 2011). It can be argued that in a spiritual sense, this condition is the antithesis of the very principles that guide the NASW and the profession at large, including notions of justice, inclusion, diversity, and advocating for the oppressed, among other banners of social work.

Why should social workers care about animal welfare, animal ethics, and the natural world in general? To begin with, this can be answered in a very much anthropocentric manner. It is becoming increasingly clear that environmental issues are perhaps the greatest threat to human social welfare and humanity on a global scale (Almiron & Tafalla, 2019; Decker Sparks, Massey Combs, & Yu, 2019; Risley-Curtiss, 2013; Hanrahan, 2011; Coates, 2003; Wolf, 2000). Environmental crises inevitably spill into the human arena; indeed, humanity (namely human behavior) itself is directly responsible for a growing number of catastrophes across the natural world, including anthropogenic climate change, pollution, the biodiversity crisis, and the 6th Mass Extinction - the first event of its kind in the history of life on earth by which a singular species is responsible for the destruction and impoverishment of life on our planet (Naggs, 2017; Cafaro, 2015; Diamond, 1989). Human exploitation, degradation, and mismanagement of the natural world has led to worsening drought, floods, food crises, pollution, eco-

system collapse, and disease development, including zoonotic (i.e., animal to human) diseases, such as COVID-19 (Fraser et al., 2021; Decker Sparks et al., 2019; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Hanrahan, 2011; Heinsch, 2011; Coates, 2003; Wolf, 2000). There is an intrinsic, direct relationship between the health of the planet and human society at large (Garlington & Collins, 2020; Almiron & Tafalla, 2019; Hudson, 2019; Shaly, 2019; Risley-Curtiss, 2013; Gray & Coates, 2012; Heinsch, 2011; Coates, 2003). Social work has finally begun to acknowledge this relationship and this has resulted in some limited changes in education and practice, such as the relatively recent development of “environmental social work” (Kati & Aila-Leena, 2018; Szucs, Geers, Jezierski, et al., 2012; Heinsch, 2011; Coates, 2003; McMMain Park, 1996).

From a human-centric perspective, it is also well-known for example that animal cruelty is a key indicative behavior for human violence and criminality in general (Arkow, 2020; Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019; Ryan, 2014; Wykoff, 2014; Risely-Curtiss, 2013; Risley-Curtiss, 2010; Faver & Strand, 2003; Wolf, 2000). Despite this relationship, social workers do not typically assess for animal abuse in the field, an oversight which can furthermore put our human clients at risk (Ryan, 2011; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Risley-Curtiss, Zilney, & Hornung, 2010). Moreover, companion animals (i.e., “pets”) often play an important role in the lives of our clients and patients – and this has far too often been overlooked when examining psychosocial factors such as family systems, support, stressors, trauma, as well as death and dying (Fraser et al., 2021; Rauptis & Hoy-Gerlach, 2020; Hoy-Gerlach & Wehman, 2017; Ryan, 2014; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Risley-Curtiss et al., 2010; Hines 2003). According to Arkow (2020), there are more companion animals in the United States today than children. This is a fascinating statistic unto itself and perhaps also an indicator of the changes in Western society as to whom or what comprises a family member in the early 21st century.

This review takes a broad-based look at the often-contradictory relationship that exists in social work in the United States as it compares to animal ethics, animal welfare, and speciesism. These interrelated concepts fall under the broad-based philosophy of “animal rights,” which is concerned

with the moral value of nonhuman animals. It should be emphasized that the state of animal rights in the U.S. represents just one particular snapshot of this complex philosophical movement which has developed in different ways across the world (Munro, 2022; Weitzenfeld & Joy, 2014).

Social Work and Animal Welfare

An Overview of Animal Welfare

Animal welfare pertains to the physical and emotional wellbeing of animals – it is a state that can be scientifically measured as opposed to being something arbitrary (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2016; Fraser & MacRae, 2011; Fraser, 1999). Animal welfare is a multidisciplinary field, and has been studied by veterinarians, ethologists, biologists, and other researchers (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2016; Fraser & MacRae, 2011; Lund, Coleman, Gunnarsson, et al., 2006; Fraser, 1999). Animal welfare is not a subject matter that can necessarily be painted with broad brush strokes as what constitutes the adequate welfare of different species varies (Lund, 2006; Hewson, 2003). Indeed, each species has its own ideal parameters as to what “welfare,” or broadly speaking, its state of “wellbeing” is. The definition of wellbeing here is multidimensional, as is the case with our own species. Animals as sentient creatures can achieve wellbeing by having their basic needs met (including adequate food, water, natural space, and safety), and this ultimately translates into *feelings* as well – which relates to a state of mind as opposed to the body (Kumar, Choughary, Kumar, et al., 2019; Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2016; Lund, 2006; Lund et al., 2006; Hewson, 2003). Animal sentience can encompass a spectrum of feelings that are shared by our own species - which not long ago was argued to be a uniquely human phenomenon (Proctor, Carder, & Cornish, 2013; Proctor, 2012; Francione, 2010; Singer, 1990). Such feelings may include (but are not limited to) pleasure, pain, contentment, and fear (Kumar, Choughary, Kumar, et al., 2019; Proctor, Carder, & Cornish, 2013; Proctor, 2012). It must be emphasized that this state of mind also necessitates the capability to perceive and feel these emotions in a manner not unlike

our own species. To that end, Kumar, Choughary, Kumar, et al. (2019) note that in 2012, an international group of preeminent neuroscientists signed what is known as the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, which confirms that “many animals – including all mammals and birds – possess the neurological substrates (i.e., biological machinery) that generate consciousness,” (p. 635). As social workers, this sentient state that we share with non-human animals should be appreciated as empathic practitioners.

Lund (2006) clearly explains the holistic nexus of animal welfare theory as including (1) natural living, (2) biological functioning, as well as (3) affective states. These interrelated factors can be illustrated by numerous examples in accordance with species affiliation. In terms of domestic animals, we can think of a cow (*Bos taurus*) for example, living an undisturbed life on a farm with ample pastureland to graze, and amongst its herd in relative tranquility. This again describes an ideal biological (and hence psychological) setting for this given species. The same concepts can be applied to wild animals. Thus, we can look at the largest land mammal, the African bush elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), which requires ample wild grazing land (savannah) to forage in their herds while being undisturbed by human encroachment and interference. In both of these cases, we see the intimate and profound interconnection between natural living, biological functioning, and affective states.

It should be clarified that for the purposes of this article, we are specifically considering the subphylum Vertebrata (essentially those animals which have a backbone, such as ourselves) - which include the classes encompassing the fish (Osteichthyes), amphibians (Amphibia), reptiles (Reptilia), birds (Aves), and mammals (Mammalia). A particularly weighted look will be focused upon the mammals because they are the most common (but certainly not the only) nonhuman animals encountered in the social work field as the predominant animal companions of our human clients (Loue & Vincent, 2021; Arkow, 2020; Strand et al., 2012). At the same time, it is important to be aware that animal welfare extends well beyond this *categorization based upon phylogenetic* (or evolutionary) *relatedness to ourselves* and indeed, it can in principle be extended to other forms of life. For example,

notions of sentience are now well-recognized in the arthropods (i.e., lobster, shrimp, crabs) and cephalopods (i.e., octopuses, squid, cuttlefish), types of invertebrate animals who have been scientifically documented to feel pain and anxiety (Passantino, Elwood, & Coluccio, 2021; Horvath, Angeletti, Nascetti & Carere, 2013). With the above in mind, an appreciation for animal welfare and its incorporation into the social work profession can afford the social work practitioner to look more profoundly into the multidimensionality of “welfare.”

Social Work and Animal Welfare - Intersectionality

Animal welfare science pertains at least nominally to social work practice when considering animals as a *means of treatment*, such as animal-assisted therapy – but this is a matter of regulation above all (Taylor, Fraser, Signal, & Prentice, 2016; Ryan, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Risley-Curtiss, 2010; Netting, Wilson, & New, 1987). To that end, in an article by Taylor, Fraser, Signal, and Prentice (2016), the authors not only acknowledge that social work is a human-oriented profession, but state that the field does not officially recognize animals as being sentient – despite an overall rise in animal-related interventions utilized by social workers and the development of the veterinary social work specialization. The social work-centric literature in this study pertaining to animals largely emphasizes that this profession has traditionally considered the utilitarian aspect of the human-animal relationship (Loue & Vincent, 2021; Arkow, 2020; Taylor, Fraser, Signal, et al., 2016; Ryan 2014). Ryan (2014) makes the related argument that animals themselves are largely ignored in social work practice, to the disadvantage of the profession and its guiding principles at large. Similarly, Risley-Curtiss (2010) explains that a consequence of social work not addressing nonhuman animals has at times resulted in confusion and suboptimal practice while encountering them in the field.

This limited conceptualization and emphasis of animal welfare in social work is somewhat counterintuitive as there are tens of millions of companion animals living in the United States (dogs, cats, birds, and others),

comprising approximately 60% of U.S. households where most of these animals are considered to be family members by their owners (Arkow, 2020; Ryan 2014; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Risley-Curtiss et al., 2010). For this demographic of Americans, these companion animals may hold a central place within the family system and thus are an important part of the lives of our clients and patients (Fraser et al., 2021; Holcombe et al., 2015; Strand et al., 2012; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Mercer, 2007; Netting et al., 1987; Crocken, 1982). Is this in itself not a reason for a more progressive, open-minded stance towards animal welfare and expanded (i.e., nonhuman) notions of justice in the social work profession? There are a number of compelling arguments for the incorporation of animal welfare considerations in social work which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Social Welfare and Animal Welfare in the United States – A Shared History

There is a curious and fascinating shared history between the origins of the social welfare movement and animal welfare here in the United States and as a social work-gearred article, this bears attention. For the great majority of Western Civilization at large, enforceable social service measures to protect the most at-risk members of society (that is, children and animals), were largely ineffective, inconsistent, or nil until the 19th century (Arkow, 2020; Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019; Zilney & Zilney, 2005; Watkins, 1990). In the United States, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in 1866, which was structurally and philosophically based on the British Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals founded in 1824 (ASPCA, 2023; Zilney & Zilney, 2005). Mr. Henry Bergh (1813 – 1888) was the founder of what would later become the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and he is known as perhaps the greatest animal welfare advocate in the U.S. during the 19th century. Throughout the course of his professional life, Mr. Bergh had prosecuted over 12,000 cases of animal abuse and in this process, became a known and respected public figure (Cappiello, 2017).

It was also through the animal welfare laws advocated by Mr. Bergh and his allies that the early legal mechanisms preventing cruelty against children would (in part) come into being, as highlighted by a landmark case involving a severely abused foster child by the name of Mary Ellen (McCormack) Wilson (1864 – 1956) in 1874, which involved ASPCA intervention (Hoy-Gerlach, Delgado, & Sloane, 2018; Norton Greene, 2013; Jalongo, 2006; Zilney & Zilney, 2005; Watkins, 1990). Mr. Bergh soon after notably founded the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1875 (Cappiello, 2017; Myers, 2008). Of further note, the advocate Henry Bergh was never a parent or a pet owner himself (Cappiello, 2017).

Since the revolutionary Mary Ellen Wilson case, child welfare and animal welfare laws, regulations, and approaches have experienced a kind of schism in the U.S., in part because of the differing, evolving views on human rights versus animal rights – though as indicated previously, this trend has begun to change (Arkow, 2020; Zilney & Zilney, 2005). Of course, there are consequences for the differentiation in these welfare laws. In case of animals, such legalities ultimately allow for further exploitation up to a legally sanctioned limit and this can vary based upon a given species and their given purpose(s) to serve their human masters (this will be more thoroughly analyzed in the “Speciesism” section below). There are different ways to consider this from a social welfare perspective.

For the social work practitioner, it is perhaps most immediately practical to recognize that the situational correlations and parallels between child abuse and animal abuse continue to be striking in many ways. To that end, research has shown an important association between the perpetrators themselves and these often cooccurring forms of violence (Arkow, 2020; Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019; Wykoff, 2014; Risley-Curtiss, 2010; Risley-Curtiss et al., 2010; Zilney & Zilney, 2005). As an illustration of this relationship, in a national survey of the largest shelters in the U.S. serving women and child survivors of domestic violence, researchers found that a remarkable 83% of shelters surveyed observed the coexistence between domestic violence and animal abuse (Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019). For social workers focused in on their human clientele, this should

have meaning on multiple levels – from a (1) treatment perspective, (2) to reporting, (3) to structural matters within the shelter system – such as the need for more facilities to be pet friendly. Yet, these glaring gaps remain. In this regard, Vincent, McDonald, Poe, and Deisner (2019) emphasize that the critical link between interpersonal violence and that of animal abuse is not typically a part of mainstream social work education and training, which is a significant detriment to the individuals and families that we work with. This argument points to the idea that one need not be an animal lover to appreciate animal welfare as an element within social welfare that deserves further consideration (Arkow, 2020; Rautkis & Hoy-Gerlach, 2020; Vincent, McDonald, Poe, & Deisner, 2019; Risely-Curtiss et al., 2010).

Social Work and Animal Ethics

An Overview of Animal Ethics

Animal ethics is a more philosophical field of study as compared to animal welfare, which is a science (Kymlicka & Donaldson, 2016; Fraser & MacRae, 2011; Fraser, 1999). Animal ethics examines and describes how nonhuman animals should be treated and considered by human beings (Serman & Bussert, 2020; Webb, Woodford, & Huchard, 2019; Kymlicka, & Donaldson, 2016; Zuolo, 2016; Fraser, 1999; Singer, 1990). Animal ethics therefore does share an inherently interconnected relationship with animal welfare as well as speciesism (Serman & Bussert, 2020; Webb, Woodford, & Huchard, 2019; Kymlicka & Donaldson, 2016; Zuolo, 2016; Fraser, 1999; Singer, 1990).

The broad idea of ethics and the act of “being ethical” pertain to a given code of morality or value system. Human moral codes are different than scientific calculations and facts. These codifications do not apply to the same kind of objective, formulaic, testable rules, as moral codes are relative – and yet their existence in some form is ubiquitous across human societies (Saroglou, 2019; Ayala, 2010; Broom, 2006). To that end, notions of ethics and morality can vary between peoples and cultures and evolve over time (Saroglou, 2019; Ayala, 2010; Broom, 2006). This is not to take away from the

meaning of “being ethical” or “being moral,” but it does potentially complicate things. Ayala (2010) argues that the existence of deliberate moral behavior is unique to humanity alone, whereas its existence in other animals is purely the product of instinct or “the product of genetically determined behaviors” (p. 9016). This conclusion that moral altruism is unique only to humanity is a reductionist, anthropocentric, and speciesist approach, which does not appreciate the vast and complex span of selfless behaviors that have been documented in what Ayala (2010) refers to under the catchall term of “biological altruism.” To be clear, biological altruism in basic scientific terms specifically refers to the reduction of direct reproductive fitness of one organism to the benefit another (Dugatkin, 2009; Wilson, 2000).

Ayala (2010) is correct in acknowledging that morality exists outside of the realm of human experience. Morality, biologically speaking, is an evolved trait and occurs in other animal species (most striking perhaps, but not limited to social and eusocial species), and includes (1) minimizing harm and (2) engaging in altruistic (or “selfless”) behaviors (Ryan, 2014; Rowlands, 2012; Dugatkin, 2009; Broom, 2006; Wilson, 2000; Singer, 1990). This biologically-based morality is important for humans to grasp in order to gain a deeper appreciation of nonhuman species and our profound similarities in so many ways. In addition, it must be said that there is no shortage of compelling cases of animals behaving as *deliberate* moral beings (Fitzpatrick, 2017; Ryan, 2014; Proctor, 2012; Rowlands, 2012). This growing body of evidence has not gone unnoticed – yet the debate continues no doubt in part because of the ramifications for humanity on social, philosophical, religious, as well as legal levels. In this sense, it is perhaps threatening to human exceptionalism. This writer would argue that these perceived threats in recognizing at least some nonhuman animals as moral beings ultimately are a hindrance to an enhanced human moral awakening and the ability for human beings to become greater planetary citizens as opposed to simply masters of the natural world.

The Codification of Animal Ethics

The effective codification of animal ethics has occurred in a gradual, limited fashion in American society and in a manner which is rather compartmentalized in terms of what species of animals are deserving of certain protections and why (Matheny & Leahy, 2007; Cohen, 2006; Mench, 2003). For example, a type of codification may be specific to select protections for work animals, research animals, or those destined to be farmed (that is, slaughtered). Other legal documents protecting animals, such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973 are specific to particular forms of wildlife that have already been negatively impacted by human behavior to the extent that there is a threat of extinction (Bean, 2009). In case of all of these examples, note that there no single *all-encompassing* document for the ethical consideration of nonhuman animal species. This is a curious and deliberate detail, which has consequences for nonhuman animals and our behaviors towards them.

Perhaps the closest thing to a defining document on animal ethics is the Universal Declaration on Animal Rights (UDAR) of 1978 which was declared by a number of NGOs and later revised in 1989 and then again in 2018 (Peters, 2020; Peters, 2018; Neumann, 2012). This document was in part deliberately modeled after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 (Peters, 2020; Peters, 2018; Neumann, 2012). It is noteworthy that the UDHR itself was partially created with an idea of species hierarchy (an idea that will be further examined in the “Speciesism” section below), in which an asserted, inherent, human “otherness,” “exceptionalism,” and “superiority,” to other animals was argued to have necessitated such a legal framework—a seemingly unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive rationale for the existence of this important document (Kymlicka, 2018). More than this, the UDHR can be understood as a legal document for the continued species-based discrimination, domination, and exploitation of nonhuman animals precisely by codifying “human exceptionalism.” To that end, human rights and animal rights as they currently stand are not always mutually compatible (Kymlicka, 2018; Cochrane & Cooke, 2016; Behrens, 2009). In this sense, the idea of human rights may sometimes infringe upon

animal rights and vice versa. The examples in this instance are abundant and worldwide in scope. One can consider human hunting practices, development projects, animal experimentation, ritual slaughter, and other means of exploiting nature as causing tension between these competing concepts (Kymlicka, 2018; Behrens, 2009).

It should be made clear that unlike the UDHR, the UDAR declaration is purely symbolic in nature and remains as such. Indeed, the UDAR has still yet to be codified or applied in any meaningful, enforceable way (Peters, 2020; Peters, 2018; Neumann, 2012). This unfortunate reality does not mean that the development towards a codified, universal system of animal rights has no practical, conceivable future. On the contrary, liberal theories of justice have continued to evolve in society, and as noted by Cochrane and Cooke (2016), there have been a growing number of political theorists and philosophers who have increasingly spoken up to discuss this matter and its implications for the rights and (by extension) protections of nonhuman animals as sentient beings. The existence of sentience in nonhuman animals continues to be a powerful argument when talking about the significance of animal ethics overall. The necessity of developing a sound ethical system in regards to nonhuman animals is not a trivial nor a baseless idea, but rather one which is supported by a growing body of comprehensive scientific evidence based upon rigorous research in the fields of biology, physiology, ethology, and comparative studies (Cochrane & Cooke, 2016; Ryan, 2014; Proctor, Carder, & Cornish, 2013; Proctor, 2012; Francione, 2010; Aaltola, 2008). It should be highlighted that, ethology, or the study of animal behavior, has provided insight into the complexity and nuance of animal behavior and communication on the intraspecies and interspecies level – illustrating the many fascinating parallels as well as applications within our own species (Ryan, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Dugatkin, 2009; Wilson, 2000; Singer, 1990).

Thus, in an article by Cochrane (2012), an argument is made for the reconceptualization of human rights to become something much more profound and inclusive – to what the author refers to as “sentient rights.” In short, the idea of sentient rights according to Cochrane (2012), is that all sentient creatures have biological as well as conscious interests (which can be

affected by the actions of others) – and as such, they have rights. This notion, per Cochrane (2012) is referred to as being *prima facie* (or being effectively understood face value), where certain basic rights are inherent by the state of being sentient. At the same time, the author reassesses the universality of the argument for human “personhood,” in remarking that notions including “a conception of the self” do not apply to all parts of humanity nor human existence - including (1) during early stages of development and (2) for those with severe mental disabilities. Such an argument is an effective consideration for the many gray areas of commonly held ideas regarding human exceptionalism. This line of reasoning furthermore echoes the philosophical arguments made by philosopher Peter Singer in his 1975 book *Animal Liberation*, which is discussed in further detail later in this review. From the opposite perspective, it is worthwhile to note that there are many cognitive ethologists who have argued with ample scientific evidence that animals do in fact have “minds,” and moreover are individual beings in terms of their own interests, capacities, and experiences (Kumar, Choughary, Kumar, et al., 2019; Freeman, Bekoff, & Bexell, 2011; Aaltola, 2008; Francescotti, 2007; Singer, 1990). This overdue recognition has potentially profound implications in various domains, such as in animal research and testing practices – including in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and yes, social work.

With the above information in mind, Cochrane (2012) argues that the “basic rights of sentient humans and nonhumans are neither conceptually nor ethically distinct,” (p. 656). All of these ideas are worth careful consideration and may offer insight into a future which is a post-humanist world - one by which universal rights are not limited by species membership alone. Such a world would have major implications for social work practice and how we engage our clients and the systems in which they live. Posthumanism is a philosophical perspective which considers nonhuman animals as agents worthy of moral consideration and is discussed in detail in the “Speciesism” section below.

The NASW Code of Ethics in the Context of Nonhuman Animals

For those human beings in favor of animal rights codification, it has been observed that there are examples of anthropocentric ethical codes which appear to bear striking parallels in terms of their moral spirit (Peters, 2020; Hoy-Gerlach, Delgado, & Sloane, 2018; Milligan, 2015; Ryan, 2014). Yet some glaring, critical discrepancies can also simultaneously exist in this codification. In the following section, a careful analysis will be made in case of the NASW Code of Ethics. The purpose of this examination is to (1) highlight conceptual common ground with animal ethics as well as to (2) identify potential problem areas which are exclusionary towards nonhuman animals. In addition, the NASW Code of Ethics will be put into a wider Western sociocultural perspective in order to provide a more profound context for the document itself.

The NASW Code of Ethics was first adopted in 1960 and has since been revised on a number of occasions throughout the years (NASW, 2021; Swick, Dyson, & Webb, 2021; Kopeikin Brill, 2001). Structurally speaking, the NASW Code of Ethics is subdivided into four (4) sections, which are worth summarizing for the purpose of this review. The first section of the NASW Code of Ethics is titled the “Preamble.” In this section, the core values of the profession are introduced. These values are elaborated upon in the subsequent “Purpose” section. The “Ethical Principles” and “Standards” sections round out this document by enumerating, describing, and discussing these aspects of the said code. In the following sections, these portions of the NASW Code of Ethics will be considered in the context of animal ethics.

The Preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics is a glaring anthropocentric piece of writing containing blatant, species-based clarifiers (Wolf, 2000). A curious question in reviewing this section of the document is why is this language even necessary? From a post-humanist and animal rights perspective, this could be interpreted as a means to allow for the domination and suffering of nonhuman animals on the basis of achieving “well-being” for human client populations – in a manner parallel to that of the UDHR. Personhood too is limited by species membership here and indeed, such

language extends to that of the core values which include “service”, “social justice”, “dignity and worth of *the person*”, “importance of *human relationships*,” “integrity,” and “competence.” These core values per the NASW (2021), are moreover to be “balanced in the context and complexity of *the human experience*.”

A growing body of literature within social work itself contradicts the speciesist, unidimensional, perspective of the NASW Code of Ethics Preamble, which at this time remains closed to the idea of greater-species inclusivity by the profession - despite conveniently allowing for nonhuman animals to enhance the human condition in practice (Sterman & Bussert, 2020; Ryan, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Risely-Curtiss, 2010). In this regard, Sterman and Bussert (2020) highlight the reality that there is in fact a “considerable body of research documenting the physical, psychological, and social benefits of human-animal interaction (HAI),” (p. 47). Simultaneously, these authors also remark that even in this basic facet, such recognition is lacking in social work education and practice (Sterman & Bussert, 2020). While this writer does not entirely agree with the overarching assumption that HAI is *always* necessarily good for “everyone,” there is certainly a strong point to be made here for social workers in regards to the importance of (1) HAI (which includes the specific human-animal bond category) and the (2) recognition of this often very powerful and deep *relationship* - which is currently not included in the NASW Code of Ethics. It is clear that relationships are not necessarily limited by species membership, and this is most simply and commonly exemplified by our pets or companion animals, who are partners in the human-animal bond (Arkow, 2020; Sterman & Bussert, 2020; Ryan, 2014; Hanrahan 2011; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Netting et al., 1987).

The “Purpose” section of the NASW Code of Ethics serves as a primary guideline for ethical considerations in the social work profession. The section is subdivided into six (6) separate purposes, which create the basis of a value system supposedly defining the field from others (NASW, 2021). In the stated purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics, *ethical responsibilities are intrinsically linked to human relationships*. In addition, judgement is specified as being something *informed*, and decision-making and action steps within

professional conduct should be consistent with the “spirit of the code.” Both of these points are of notable consideration for any future amendments concerning the inclusion of nonhuman animals. The code moreover does not provide a set of rules for conduct in all situations (NASW, 2021). It is therefore a code that in a sense, also recognizes its own limitations as an ethical guide. This too in theory seems to allow for the possibility of future amendments. The arguments made in the previous sections in regards to scientifically-supported, evidence-based notions of (1) sentience, (2) the concept of the individual, and (3) basic rights as a result of these qualities, call into question some very fundamental notions of the “Purpose” portion of the NASW Code of Ethics and why this document is ultimately incomplete in its current, restrictive form.

There are several subsections in the NASW Code of Ethics that should be examined in the context of animal ethics. Self-determination (1.02) is an interesting concept within the code. Self-determination is an ethical standard which is roughly akin to goal-setting in an unobstructed manner and can be understood to be linked in a philosophical way to ideas like “destiny” and “potential” (Freedberg, 1989). Self-determination in the context of social work is often client-centered in nature, but it can also be thought of as nation or people-centered as well (i.e., a given ethnicity, a given nation, etc.), particularly in the context of postcolonialism. Self-determination as it is written in the NASW Code of Ethics itself brings up an interesting point, which is that there are *limitations* to this process – and that in any measure, it does have the capacity to inflict harm when exercised in destructive ways (NASW, 2021). This is an interesting concept when one considers the balance between human self-determination and animal rights as well as other environmental issues. To that end, humanity as a whole, in exercising its own species-wide self-determination, has caused the destruction of enormous swaths of the planet, the exploitation of the natural world, biological impoverishment, and extinction (Decker Sparks et al., 2019; Naggs, 2017; Cafaro, 2015; Hanrahan, 2011; Coates, 2003). Cultural competence (1.05) in the broad sense is a related concept here as it includes understanding norms. While Western social progressivism has grown to teach inclusion

across different human cultures and societies, it has struggled to consistently find a cohesive moral voice in regards to the treatment of animals (Fraser et al., 2021; Peters, 2020; Milligan, 2015; Ryan, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Mutsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Wolf, 2000). This point is well-illustrated by the NASW Code of Ethics.

Freeman, Bekoff, and Bexell (2011) note that the history of Western Civilization has been founded upon “human superiority and dominion, and the Cartesian human-animal dualism,” (p. 594). Such ideas have significant roots in select, ancient Greek writings, as well as in Judeo-Christian biblical texts (Szucs et al., 2012). These concepts pertaining to the domination of nature in religious, philosophical, and utilitarian terms (which are not unique only to the West), have continued to influence many aspects of society in both direct and indirect ways - and this too is evidenced by the NASW Code of Ethics. The Western World has continued to be amongst the great drivers and purveyors of animal exploitation in numerous and industrialized ways (Peters, 2020; Peters, 2018; Szucs et al., 2012; Freeman, Bekoff, & Bexell, 2011; Singer, 1990). In terms of animal ethics, these examples present a great hurdle for sowing palpable progress on the global stage, as indicated by the impotence of the well-intentioned UDAR.

The NASW Code of Ethics and the Promise of a More Inclusive Social Work Profession

It is the opinion of this writer that Section 5 of the NASW Code of Ethics, “Social Workers’ Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession,” is a significant, overarching standard in the process of forwarding the agenda of animal rights and fighting species-based discrimination. This ethical standard infers the importance of sound, empirically-based evidence in our profession, which by extension includes (1) the growing amount of knowledge about nonhuman animals and (2) the intrinsic value of behaving ethically towards them. Moreover, Section 5.01(b), titled “Integrity of the Profession,” allows for the improvement “of the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of

the profession.” Sections 5.01(d) as well as section 5.02, titled “Evaluation and Research,” furthermore allow for the possibility of a profession-wide evolution through the scientific method and evidence-based study.

The arguments for the inclusion of animal ethics in social work practice is not based upon hearsay but rather careful scientific observation and analysis (Ryan, 2014; Proctor, Carder, & Cornish, 2013; Proctor, 2012). This is philosophically challenging for the current set of ethical codes by which social workers are to carry themselves professionally – but that should not preclude the changes that are ultimately necessary. Thus, the final NASW Code of Ethics standard worth consideration is titled “Social and Political Action” (6.04), which necessitates the inevitable steps towards progress and change. This has been an important element in the evolution of society in the United States and the Western World over the course of the past century. In this manner, the trend towards social progressivism has continued gradually but steadily since the end of the Second World War (1939-1945).

Social Work and Speciesism

An Introduction to Speciesism

Social work is aware of what Wolf (2000), refers to as the oppressive existence of “noxious ‘isms” (p. 88), which include the likes of racism, ageism, and sexism – negative, bias-based forces which unfortunately remain pervasive in society today. These isms are directed towards at-risk, often historically marginalized groups in a discriminatory fashion. *Speciesism* is not traditionally part of the aforementioned list of “noxious ‘isms”, as it is a form of discrimination which traditionally exists outside of direct *human* experience (Kymlicka & Donaldson; Wolf, 2000). Conceptually however, there is a clear and direct relationship with the other types of prejudice listed above, as speciesism is the belief in the inherent superiority of certain species versus others – with humanity always dominating among all (Singer, 2015; Wykoff, 2014; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Moore, 2013; Wolf, 2000; Singer, 1990). Everett, Caviola, and Savulescu (2019) define prejudice as an

“attitude, emotion, or behavior towards members of a group, which directly or indirectly implies some negativity or antipathy toward that group,” (p. 785). This definition is as appropriate for speciesism as it is for the other forms of the noxious isms listed above.

Speciesism is manifested in many ways across all cultures and peoples globally, depending on the cultural norms and taboos related to different animal species. A number of scientific studies have noted the remarkable psychological similarities between speciesism and other more “traditional” forms of prejudice, discrimination, and hate (Everett, Caviola, & Savulescu, 2019; Singer, 2015; Wykoff, 2014; Horta, 2010; Singer, 1990). In this manner, speciesism has often translated into violence and destruction, whether in case of the sanctioning of industrial-scale killing of nonhuman animals, to hunting practices, to entertainment, to deliberate eradication campaigns – some of which have led to the extinction of numerous species across the scale of human history (Naggs, 2017; Cafaro, 2015; Diamond, 1989).

The term “speciesism” was coined in 1970 by Richard Ryder (b. 1940), a British psychologist who wrote a provocative book and exposé of sorts titled “Victims of Science: The Use of Animals in Research”, which examined the *inhumane* treatment of research animals (Horta, 2010; Moore, 2009). Ryder has compellingly argued that like racism, speciesism is inherently illogical, and is based upon an appearance of otherness. Peter Singer (b. 1946), the renown Australian philosopher, later reviewed Ryder’s work and then adopted the term speciesism (Moore, 2009; Singer, 1990). Singer brought the concept of speciesism to a broader audience with his seminal book “Animal Liberation,” first published in 1975, which is a difficult, often damning read, providing graphic descriptions of the horrors of animal testing, factory farming, and other forms of ethically dubious behaviors conducted on animals for the benefit of humans, which results in the violent, unnatural deaths of about *80 billion terrestrial animals per year globally* (Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Ritchie, Rosado, & Roser, 2017; Milligan, 2015; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Moore, 2009; Singer 1990). The major argument made in the book returns to the idea of sentience and the ability of animals to suffer and feel pain (Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013;

Francione, 2010; Franklin, 2005; Singer, 1990). This central idea of being able to feel is tied to notions of rights - although Singer himself also recognizes certain generalized differences between human and nonhuman animals, such as in terms of intellectual capacities. Such differences however do not negate the latter group to an equal consideration of *interests* (Singer, 1990).

Singer (1990) notes that speciesism is fundamentally human-centered, in which more value is placed upon our own species as compared to all others who are classified and subdivided according to their given uses for human purposes (within one society to the next). Animal rights and ethics are said to fall under the philosophical banner of what is known as “posthumanism” – a broad-based philosophical movement which is not anthropocentric and strongly considers non-human players, such as animals (Singer, 2015; Moore, 2009; Singer 1990). Posthumanism has been considered by some to be radical, if not dangerous – as it philosophically erases the human exceptionalism that has defined our species in fundamental ways since the dawn of civilization. Singer supports this notion and has argued for it in the name of true animal rights (Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Singer, 1990). It should be noted that the particular moral philosophy which Peter Singer is associated with is known as *utilitarianism* (Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Francione, 2010; Franklin, 2005; Singer, 1990). Utilitarianism in short advocates for a greater, more enlightened form of equality - for all creatures that possess sentience, and to minimize pain and promote happiness (Chaohwei & Singer, 2018; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Francione, 2010; Franklin, 2005; Singer, 1990). This philosophical construct certainly seems in principle to be complimentary with the NASW Code of Ethics – and yet there is again the antithesis here whereby social work practice is solely geared towards human need

Based upon the current literature examined throughout the course of this review, it does not appear that social workers in general are familiar with speciesism as a major form of discrimination (Peggs, 2016; Ryan, 2014; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Hanrahan, 2011; Wolf, 2000). It is possible based on the review of the literature that this impoverishment of

knowledge may well be a deliberate, top-down decision from NASW as well as the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), and there is certainly a growing body of literature supportive of this perspective (Taylor, Fraser, Signal, & Prentice, 2016; Ryan, 2014; Hanrahan, 2011; Wolf, 2000). To that end, there is an absence of speciesism taught in social work education – something which contradicts that of other closely related professional fields, including psychology (Peggs, 2016; Wolf, 2000). This is troubling when one considers the NASW tenets of justice, morality, and ethics in very fundamental terms. Moreover, this may be problematic for more holistic, practical approaches to practice, in which nonhuman animals and their wellbeing are related to that of our clients (Arkow, 2020; Walker, Aimers, & Perry, 2015; Ryan, 2014; Faver & Strand, 2003).

Humanism, Speciesism, and Nature

Humanism is a notable philosophical area of consideration while arguing for the inherent value of nonhuman animals from the position of a social worker. Humanism as its name implies, is fundamentally anthropocentric in nature – which is traditionally the case for the majority of philosophical and psychological paradigms (Figdor, 2021; Cushing, 2003; Joy, 2002; Shapiro, 1990). From a philosophical point of view, humanism places an unquestionably greater moral worth upon humanity as compared to nonhuman animals based upon cognitive differential (Figdor, 2021; Shapiro, 1990). From this, an imperfect dichotomy exists between *humanism* and *speciesism* in regards to fundamental questions of moral consideration and personhood (Figdor, 2021; Cushing, 2003; Shapiro, 1990).

The principles of humanism can be applied to a wide number of diverse fields and enterprises, including social work (Payne, 2011; Goroff, 1981). Humanism within the context of clinical practice is a thought system by which human potential and self-actualization are held as being a primary force (Payne, 2011; Shapiro, 1990; Goroff, 1981). Certainly, we as social workers are familiar with the concept that the *social sciences* themselves are in reference to human behavior and the human condition overall. This

relationship is exemplified by the content found in the NASW Code of Ethics itself.

From a species egalitarianism perspective, humanism is an “ism” too—and one that has arguably been noxious towards nature, which has historically served as its philosophical antithesis (Figdor, 2021; Rusen, 2006; Shapiro, 1990). However as noted by Shapiro (1990), there are select concepts within humanism that allow for a limited degree of rapprochement. In this respect, it can be argued that there is a philosophical divide between two key aspects of humanistic thought: (1) empathy and (2) reason (Shapiro, 1990). While empathy has traditionally been a driver for the animal rights movement, reason has historically been associated exclusively with human beings (Shapiro, 1990). It is worthwhile to point out that the opposite of reason is considered to be “instinct,” or innate, non-learned behaviors, which have classically been associated with the animal kingdom (Ayala, 2010; Dugatkin, 2009; Tooby & Cosmides, 2005; Wilson, 2000; Nicholson, 1998). This strict, latter dichotomy, which has been held as a core belief in humanistic philosophy, is no longer deemed as true based upon scientific inquiry (Tooby & Cosmides, 2005; Wilson, 2000; Nicholson, 1998).

In terms of nonhuman animals, there is growing and compelling scientific evidence that animals do in fact engage in rational decision-making (Kumar, Choughary, Kumar, et al., 2019; Freeman, Bekoff, & Bexell, 2011; Aaltola, 2008; Cushing, 2003; Singer, 1990). Particularly striking examples of this have been found in a number mammalian species, including (but certainly not limited to) the proboscideans (elephants and kin), cetaceans (whales and dolphins), and the apes (Fitzpatrick, 2017; Ryan, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Singer, 1990). Such revelations about the natural world and the consequences of humanity’s destructive relationship with it have brought about voices within the humanistic framework to reconsider certain anthropocentric, ecocidal aspects of this approach (Ryan, 2014; Rusen, 2006; Shapiro, 1990).

Future Considerations

Wolf (2000) asserts that discussions about animal rights and speciesism do indeed have a place in the social work profession. Ryan (2014) presents a similar case which is made from a number of different compelling perspectives, including philosophical, physiological, and biological – arguments that have previously been addressed in this paper. The social work profession would benefit from reevaluating its relationship with nonhuman animals through these prisms as a broad-based means to consider the significant ideological and philosophical overlaps that exist between social work ethics and the case for animal rights. Despite these important commonalities, social work remains a profession that is not allied with the animal rights movement in any significant or official way (despite the efforts of some individual social workers) (Fraser et al., 2021; Sterman & Bussert, 2020; Ryan, 2014; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Ryan, 2011). This moral shortcoming arguably weakens the NASW Code of Ethics and its mission statement. To that end, this inaction can also be said to be oppressive as it reflects the will of the dominant species in power. This power dynamic moreover has yet to be considered by NASW, despite the organization's respectable work in fighting other forms of injustice and reducing various human-centric noxious isms in society, including racism, sexism, classism, etc. (NASW, 2023; NASW, 2021; Sterman & Bussert, 2020; Ryan, 2014; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2013; Risley-Curtiss, 2013).

Social work has, since its founding in the United States, been a progressive field that has advocated for the rights of the oppressed, the marginalized, and those within society without a voice. These ideas are embedded in the NASW Code of Ethics – which up until now have only applied to human beings. This does not mean that these core values are necessarily forever fixed exclusively on the needs of the world's dominant mammal. Indeed, one of the great strengths of the social work profession is its ability to evolve and incorporate big ideas and concepts from other fields, including (but not limited to) psychology, nursing, education, sociology, economics, law, and more. Today, as described above, aspects of environmental issues have

begun to infiltrate the field of social work given the scope of the human-caused, worsening disasters now endangering our planet (Bright, 2021; Shaly, 2019; Dominelli, 2013; Gray & Coates, 2012). Environmental justice for example (albeit in an anthropocentric form), has become a growing cause in social work advocacy. Simultaneously, some initial conversations have been presented in at least considering human companion animals as an important part of the ecological systems of our patients and clients – even though this too remains ultimately based on the needs and concerns of our fellow *Homo sapiens* (Fraser et al., 2021; Ryan, 2014; Fraser & MacRae, 2011; Risely-Curtiss, 2010; Fraser, 1999).

In his book “Animals in Social Work,” Ryan (2014) makes an interesting observation that great social movements must necessarily occur in three stages of development, including (1) ridicule, (2) discussion, and (3) adoption. Certainly, one can see aspects of these components when carefully examining the likes of many great progressive movements here in the U.S., including Civil Rights. Ryan (2014) firmly believes that for social work, the true incorporation of the animal rights movement within the profession has entered into its “discussion” stage – which is seen as a victory unto itself. For Ryan (2014), evidence of the discussion stage is demonstrated by the growing number of publications which have begun to address the relationship between nonhuman animals and social work. This article then can perhaps be considered further evidence of Ryan’s contention. At the same time, it proposes avenues for real change in social work in both a philosophical and methodological manner.

Limitations

This study does have limitations. First, this literature review primarily serves as a critique of the social work profession in regards to animal ethics, animal welfare, and speciesism in a Western, and a predominantly American context. While NASW is the largest professional social work organization in the world, it is far from being the only one (NASW, 2023; Banks & Nøhr, 2012). Social work as a profession is recognized and practiced globally across

different cultures (Banks & Nøhr, 2012). Social work practice varies across different societies and this has implications for practice as well as advocacy work (Banks & Nøhr, 2012). Moreover, different civilizations and cultures have their own particular histories and relationships in regards to the human-animal dichotomy. Thus, animal ethics, animal welfare, and speciesism are universal themes that are addressed in a variety of different ways across different continents, countries, and regions (Munro, 2022; Weitzenfeld & Joy, 2014; Singer, 1990). Further research is needed to (1) better understand these global issues and (2) to determine how and if social workers are acknowledging them. Finally, the current literature pertaining to social work and its relationship with animal ethics, animal welfare, and speciesism remains limited. This is problematic unto itself in terms of (1) data availability and analysis as well as (2) effectively disseminating this topic within the broader spheres of social work research, education, practice, and advocacy.

Action Steps

An important question is what action steps can be taken for social work to be more inclusive towards nonhuman animals? Educational development will certainly be necessary as an action step for change, including by being incorporated into foundational social work learning and training. This would necessarily require the engagement and consideration of the CSWE. If the stated policy agenda of the CSWE (2023) is to promote the social work ideals of education, social justice, and research into practice, can this truly be achieved by effectively ignoring the global oppression of trillions of terrestrial and aquatic animals per year? The only rational conclusion that can be made here is no – as the current slate of social work ethics provides only a narrow, prejudiced form of justice favoring those in power (i.e., humanity).

Similarly, the NASW Code of Ethics must be revised. This is not an insurmountable task as the Code of Ethics is understood to be a “living document” and indeed, it was last revised only in 2021 as the result of systemic

societal changes - including pertaining to (1) the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) social justice movements (NASW, 2021; Swick, Dyson, & Webb, 2021). The latter rationale for the revisions is particularly pertinent for the purposes of this paper (NASW, 2021; Swick, Dyson, & Webb, 2021). Similarly in 2017, revisions made to the NASW Code of Ethics were a *recognition of cultural changes that were impacting social work practice* – and this was in case of technology-based applications (NASW, 2021, Reamer, 2017). In other words, we see here in both revisions that the realities of societal evolution had effectively necessitated changes in the law of the land as they so often do in many sociopolitical domains. The march towards animal rights has been steadily heading in this same direction. In this regard, social work has the unique opportunity to serve as a flagbearer given the many philosophical overlaps that already exist – though (as of now) in a context limited by species membership. In an anthropocentric world, it is perhaps too easy to forget that we are but one of *millions of species* here on earth.

As with any effective social movement, organizing is key. Like-minded social workers who have a background in the fields of green social work and veterinary social work certainly have roles to play in action group creation and alliance building. In this regard, environmental social work organizations have grown globally, with aspects of animal rights being one of a number of declared mission statements (Hudson, 2019; Dominelli, 2013; Gray & Coates, 2012; Shaw 2011). Interdisciplinary work is also a crucial step in the road of organizing a movement and creating more profound links between animal welfare science and social service. This area of collaboration remains in a rather primordial stage of development based upon the current review (Dominelli, 2013; Gray & Coates, 2012; Shaw, 2011). Nonetheless, social work has an untapped potential as a bridge builder within the environmental humanities, which ultimately requires the strengthening of bonds between humanity and nature – that is to say, all living things. Humanity does not and cannot live inside of a proverbial bubble. Social work inherently recognizes this reality from a systems-based perspective.

The time has come for the beginning of a sustained, serious conversation to allow for nuance and the recognition that (1) sentience is not unique

to our species and similarly, (2) oppression is not limited by human experience alone—*although humanity ultimately bears the sole responsibility for its existence*. It is precisely through oppression of course by which our species has become the dominant animal on earth. The future of life on our planet now rests with the urgency of a moral and ethical evolution within our species to become more empathetic, considerate, and inclusive in how we live and conduct ourselves in relationship to nature as well as towards each other.

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Social Workers in the Social Housing Assistance Sector: Building the Ideal Housing Policy Principles

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Abstract

Indonesia has established a Self-Help Stimulant Assistance (SHSA) to help develop affordable housing in Low-Income Communities (LIC). SHSA funding is provided to selected LIC to independently build new housing and renovate uninhabitable residential houses to bring them up to habitable standards and social workers have been key to the implementation of this program. This study uses two theoretical frameworks for effective housing policy (Schill & Wachter 2001, Hannigan & Wagner 2003) to explore the extent to which the SHSA was perceived by social workers to exhibit these qualities. To explore the role of social workers in the implementation of the SHSA, 25 qualitative interviews were completed with social workers working in LICs in Indonesia. Six themes from the theoretical framework were found to be important to the effective implementation of SHSA, including: 1. links to other social policies; 2. using production subsidies to overcome obstacles, 3. not adopting a one-size-fits-all model, 4. provides permanent affordability housing, 5. is comfortable, and 6. accessible and flexible service provision. The findings also highlight the importance of

providing social workers in the housing assistance sector with greater authority, especially with strategic decision-making to overcome various problems and obstacles to implementing the SHSA. These obstacles included a lack of supply of building materials for housing construction, the high cost of production, the lack of commitment and awareness of the recipients of the program of appropriate building materials and practices and a lack of attention to the development schedule. Overall, these findings point to greater opportunities and bargaining positions for social workers in the social housing assistance sector through granting authority to social workers in the social housing assistance sector, especially in making decisions as strengthening the capacity and potential of individuals and groups of social workers.

In addition, a more systematic mechanism and approach for social workers to adhere to a set of ideal housing policy principles including target achievement, scale, and focus on low-income people's efficiency in obtaining home ownership, access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity, and increase in family economic income...(provide a broader perspective here as to why the findings are important).

Keywords: Social work value, Housing assistance, housing policy, affordability, Indonesia

Introduction

In many countries, social housing assistance policy for LIC has increased in recent decades (Colburn, 2019; Hungerford, 1996; Olsen et al., 2005). Two factors related to this increase are a lack of housing affordability and threats to the financing of new housing (Average, 2019; Beer et al., 2011; Monkkoenen, 2018; Ng & Neo, 2019; Reamer, 1989; Zou, 2014). This phenomenon suggests that social housing is an important aspect of past and future housing policies and is an important dimension of social welfare policy and the provision of affordable housing (Clapham et al., 1990; OECD, 2020).

Housing is often associated with improved health, especially among disadvantaged families and children (Fenelon et al., 2018) Fenelon et al., 2017), safety (Kim et al., 2017), labour force participation (Jacob & Ludwig, 2012) and disaster development (Hamideh et al., 2021; Hickson & Lehmann,

2014; Sukhwani et al., 2021). Ideally, housing assistance should provide and develop independence i.e. 'do with' and not 'do for', so that the assistance provided can encourage and support independence (Housing Support Grand, 2020).

This study discusses social workers in the housing assistance sector in building policy principles and housing service support. There are two important reasons why housing assistance social workers are required to be able to apply the principles and practices of housing service support policies, namely first, the value base of the social work profession, its principles and objectives, and the concept of social work practices as stated in several social work codes of ethics (AASW, 2020; Bowles & Curry, 2006; IASSW, 2015; NAPSWI, 2015; Pawar, 2019; Pawar & Thomas, 2017) which demands and requires social workers to carefully and diligently engage in policy practices, solve social problems professionally according to applicable rules, and not as controllers of mechanisms, but to promote social change and development; secondly, the nature of the needs and scope of the problem and the level of density communities in the Asia Pacific region need a policy practice approach (Pawar, 2019).

In a local context (Directorate of Housing Supply, 2019; Government Regulation Number 1 Of, 2009) explains that social workers are required to have competence and concern in carrying out service tasks and handling social problems, community counselling, community debriefing, and empowerment, encouraging social change and strengthening groups. Social developments such as housing assistance for LIC have been promoted as an important part of social work so that social workers must have awareness and be able to work in areas such as economics, politics, and technology of social life while bringing useful knowledge, skills and values (Hugman, 2016), including also the principles of housing policy aimed at ensuring the availability of safe, maintained and affordable housing consistently despite changes in housing standards (Reiss, 2010).

Schill & Wachter (2001) put forward seven principles for housing policy. Housing policy should: 1. link to other social policies; 2. focused on correcting past mistakes and be future orientation; 3. work with the market; 4.

include housing vouchers as the main source of incremental housing assistance in the future; 5. use production subsidies to overcome supply barriers; 6. not adopt a one-size-fits-all model; and 7: Regional Solutions Are Necessary and Require That States and Localities Become Responsible Partners In Removing Regulatory Barriers. Meanwhile, from the perspective of housing service support Hannigan & Wagner (2003) put forward four principles, namely housing must be: 1. permanent and affordable; 2. safe and comfortable; 3. service support is accessible and flexible, and targets housing stability; and 4. empowers independence through the involvement of the community or tenants in the management of housing projects, providing employment opportunities and encouraging the formation of tenant councils and advisory groups.

Of the eleven principles of housing policy support that have been outlined, several principles are relevant to the theme and problem of this study.

Of the eleven principles of housing policy support that have been described according to Schil & Wachter (2001) and Hannigan & Wagner (2003), this study found several principles that are relevant to the themes and research issues that are being carried out so that they can contribute to the practice of social workers and housing social assistance policies.

On the other hand, building the principles of housing service policy support is very important as a positive response to the future direction of housing policy (Schill & Wachter, 2001) and as a basis for social workers in supporting the welfare of individuals, families, and communities (Hugman, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to highlight the role of social workers in the social housing assistance sector in establishing the principles of ideal housing policy that include housing policy that: 1. is linked to other social policies; 2. Uses production subsidies to overcome obstacles, 3. Does not adopt a one-size-fits-all model, 4. provides permanent affordability housing, that is 5. safety and comfort, and 6. Service support is accessible and flexible.

Self-Help Housing Stimulant Assistance Program (SHSA)

Public housing such as housing has a specific position compared to other welfare sectors such as education, health, and security. This is because housing is often assumed to be a forgotten pillar of the welfare state even though on the other hand it is an important component of community welfare (Schwartz, 2012) and although it has been provided directly by the government, the involvement of other housing policy stakeholders is still quite important such as through capital intensity and local government support (Kemeny, 2001).

Indonesia has established the Self-Help Stimulant Assistance (SHSA) program or better known as renovation houses surgical houses as one of the policies to meet housing needs. Through the program, LIC are selected and given funds to independently build new residential homes and renovate uninhabitable residential houses. The SHSA program or surgical house has been implemented since 2006 but in 2011, the program experienced various obstacles such as limited housing locations and budgets. Since 2012 this program has been intensively implemented by the Indonesian government and in the last six years (2015-2021) it has been able to build hundreds of thousands of uninhabitable houses as many as 229,156 units consisting of the construction of 654 special housing units and support for handling 228,502 units of self-help houses.

The SHSA program requires synergy with other programs such as access to electricity, provision of environmental facilities in housing such as clean water and sanitation, and the legality of land ownership to ensure the success of the SHSA program. In its implementation, the role of the central government is still very dominant, especially in making decisions on budget allocation and housing supervision functions in the regions (Norris, 2012). This is by the conceptual definition of SHSA which is the Government's assistance for low-income people to encourage and increase empowerment in improving the quality of houses and the construction of new houses along with infrastructure, facilities, and public utilities.

SHSA is a program that has advantages and characteristics by placing LIC as the main actor of the program, there is no charge levy, is oriented towards the construction of houses to be livable, on target, on time, on benefits, accountable, not past the fiscal year, mutual aid and sustainability (Directorate of Swadaya Housing, 2019). In its implementation, social workers together with the community consult through a forum called a community meeting to form a Beneficiary Group (BG) whose members come from the local community and have the duty and responsibility to identify and verify LIC who meet the requirements to receive assistance, submit proposals, take advantage of the assistance by the agreed plan, be responsible for the use of assistance and prepare an accountability report.

The types of SHSA activities are divided into two, namely: 1) Improving the quality of independent houses which is an activity to improve uninhabitable houses into habitable ones. Subsidy programs are available to help individuals or communities in the planning stages for up to Rp.17,500,00 (USD1,170.29). An additional Rp.15,000,000,- million can help with the purchase of building materials and Rp.2,500,000,- million for the wages of artisans; 2) New Construction of Self-Help Houses which is a new livable house construction activity held on the initiative and efforts of the community, both individuals and groups with total housing assistance of Rp.35,000,000,- with details of Rp.30,000,000,- million for the purchase of building materials and Rp.5000,000.- for artisan wages.

The SHSA program is the flagship program of the Government of Indonesia in meeting the needs of housing services inseparable from the background of the large number of home ownership built independently by the community in 2016 of 69.59 percent (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016) and increasing in 2019 which reached 79.67 percent (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Then based on the performance achievements in 2021, the number of fulfilling the needs of livable houses through the facilitation of independent houses for LIC from the target of 192,430 units or only realized 127,091 units or experienced a deviation of 65,339 units with a performance achievement of 66.05% even though based on the strategic plan, the achievement of housing assistance has exceeded the target from 81,000 units to 127,091

or a performance achievement of 159.90% (Directorate General of Housing, 2021).

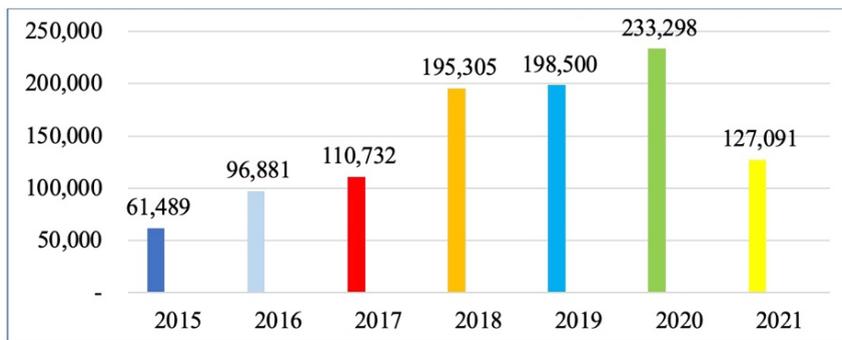


Figure 1: Realization of the achievements of the SHSA Program in 2015-2021 (Directorate General of Housing, 2021)

Based on Figure 1 above, the overall implementation of SHSA in 2021 was not achieved, due to several causal factors, namely the suspension of the SHSA utilization plan of 64,500 units because it was focused on handling extreme poverty, stunting, and handling integrated slums, then the quality and validity of the data of prospective beneficiaries have not been valid and has not been fully inputted in the electronic application of Uninhabitable Houses and often occurs replacement of proposals and the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

On the other hand, the implementation of restrictions on community activities (PPKM), due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and many regions have imposed restrictions on activities that hinder verification activities, community assistance, and the implementation of physical activities, and other activities that require face-to-face activities, and some beneficiaries some have difficulty empowering due to economic difficulties due to being dismissed at work.

The categories of uninhabitable houses that are the targets of SHSA activities are as follows: 1) Floor materials in the form of land or class IV wood; 2) Wall material in the form of bamboo/wood/rattan or class IV

wood; 3) No/lack of ventilation and lighting; 4) Roofing material in the form of leaves or tiles that are already fragile; 5) Severely damaged and or moderately damaged and insufficient floor area of the building. In addition, there are several requirements such as 1) the adequacy of a minimum residential area of 7.2 m² per capita (sufficient living space); 2) having access to adequate drinking water; 3) having access to proper sanitation; 4) building resilience (durable housing).

One of its advantages, when compared to other housing assistance programs in Indonesia, is to position LIC as a beneficiary group (BG) or independent main actors who are actively involved in socialization activities, identification of potential beneficiaries, rebuking residents, implementing development and maintaining the timeliness of home improvement construction.

On the other hand, in addition to LIC, there are SHSA program actors who also have an important role, namely field facilitators or commonly called social workers who act as the spearhead and front line of the SHSA program as well as being responsible for supervising and assisting, the driving force of community assistance and connecting the recipient community of the program, namely LIC, with the vision and mission of the SHSA program. The position of the housing social worker as described by Rollins (2019) is referred to as a relationship-building agent who is expected to be able to overcome various problems of social housing assistance through advocacy (Mosley, 2010) being a voluntary agent and consultant (Choo, 1984) professional transdisciplinary (Evans, 2017), as a welfare officer (Marshall, 1975) so that it can be said that social workers are the ones who know the most and have awareness of the lack of access to affordable housing and therefore actively advocate for LIC to be guided by housing assistance (Cordoba, 2015).

The dynamics of social workers in dealing with the problem of housing assistance have a long and diverse tradition (Ng & Neo, 2019), such as the basic needs of food, clothing, and health in supporting housing social assistance programs (Quintiliani et al., 2021; Reamer, 1989; Rymill & Hart, 1992), social housing for the homeless (Cordoba, 2015; Early, 2004; Sahlin, 1995;

Thompson et al., 2006; Zufferey, 2008), refugee problems (Aigner, 2019), housing ownership and social capital (Donoghue & Tranter, 2012).

Methodology

This study used qualitative interviews that explored the experiences of social workers in applying the principles of ideal housing policy and the experience of community groups that receive housing assistance program facilities, namely LIC. How it is stated that qualitative study has the objective of representing or interpreting complex social processes and experiences through having an interpretive perspective and using "qualitative" methods such as participant observations or interviews (Bigby, 2015).

The qualitative approach in this study aims to explore the experience of social workers in applying the principles and policies of housing support services during the housing assistance program, which is three months according to the schedule for house construction and renovation. To achieve this goal, the methodology is informed by hermetic phenomenology, to generate a deep understanding of the life experiences (Manen, 1997) of social workers and beneficiaries of housing assistance programs. This approach is very relevant to the phenomenon studied, namely the experience of social workers in the housing assistance sector. This requires interpretive practice centred on a joint construction relationship between researcher and participant. Each brings its socio-cultural context to explore the phenomena of each of the subjects (Conroy, 2003; Pascal et al., 2011).

There are six factors identified as ideal housing policy principles, namely that housing policy should be linked to other social policies, the use of production subsidies in overcoming obstacles, housing policy cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all model, provisions, and affordability, security, and comfort, support services are accessible and flexible (Hannigan & Wagner, 2003; Schill & Wachter, 2001).

Participants

The total number of participants in the study was 25 people consisting of fifteen social workers and ten LIC members who received the SHSA program. All participants have completed all interviews. Seventeen of them were men and eight were women. In terms of ethnicity, most of them are aged ($n = 21$) and all of them are indigenous Indonesians. Most are between 30 and 55 years old ($n = 19$), with the youngest being 25 years old and the oldest 59 years old. Most of the participants lived in large rural centers ($n = 14$) or smaller ($n = 6$), and 5 were in urban areas. The type of location was consistent throughout the study period. All of them work in the private sector or non-governmental with diverse professions, namely farmers, labourers, traders, and private employees.

The site selection was carried out based on the assumption of typical cases (Yin, 2014), namely the type of case from the research location that received the benefits of the housing assistance program so that based on this the location of this study was in Banten Province which is the recipient province of the SHSA program and seven villages were selected with details of two villages in Serang City, namely Pancur Village and Unyur Village, two villages in Pandeglang Regency, namely Cadasari Village and Tanagara Village, three villages in Serang Regency, namely Teras Village, Walikukun Village, and Carenang Village.

Data collection

Data collection involved a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 25 participants, over three months during which the housing assistance program was implemented. The interview took place during the period from June to August 2021. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with open-ended questions lasting about 45 minutes to an hour in each participant's office and home to create a comfortable in answering questions. When the interview took place, the researcher recorded using a tape recorder and recorded each participant's answer to complete the recording data.

The themes of the interview questions focused on the issues stated in the research questions referring to the six principles of supportive housing policy i.e. housing policy should be linked to other social policies, the use of production subsidies in overcoming barriers, housing policy cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all model, provision and affordability, security and comfort, service support accessible and flexible (Hannigan & Wagner, 2003; Schill & Wachter, 2001).

Data collection through interviews is used because it is a fairly ideal method of understanding and exploring participants' experiences, attitudes, meanings, and actions (Tierney, 1991). Since this study is informed by a social constructionist paradigm in which social reality is perceived as a social construct, then experiences, activities, and phenomena by each respondent are assumed to be sources of social reality and can only be explored in depth using interviews (Merriam, 2009).

Data analysis

Each transcript of the interview results is analyzed thematically, the text data is read thoroughly, then given a code, theme, and written. The analysis is an adaptation of the stages that include data recognition, coding, composing themes, reflecting on themes, perfecting themes, and writing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The results of the thematic analysis aim to be consistent with the methodology in identifying six themes of supporting housing policy principles. In this study, ethical approval was obtained from the university. The use of mentions of social worker informants A to O (15 people) and community informants P to Y (10 people) in the research results section aims to distinguish between social worker informants and community informants. In addition, the use of the alphabet aims to protect anonymity and maintain the confidentiality of informants.

Findings

Interesting and consistent data have been obtained from the experience of social workers and interactions as a source of information interviews

research by the social housing assistance sector in building ideal housing policy principles. Of the various themes most frequently discussed in all interviews is the focus on the knowledge and experience of social workers and LIC thus providing a variety of important implications for the research.

The findings show that housing policy is related to other social policies as a collective intervention and participation of women to increase income, on the other hand, social housing assistance programs face obstacles to the lack of supply of building materials for housing construction or renovation, the high cost of production that exceeds the amount of the aid budget, the lack of commitment and less awareness from the recipients of the program due to the improper use of building materials and the lack of attention to the development schedule.

The housing assistance program carried out has placed LIC as the main actor or actor and the social worker in the housing assistance program has taken advantage of the views and values that apply in the community so that the housing assistance program can be accepted. LIC access in meeting basic needs has been met although it is recognized that not all LIC needs get easy access such as the long distance between the house and the work site, this is because the location of the new house occupied by the LIC is located in the suburbs so that the LIC has to travel to the work site for a relatively long time.

The focus of this research is the experience of social workers and the interactions carried out with LIC. Concerning building the principles of an ideal housing policy, this study gave rise to the theme: the principle of supportive housing policy i.e. housing policy must be linked to other social policies, the use of production subsidies in overcoming obstacles, housing policy cannot adopt the model of one size fits for all, provision and affordability, safety and convenience, support services are accessible and flexible, discussed further below.

Housing policy is Connected to other Social Policies

Housing policy is a policy that cannot stand alone, or it can be understood that housing is a policy that can have a broad impact on other social policies. In the context of this study, social policies connected to housing assistance are clean water, sanitation, electricity, and land ownership status policies.

Related to this, the initial question of the interview that the researcher asked was whether social workers already knew and understood that the principles of housing policy must be connected to other social policies. Most social worker informants put forward almost the same experience. This is evident in the story of social worker A who said that housing assistance must be utilized to the fullest and must be ensured to be supported by other social policies:

We have a principle that is how to make this housing assistance can be utilized optimally by LIC. We know that SHSA is a form of program in the construction or renovation of houses so social policies such as access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, and land ownership status should be ensured to be available first before the assistance program is implemented.

Meanwhile, social worker C explained that the process of identification and verification as a condition and criterion for determining the recipients of housing assistance programs is a very important thing to do before housing assistance is implemented, and agrees that housing assistance is a policy related to other social policies:

That's right, we agree that this housing assistance should be supported by other policies because houses that are built or renovated must have access to other social policy needs, and from the beginning, we have to identify and verify.

Interestingly, social worker C recounted his experience of the obstacles and problems encountered throughout this program, namely that there are still LIC who do not have the legality of LIC land ownership status certificates which are still in the form of buying and selling documents only.

Although agreeing with the identification and verification process as stated by social worker C, a different thing was explained by social workers F, H, and M who said the social policy of access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity is mostly LIC in poor condition, although it can still be used but is not sufficient for household needs.

The experienced stated by some of the social workers above shows that procedurally, the principles of supporting housing policies have been carried out including the identification and verification process, especially for those related to social policies such as access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity even though there are still LIC problems that do not have legality related to land ownership status. To confirm the above problems, we conducted interviews with LICs and most responded that they still urgently need the attention of social facilities from the government such as access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity. The only problem as stated by social worker C above is that not all houses have a certificate of land ownership. Confirmation from LIC 2, 3, and 7 says as follows:

The problem we face is the status of land ownership that is not supported by a certificate. This is because most houses are acquired by inheritance from parents and buying and selling transactions without using certificates.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, housing assistance policies have an impact on health and economic policies. This is evident from the story of LIC 1 and 5 who work as traders saying the following:

The policy of housing assistance through the provision of funds of Rp. 17,000,000, this is very helpful for us. The condition of the residential environment is getting better, especially from health factors for elderly parents and children who are still very susceptible to disease. On the other hand, we, especially women and housewives, can save and set aside money to divert trading capital to make our economic income increase.

The Use of Production Subsidies in Overcoming Obstacles

In practice, social workers in the housing assistance sector are not only faced with various problems that come from LIC such as low income, lack of home facilities and infrastructure, and poor health conditions. However, it also often has to face production problems such as the lack of supply of building materials for housing construction or renovation and the high cost of production that exceeds the amount of the aid budget so to overcome it, a production subsidy mechanism is needed. To overcome these obstacles, social workers C and I said the production subsidy mechanism in the housing assistance program has been carried out at the planning stage by cooperating with partners or providers of building materials for the purchase of building materials by the amount of housing assistance budget provided to LIC, as stated by social worker C and I as follows:

It is true that at the beginning we have applied the principle of production subsidies through cooperation between LIC represented by BG and partners or providers of housing building materials to be built or renovated, the selection of partners is carried out by LIC or BG in the hope of obtaining cheaper prices, in this way, production obstacles at the time of construction or renovation of houses can be avoided.

However, it is interesting to listen to what was conveyed by social worker G who recounted his experience when he encountered the problem of hampering the construction of relief houses due to the absence of availability of building materials, as stated as follows:

There was an incident where the housing assistance program did not run according to the predetermined plan and time because building materials were no longer available, and after we explored what the causative factors were, it turned out that there was an improper use of building materials and a lack of attention to the construction schedule. We see this as a matter of less commitment and awareness from the program's receiving community.

Social worker F has almost the same experience, where the distribution of housing materials or building materials from partners providing building

materials is late and does not arrive on time at the program site, thus hindering the process of building houses:

True, sometimes the supply of buildings from partners of building materials providers is subject to delays. To address this we provide understanding to building materials provider partners and remind them about the meaning of this commitment and agreement of the program.

To get thorough information, we found LIC 2,5, and 8 as recipients of the housing assistance program and their response said that delays in the supply and distribution of building materials sometimes occur due to weak commitments from building materials supply partners.

Housing Policy doesn't just Adopt a one-size-fits-all Model or Approach.

As outlined in the previous section, the housing assistance program carried out has placed LIC as the main actor or actor. This is done to overcome the problem of the community's lack of responsiveness to government policies and programs due to differences in views, values, and norms that apply to the program recipient community.

Housing assistance social workers often face mixed responses and challenges from the community caused by these problems. Therefore, the use of a flexible and non-static approach on one model or the same size is a necessity for social workers. The experience of informants of social workers A and N in applying cultural approaches that are by the views and values of society are outlined below:

Local people have views and values that we cannot ignore. The strength is precisely there, how do we take advantage of these views and values so that housing assistance programs can be accepted? In addition to positioning the community as the main actor or actor of the program, we take a religious approach, for example by socializing that the health value that we manifest in the housing assistance program has similarities with the understanding and religious values adopted by the community.

The experience of social worker A through various approaches to LIC is also followed by some other social workers so that the community can accept

housing assistance policies and programs, this is evident from the stories of social workers D, H, and O who say that in addition to having common health values, housing assistance programs also contain the value and culture of cooperation in the process of their activities and this is by the characteristics and has become a local tradition/wisdom of the community Indonesian:

The approach we take to the community to receive housing assistance programs is sometimes not easy, and we have to adjust to the culture of the local community so that they are willing to accept positively, one way is by providing information that this housing assistance is done together or mutually by the community and finally they are willing to respond positively.

Permanence and Affordability

Most LICs experience problems with uninhabitable housing conditions and low-income ability so they are unable to reach expensive housing prices. Therefore, the housing assistance program is a solution to encouraging the achievement of permanent and affordable housing buildings. The experience of a social worker I am described as follows:

In some locations, the condition of the beneficiary's house is in poor condition, for example, brick wall buildings and some of the tops of houses made of wood have begun to be destroyed. We are working to make housing assistance useful for repairing damaged home buildings.

Social workers J and K said LIC already has an agreement and cooperation with a partner providing housing building materials related to the purchase price adjusted to the availability of the budget. The experience of almost the same social worker K about the condition of the building that is no longer suitable for residence is stated as follows:

We focus on building houses that are damaged to permanent, ranging from the installation of strong bricks, wood, and iron materials for the foundation of the house. Although the result is simply the house becomes stronger and more worthy of being a place to live, the point is that we want to make sure LIC gets a decent and permanent home for their daily family life.

A different view was expressed by social worker E who said the sustainability aspect is a goal that must be achieved in the principle of permanence and affordability, this is intended so that LIC as a beneficiary of the housing assistance program can enjoy it for a long time, therefore the building of houses must be built/renovated using quality materials, durable and can be used in the long term.

Safety and Comfort

One of the important goals of housing assistance is to provide comfort and security in a healthy environment for LIC. This is evident from the statement of social workers B and L who said safety and comfort factors are indicators of the success of the housing assistance program:

Comfort and safety factors are still important priorities for LIC in occupying the new residential building, in the long run, it is beneficial to the future interests of LIC children and families. Once these two factors are met, then we can say that the LIC housing assistance program has been successful.

To confirm the above statement of the social worker, interviewees in LIC 4 and 6 said the following:

That's right, here we occupy a house with a relatively safe and comfortable environmental situation, something we have never gotten before. We hope that this can continue for a long time so that children and families can grow a positive environment.

Service Support Is Easy to Access and Flexible

Housing assistance is one of the solutions for LIC to own a house according to an affordable price and access to expected needs, on the other hand, the support of easily accessible and flexible services is a need for LIC that must get attention. Here is the statement of social workers B and L about it:

LIC access in meeting basic needs has been met although it is recognized that not all LIC needs get easy access such as the long distance between the house and the work site, this is because the location of the new

house occupied by LIC is located in the suburbs, so LIC has to travel to the work site for a relatively long time.

The statement of the social worker above was confirmed through interviews with LIC 4, 6, 9, and 10, each of whom works as a factory worker in Serang City, Banten Province, which says as follows:

One of our difficulties is the distance to the work site, we have to travel to the highway first to access the pick-up transportation of the employees who are our only means of transportation, we hope that in the future the government will provide shuttle transportation near our newly occupied homes for workers living in the suburbs.

Discussion

Housing policy is a policy that can have a broad impact on other social policies and most social worker informants who carry out activities on housing assistance programs say it is a necessity. As a result of welfare reform, housing policy is increasingly seen as part of a holistic strategy to build human capital and drive economic mobility (Schill & Wachter, 2001).

Specifically, housing assistance programs such as SHSA in Indonesia require support such as the availability of access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, and land ownership status, therefore the identification and verification process as a condition and criterion for determining the recipients of housing assistance programs is a very important thing to do before housing assistance is implemented. Housing assistance is associated with improved health and psychological well-being for individuals entering public housing and multifamily housing programs (Fenelon et al., 2017).

The findings showed that there are still LIC who do not have the legality of land ownership status certificates because most of the houses are acquired by hereditary means or inheritance from parents and the sale and purchase of houses carried out by LIC parents are carried out without using certificates, on the other hand, almost most of the LIC residences experience poor conditions such as limitations in accessing clean water, sanitation and supply of electrical energy. the findings of this problem further confirm that

housing policy will always be connected to other policies and that connectiveness is carried out in the form of collective actions of the state or government to overcome these problems through other social policies so that intervention of the state through other social policies can be called another form of collective intervention (Sprigings, 2005).

However, SHSA housing assistance or surgical houses through the provision of funds amounting to Rp. 17,000,000, this is very helpful for LIC, especially health factors for elderly parents and children who are still very vulnerable to disease so that LIC, especially women and housewives, have the opportunity to save and set aside money to be diverted to trade capital to make the family's economic income increase.

This research conducted by Cass (1986) explains that housing policy for women should be placed in the context of the distribution of economic and social resources in the broadest sense, taking into account not only the distribution of current income but also the distribution of resources to obtain future income. Regarding household income, Olsen (2005) emphasizes the importance of participation in family self-reliance programs as an initiative in public housing programs and housing vouchers to increase labour income.

Social workers in the housing assistance sector are faced with production problems such as the lack of supply of building materials for housing construction or renovation and the high cost of production that exceeds the amount of the aid budget. In contrast to the results of the study (Ellen et al., 2003) in the results of her research said that the housing production program has produced a substantial positive impact and contributed to the revitalization of the environment in New York City. Therefore, one of the efforts to overcome this problem requires a production subsidy mechanism which is carried out at the planning and cooperation stage with partners or providers of building materials for the purchase of building materials by the amount of the housing assistance budget.

According to Khadduri & Burnett (2003), there are several problems in the production subsidy mechanism, namely, first, the tendency to have higher costs; secondly, due to high costs, the effect can limit household

choices; third, production subsidies can "extinguish" private housing production and, therefore, are ineffective in increasing the total housing stock; quarterly, production subsidies can reduce property values in some neighbourhoods.

In addition, other research findings show a lack of commitment and less awareness from the program recipient community due to improper use of building materials and lack of attention to the development schedule. According to Gao et al (2009), program housing has not focused on improving the results of work among consumers. In addition, creating organizational commitments among supportive housing providers to improve consumer employment outcomes remains a major challenge. Thus, the task and responsibility of the social worker which is also very important are to mature the mechanics of production subsidies at the planning and cooperation stage with partners or providers of housing building materials, in addition to the social worker must continue to encourage all parties involved in the SHSA housing program in Indonesia to build commitment and awareness.

As outlined in the previous section, the housing assistance program carried out has placed LIC as the main actor or actor. This is done to overcome problems that often occur and are encountered in the implementation of the SHSA program. On the other hand, the social work of housing assistance often faces diverse responses and challenges from the community due to the lack of public knowledge of government policies and programs due to differences in views, values, and norms that apply to the program recipient community.

The social work of the housing assistance program has taken advantage of the views and values prevailing in the community so that the housing assistance program can be accepted. In addition to positioning the community as the main actor or actor of the program, it also takes a religious approach, for example by socializing that the health value that we manifest in the housing assistance program has similarities with the understanding and religious values adopted by the people in Indonesia. That there is a value and culture of cooperation in the process of housing

development activities and this is by the characteristics and has become a local tradition/wisdom of the Indonesian people.

The housing assistance program is a solution to encouraging the achievement of permanent and affordable housing buildings. The experience of social workers says that LIC already has an agreement and cooperation with partners providing housing building materials related to the purchase price adjusted to the availability of the budget. As the sustainability perspective is a goal that must be achieved in the principle of permanence and affordability, it is intended that LIC as a beneficiary of the housing assistance program can enjoy it for a long time, therefore the building of the house must be built/renovated using quality materials, durable and can be used within a long period.

According to Collins (2014), low-income communities continue to face barriers to buying a home, mainly due to a lack of income and net worth. The public policy seeks to subsidize these barriers to home buying for low-income people through tax policies, grants, and other strategies. The current policy is, at best, inefficient and unfair, and at worst and ineffective.

LIC access in meeting basic needs has been met although it is recognized that not all LIC needs get easy access such as the long distance between the house and the work site, this is because the location of the new house occupied by the LIC is located in the suburbs so that the LIC has to travel to the work site for a relatively long time. According to (Fossey et al., 2020) social housing location and housing-related support must explicitly pay attention to the safety and security issues of the community as a whole.

Research Limitations

The main limitation of this study is related to a methodology that most studies pay more attention to interviews as primary data so as not to include documentation data as a support for research so that the work of the social housing assistance sector in various perspectives has limitations in tracing data derived from government documents.

Implications for Policy

Several similar studies have been conducted outside of Indonesia, including in Australia and the United States. US findings suggest that housing production programs have had a positive impact and contributed to environmental revitalization (Ellen et al., 2003). Building the principles of housing service policy support is very important as a positive response to the future direction of housing policy (Schill & Wachter, 2001) and as a basis for social workers in realizing the welfare of individuals, families and communities (Hugman, 2016). This research is specific to Indonesia and cannot be generalized to contexts outside Indonesia. This research offers interesting findings and should be considered by the Government to encourage the performance and appreciation of social workers in the social housing assistance sector. In addition, building the principles of housing service policy support by social workers is very important as a positive response to the future direction of housing policy in Indonesia in realizing community welfare.

Further Research

Further research is needed in the future either from the aspects of diverse methodologies or the development of perspectives in analyzing social housing assistance programs. This will be useful for adding insight and knowledge to different analyses. Additional research from the perspective of social worker performance and social housing assistance trends is becoming particularly important in the future.

Conclusion

Establishing the principles of an ideal housing policy is a prerequisite for social workers in realizing the success of social housing assistance programs. Efforts such as collective government intervention through other social policies, focusing on the planning and cooperation stages with partners or providers of housing building materials to mature production subsidy mecha-

nisms, encourage commitments and awareness of all parties involved in the SHSA housing program in Indonesia.

Within certain limits, the practice of social workers in the social housing assistance sector experienced several obstacles such as the lack of availability of access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, and land ownership status, production supply problems, lack of commitment and awareness of LIC, but the social workers in the social housing assistance sector have shown effective performance, especially in building housing policy principles.

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Social Workers, Regulation, and Social Justice: Tensions in Canadian Social Work

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Abstract

Social workers expect their professional regulatory body to work to further social justice mandates. Data collected from document and website reviews and participants illustrate that social justice exists within the current regulatory framework. This study explores social workers' expectations of their regulatory organization's participation in social justice. Interviews were conducted with 22 Canadian social workers; participants all indicated that they felt social justice was an important aspect of social work. Participants from the practitioner group expressed concern with the level of social justice being embraced by the regulatory body. Participants from the regulatory group claim they were advocating for social justice. Reviews of legislation illustrated a varied position of social justice within the framework. Regulatory websites and association membership showed involvement in social justice efforts. Individual regulatory organizations have embraced this important aspect of social work. Results showed that regulatory bodies participate in social justice efforts; however,

some members feel that this is not enough. Improved communication between the regulatory body and the membership is recommended.

Keywords: Social work, Canada, regulation, social justice, structural social work

Challenging the status quo and seeking better alternatives for society is a cornerstone of social work in Canada. It is so engrained in practice that it appears in the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (CASW, 2005). In fact, the pursuit of social justice is rooted in the beginning of social work in the charity movements of the 19th century (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). Social workers challenge oppressive practices and attempt to demystify structural barriers that prevent clients from achieving their goals; they advocate for change and struggle against conventional power structures that uphold privilege and power for few while ignoring the reality of many (Mullaly, 2007).

Cepulionyte and Dunajevs (2016) define a value contradiction as an occurrence within social work practice that causes a tension for the individual because the requirements of their practice and their social work values do not match. Often social workers find themselves intertwined in value contradictions within their professional practice on issues such as abortion (Cepulionyte & Dunajevs, 2016), upholding organizationally defined roles (Gallina, 2010), professional roles (Mullaly, 2007), organizational requirements (Gough & Spencer, 2014), and the place of political activism in social work practice (Fargion, 2008; Hugman, 2009; Lundy, 2004; Mullaly, 2007). Using the concept of value contradiction, and framed within a structural dialogue, this research explores the place of social justice within a Canadian regulatory framework, with the intention of allowing front-line practicing social workers as well as regulators to present, in their own words, their views on this topic.

For some in the social work field, the quest for professionalism has come at a cost: a move away from challenging systems and advocating for social justice (Barter, 2012; Fargion, 2012; Greenwood, 1957; Mullaly, 2007). The impetus for this research is the value contradiction that exists between regulatory control for social work and the place of social justice within this system. Regulation focuses on the protection of the public (Mullaly, 2007) while the front line, the individual social worker, seeks justice (Donaldson et al. 2014). The significance of value contradictions can be seen in the differing views presented by the

participants in this research and their frustration over the location of social justice within the regulatory controls of social work in Canada. The question then becomes: Does social justice have a place within the regulation of social work in Canada? Similar questions have been raised in social work studies over time (Greenwood, 1957; Kallen, Miller & Daniels, 1968; Mullaly, 2007), but the views of social workers and regulatory bodies have not been investigated.

Structural context of value contradictions

Mullaly (2007) presents two distinct views of social work, conventional and progressive, highlighting a key value contradiction and offering an interesting frame to discuss social justice within the Canadian regulatory system. A conventional view of social work practice is influenced by government organizations, capitalist ideologies, professional regulation, case work, and organizational structures (Barter, 2012; Burt, 2008; Carniol, 2000; George, Coleman & Barnoff, 2010; Hugman, 2009; Matthews, 1927; Mullaly, 2007; Stadum, 1990; Swain, 2001). Conventional social work limits social workers to operating within a full acceptance of regulations, rules, obligations, and laws, along with a perceived shift away from social justice efforts (Kallen et al., 1968; Mullaly, 2007). This approach to practice focuses on individual problems and reduces interventions to mask larger social issues (Mullaly, 2007). It is within this conventional system that social work regulatory bodies in Canada exist. However, from this conventional position they have access to areas of government systems that individual social workers may not have, providing an opportunity to leverage existing relationships to advocate for social justice.

A progressive view of social work practice considers the structural elements that contribute to the struggles faced by individuals, families, and communities (Chan, 2018; Lundy, 2004; Mullaly, 2007). Progressive practice identifies macro-level issues within society that perpetuate problems and advocates for change through social justice activities (Brown & Hannis, 2012; Dudley, 1978; Lee, 1999; Mullaly, 2007; Shragge, 2013). Social workers who support social justice interpret their work through this progressive lens.

Barter (2012), in a challenge to the profession, argues that the social justice roots of social work are being threatened by conventional regulatory

frameworks. Social workers “are working at arm’s length and are primarily concerned with social control rather than social change” (p. 234). Barter contends that a focus on regulation and the professional label for social work has pushed social workers away from advocating for social change in exchange for a mainstream professional identity. Indeed, 66 years ago Greenwood (1957) cautioned that “social workers might have to scuttle their social action heritage as a price of achieving the public acceptance accorded a profession” (p. 55). Just over a decade later, Kallen, Miller and Daniels (1968) presented a situation in North America where the focus of social work “ignores the systematic interrelationships of institutions within the social structure” (p. 236) and focuses instead on forcing the individual to change to address their own problems, thus moving away from social justice to mainstream roles of social control. Yet many social workers practicing in large government organizations strive to maintain their responsibility as agents of social change when describing their views of social work (Lipsky, 1980; Theriault et al. 2014).

Social workers do not need to align themselves with only one viewpoint, conventional or progressive (Chan, 2018; George & Marlowe, 2005). Progressive ideologies can infiltrate traditionally conventional practice areas and intensify their support of social justice. Likewise, expectations of regulatory bodies can evolve to allow higher expectations for their participation in social justice activities. It is not surprising, then, that social workers expect their regulatory body to act as an agent of social change.

Canadian social work regulation

Social work in Canada is regulated provincially, and each province has a designated regulatory body. In some Canadian jurisdictions the regulatory body functions as a dual role entity, which means that they are both a regulatory body and a professional association (Rice, 2018; Kourgiantakis et al. 2022). Currently these jurisdictions are Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. The jurisdictions of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories have a sole regulatory body with no association obligations. As this research is being written, Alberta is in a state of flux with the passing of Bill 46, which requires a separation of the

regulatory and association functions of the professional association in the province (ACSW). These differences between jurisdictions are important to acknowledge in this research, as they speak to the legislated mandates of each regulatory body. The scope of this research is limited to an exploration of the regulatory bodies' position in social justice efforts. While the role of the independent provincial associations in social justice is important, it is not a part of this research.

Method

This research was undertaken from a qualitative perspective, which was used to ensure that the question of rigor was taken seriously (Padgett, 1998). Data was collected from three separate sources: interviews, legislative documents, and websites. Richardson (1998) describes the triangulation of data as using “different methods such as interviews, (...) and document checking to validate findings” (p. 358); however, this description does not seem to truly speak to the multitude of sources examined. Given its number of sources of information, the use of triangulation, although accurate, seems to limit this research by suggesting that there is one fixed point where one can “triangulate” focus (p. 358). Richardson (1998) proposes a more appropriate description, “crystallization”, which suggests “a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of this topic” (p. 358) that takes into consideration the data collected from each of the distinct groups as well as the other sources that have been consulted and analysed.

The use of qualitative inquiry in this research allows for the experiences of participants to become the data explored (Berg 2007; Chun Tie et al., 2019; Laws & McLeod, 2004; Warner, 2008; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). Perspectives from registered social workers were collected from semi-structured open-ended interviews focused on exploring the place of social justice in regulation, allowing for the participants to provide uninterrupted narratives of their views and expectations (Berg, 2007; Faulkner & Faulkner, 2019). Participants were purposefully selected as being members of one of two groups in social work: some were regulatory participants (who worked with a regulatory body) and others were practice participants (who did client interventions or taught).

Faulkner and Faulkner (2019) present purposeful sampling as valuable in research when it is important to have participants with some predetermined characteristic in mind. This research required individuals that were registered social workers who were either working in a practice field or in a regulatory capacity. In the case of regulatory participants, purposeful sampling was used as there are only 11 regulatory bodies in Canada, the number of potential participants from this group was limited. Practice participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in research on professional regulation and on their understanding of the regulatory process.

In total, 22 individual interviews were conducted for this research. Of these participants, 14 self-identified with the practice category. Two were from a community-based organization, four from child welfare, three from health/hospital practice, and five from an academic setting. The other eight participants self-identified as being closely involved with a regulatory body, either as an employee, volunteer, or board member. Two of the participants were retired from front-line practice but had more than 30 years each of social work and regulatory experience; one had been an employee of a provincial regulatory body; one had been a long-serving board member; five participants were directly involved in regulatory employment; and one participant was a member of a board of directors.

The researcher then transcribed each interview and subsequently analyzed each transcript and any accompanying notes to identify themes specific to social justice. The data collected from the interviews was then categorized, allowing themes to emerge. This data was then reviewed further to ensure that the examples provided in the research were representative of the participants and reflected their voices. To further enhance the rigor of the study, a variation of member checking was utilized. Participants' responses in qualitative research are essential, and to ensure that their views are presented accurately, it is valuable to follow up with some participants if possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accordingly, four participants, one regulatory and three practice, were asked to read a draft of the paper prior to submission for publication to provide any feedback that they felt was necessary.

Additionally, a comprehensive review of the 11 Canadian regulatory jurisdictional legislations and the websites of the regulatory bodies in these

jurisdictions was undertaken to identify evidence of social justice efforts. The reviews of the legislation specifically looked for the clear inclusion of social justice within the documents. The reviews of websites were conducted to identify evidence of involvement in social justice efforts reflecting the definition of social justice that appears in the following section of this paper. Ethics approval was granted by the University of New Brunswick, Canada. Participants were advised at the start of the interviews that they could end the process at any time and/or request that their information be withdrawn from the research without explanation, and that their identity would be protected by the researcher.

Defining social justice

While conducting this research, the methodological question soon became clear: What constitutes social justice and how should it be defined? To overcome this hurdle, a grounded theory approach to defining social justice was undertaken by using the data collected from participants through interviews (Chun Tie et al., 2019; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using an iterative approach to coding data (Chun Tie et al., 2019), comments on social justice presented in the interviews were identified, and through constant comparative analysis, a definition of the term as presented by the interview participants was developed. It was evident while completing the interviews that the terms “social justice” and “social action” were being used by participants interchangeably.

This paper is written using the term “social justice”; however, the terminology used by the participants is presented in this research as they stated it. Participants from the practitioner group identified macro-level efforts, public statements, protests, and political commentary as being important components of social justice. Participants from the regulatory group identified political influence, participation in decision-making, public statements, media releases, and an active public voice as being definitive of social justice. Through a constant review of the data, theme saturation was reached (Birks & Mills, 2015), allowing for a definition of social justice that was appropriate for this research. Here, then, social justice is defined as actions that focus on social issues in a meaningful manner, with the intention of eliciting change and raising awareness within a public forum. By developing this definition of social justice

through a grounded theory approach, this research can support an exploration of the topic in a manner reflective of the participants in this study.

Results

Results of interviews and reviews of legislation and websites of regulatory bodies are presented in the following section. First, the data from the interviews will be presented.

Defining social work practice

The practice of social work was discussed as a main research theme by all the participants in their interviews, illustrating a critical approach to practice (Barter, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). A participant who worked in a child welfare setting provided this description of how social justice defines practice:

It's also taking social action on bigger things. Not just bread and butter issues for myself as a job but also what's going on in society. It's speaking out and naming things. It's helping (clients) to question and understand the unjust system that they're living in.

This view of social work suggests that the role of the social worker requires them to expand their focus beyond only helping the individual, by speaking out, naming social problems, and being willing to be responsible for taking a stance on bigger social issues (Barter, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). A second participant from a hospital setting described social work practice as helping clients to navigate a broken system while advocating for change:

It is a pretty broad field, but it's based on working with people who are struggling in one way or another and offering them support in whatever ways you can. Basically, helping people navigate a broken system while advocating for change.

A third participant, from an academic setting, explained their view of social work practice as expanding beyond the individual and looking at larger structural issues (Mullaly, 2007) that affect individuals' lives:

The one-on-one interactions we have with individuals, it's empowering individuals to move forward and deal with whatever issues are

confronting them. But we often say in terms of that one-on-one it's not always necessarily the "problem" of that individual, it often gets defined that way, when generally it is larger structures that are impacting the individual.

These examples show that social workers define social work practice as not only working with individuals, but also navigating broken systems and working to correct the harmful nature of larger structures that impact the lives of the people that social workers help (Chan, 2018; Mullaly, 2007). A participant from a child welfare practice environment summed up this argument very well: "I don't want to help people adjust to an unjust system, I want to help them to question and understand the unjust system that they're living in." This participant then goes on to say that the regulatory body "can speak out and they can disagree, and they can do something different."

Regulatory participants provided definitions of social work practice that also reflected the importance of social justice:

I define social work pretty broadly as enhancing or promoting the social function of individuals, families, groups and communities, promoting social justice, and social programs, and working towards a better society in general.

Another regulatory participant stated that social work "promotes social change"; that it is "based on principles of social justice"; and that it "engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance societal well-being." Supporting the position of Mullaly (2007), and George and Marlo (2005), all 22 participants in this study provided definitions of social work practice that included social justice as a key aspect of the profession, regardless of whether they were a practice or regulatory participant.

The social justice role of the professional organization produced two separate themes for discussion. One was highlighted by the comments of practicing participants who felt the regulatory body does not participate in social justice efforts. A second theme, presented by regulatory participants, suggests that the regulatory body does participate in social justice, although not through protests or outward political activism. These themes are presented below.

Social justice (practice participants)

Twelve participants from the practice group identified the lack of support of social activism as a worry, because activism is one of the building blocks of the profession of social work (Mullaly, 2007). The proponents of progressive and structural approaches to social work spoke of the centrality of social and political activism to social work (Fargion, 2008; Hugman, 2009; Lundy, 2004; Mullaly, 2007). This sentiment is illustrated in the following commentary by a participant who worked in a community-based setting:

Social justice isn't the reason I went into social work but it's the reason I fell in love with it. In my opinion it's what sets social work apart from other human services, like psychology, the focus on the structural issues causing the problems. That's what I feel passionately about, working to build a society where everyone has the same chance at things.

A practitioner participant, from a child welfare background, was particularly concerned with the lack of support that their local body provided to their membership in social justice efforts because of the nature of the current board of directors:

It's not going anywhere. I think they're a very conservative board and association really. You wouldn't see them out picketing, you know, or nailing politicians on certain things. It just wouldn't happen. I mean, I don't see any social action at all.

This participant pointed out different elements that are important in the discussion of social justice and professional regulation, indicating a perceived unwillingness of the regulatory body to challenge the government administration. They are not convinced that the regulatory body is able to effectively work within government to move forward social justice agendas. One practitioner participant spoke of a time when their regulatory body distanced themselves from the actions of the local chapter by not becoming involved in questioning political leaders during an election. This participant felt this inappropriate and stated, "our job is, and part of our responsibility according to our code of ethics is, social change, social action." Another registered participant offered these

thoughts about why they believed their regulatory body was unsuccessful in effecting change at the social level on behalf of the social work profession:

I don't see them as particularly proactive. At this point it is perhaps a tad on the conservative side. (...) I don't see them showing up at the legislature perhaps as much as they might need to. Issues coming from poverty, to changes to homelessness initiatives are important to social work. We could have a stronger social work voice in those kinds of issues.

Twelve practice participants reported that their regulatory body could increase their role in advocating for social justice. This attitude suggests a perceived lack of will on the part of the regulatory body to participate in social justice. This is indicative of the value of social justice within social work (Mullaly, 2007; George & Marlo, 2005) and shows that for these practice participants there remains a contradiction (Cepulionyte & Dunajevs, 2016) over the roles and expectations of the provincial regulatory bodies.

Social justice (regulatory participants)

All eight of the regulatory participants indicated that their jurisdiction participated in social justice in a manner that was able to influence change. A regulatory participant, working directly for a provincial regulatory body, began their comments by discussing the different definitions of social justice considered to be relevant, then moved to discussing examples of how the regulatory body is addressing important social issues:

Well from my perspective the role of social action is what we do. How do we define it? (...) Is social action organizing a protest? Sit-ins and protests and that stuff, that's one perspective. For me another perspective of social action is really to promote social justice, to be at the table and promote some change for the best interest of the client. So, we try to do alternative ways of social action. (...) So being where the decision is being made (...) is the way of influencing social policies, building commitment, collaboration, and change (...) we develop partnerships and collaborations with diverse groups of partners, and we try to develop program research and so forth to be able to do something proactively to help the situations.

Moving away from the more structural model of social justice, community organizing, and protest (Mullaly, 2007; Shragge, 2013), in the view of this participant, is a means of fulfilling the role of social work. This participant says that being at the table with government and holding true to a social justice agenda is a practical and effective way for the regulatory body to advocate for issues of social justice (Chan, 2018), stating “It’s different from some social change efforts and grassroots protests and activism that slap everyone in the face. It’s a different way of doing social action.” Another regulatory participant said that their provincial regulatory body was participating in social justice work though “grassroots efforts and partnership building” to address social issues in a real and impactful way.

The data collected in this qualitative research illustrates that within the sample of participants there was an overwhelming agreement that the pursuit of social justice is important to them when considering the role of the regulatory body. However, there was a clear discrepancy between the practicing and regulatory participants regarding how much effort the regulatory bodies put into social justice advocacy.

Legislative review

A review of the current legislative documents that regulate social work in Canada was conducted. Of the 11 jurisdictions represented by these documents, eight of the pieces of legislation spoke to whether social justice belonged in the scope of the professional body or of the profession. The legislation in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island all refer to the place of social justice within the objects of the regulatory body, making social justice advocacy an actual role of the association and a part of their corporate functioning. In Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories, the place of social justice is found within the legislated definition of social work practice and not within the objects of the association or college. This shifts the responsibility for advocacy, at least at a formal legislative level, to the individual member. The province of Nova Scotia has interesting legislation because it refers to social justice, community change, and improving social conditions in both the objects of the college and the definition of the practice of social work. The location of this information within the legislation is different between the jurisdictions.

Legislation in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, and Newfoundland had no mention of the place of social justice within their legislation.

Individual websites

To determine if the provincial regulatory bodies were involved in social justice efforts, a review of their respective websites was undertaken. All eleven of the jurisdictions demonstrated at least some connection to social justice efforts as related to social work practice. Data showed that one of the main forms of social justice participation was through the release of media statements on topics ranging from conversion therapy, support for minority groups, reconciliation, provincial budget critiques, anti-racism messages, diversity, equity and inclusion of marginalized communities, commentary on provincial child welfare programs, health reform, minimum wage, and mental health advocacy, to name a few.

The jurisdiction presenting the weakest connection to social justice content was that of the Northwest Territories. In this jurisdiction, regulation is not conducted by an individual licencing body, but by the department of health and social services, which is a territorial government-based department that internally regulates professionals practicing in the Northwest Territories. The review of the departmental website found links to varied topics, such as *Building stronger families and Climate change and health*. Although a government website, these examples of social commentaries can be perceived as places for issues of social justice to be presented.

The remaining ten jurisdictions fall into two distinct categories. The first category is provinces that have standalone regulatory bodies: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. The second category is provinces that share a regulatory and association role: New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan. For the provinces in the first category, with a single focus social work regulatory body, the primary function of the regulatory body is the protection of the public. In these jurisdictions, it is evident that the social justice roots of social work have not been lost, but rather are being incorporated into the day-to-day work of the organizations. The registrar of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers wrote that as a regulatory body they have a “responsibility to engage in

difficult discussions and to examine how issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion fit within the regulatory context,” showing a commitment on the part of the college to continue to seek change in these areas (Betteridge, 2021). Jurisdictional bodies have produced reports that speak to societal issues. One example of this is from the regulatory body in the Province of Quebec, l’Order des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec. It released a report, *Un rendez-vous incontournable* (May 2020), that recognized the collective responsibility towards children and youth in the province and called for a substantial reinvestment in front-line social services and the prevention of child maltreatment. In British Columbia, examples on the website further support the place of social justice within the regulatory framework. These include a video on Indigenous registered social workers, statements on residential schools and Indigenous-specific racism, and a toolkit for further improving the relationship between registered social workers and First Nations communities. The Manitoba website includes public statements regarding truth and reconciliation, conversion therapy, and systemic racism, to highlight a few. These examples illustrate a commitment to social justice and speaking out on important issues.

Jurisdictions that maintain a dual role regulatory and association body have examples of social justice projects as well. All these jurisdictions present as being comfortable with social justice advocacy while also fulfilling their mandate of regulatory control. These jurisdictions provide frameworks that support the development of social justice and advocacy committees. In Saskatchewan (SASW), the professional association describes itself as “a member-based organization that governs the profession of social work and serves and protects the public interest through regulation of the social work profession; support to competent and ethical social work practice; promotion of the profession; and advocacy for social justice and well-being for all.” New Brunswick and Nova Scotia both boast a social justice component; New Brunswick has a social action committee supported by the board of directors, and Nova Scotia has both a social justice committee and a policy and advocacy committee. New Brunswick has publicly supported a zero-tolerance policy on conversion therapy and is a strong voice in the long journey towards truth and reconciliation. Nova Scotia has produced a social policy framework document for its province,

and as recently as October 2022, published a statement of support for a local union that was on strike. The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers made this statement on their approach to social policy and social work: “Our profession is founded on humanitarian and egalitarian ideals. We envision and work towards a society that promotes social, economic, and political equity. As social workers, we labour in solidarity with our clients, organizations, and communities, and with Nova Scotians who are vulnerable, oppressed and dealing with the hurtful outcomes of society.” Newfoundland’s website highlights regulatory involvement in the provincial health accord supporting health care reform, a commitment to truth and reconciliation, and the publication of an online forum titled Connecting Voices, which allows members to write articles of interest and supports a social justice lens. All the provincial regulatory bodies support Canadian First Nations communities, acknowledge the unimaginable damage that has been caused by residential schools, and emphasize the importance of reconciliation for the mending of the national fabric. A last element gleaned from the website reviews was membership in the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Canadian Association of Social Workers membership (CASW)

The CASW is viewed as the political voice of the profession of social work in Canada. There is a distinction, however, between the CASW and regulatory membership across the country. In the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, being a member of the professional regulatory body automatically grants the individual social worker membership in the CASW. However, being a registered social worker in the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island does not provide CASW membership to the individual social worker. In each of these jurisdictions, the individual social worker must register in the provincial association (separate from the regulatory body) to obtain CASW membership. The provision of CASW membership to individual members by some regulatory jurisdictions is an example of a form of social justice participation. By providing membership, which also provides financial support to the CASW, these jurisdictions are actively supporting a national organization that is not hesitant about speaking out on social justice issues.

Discussion

Social justice is clearly an important component of social work identity, though views differ among the participants about what it means to participate in social justice efforts. For practicing social workers, social justice brings value to their professional identity, and this research shows that the regulatory bodies, in the commission of their legislated roles, can include social justice efforts within their structures. Regulatory bodies have adopted a clear stance of supporting social justice initiatives. Mullaly (2007) claimed that social work regulation is missing the presence of any sanctioning of political activism or social action. Despite some disagreement from practice participants in this study, the professional regulatory bodies show an approach to social justice that broadly aligns with a progressive approach to practice.

Supporters of the progressive and structural approaches to social work saw the presence of social justice as a key component of social work practice (Fargion, 2008; Hugmann, 2009; Lundy, 2004; Mullaly, 2007). As has been illustrated, in all but three of the regulatory jurisdictions, social justice appears within the legislation as an expectation of either the professional body or social work practice itself. The review of the websites illustrates that all the jurisdictions, in some manner, speak out on social issues of importance in Canada today. The regulatory bodies' engagement with social justice topics illustrates that their legislative role for public protection and participation in social justice efforts can coexist within their structure through the development of position papers, media statements, collaborative change work with government, and the support of social justice committees within the organization.

All of the participants in this research send a clear message that social justice should be a part of the role of the regulatory body. In fact, all the participants agreed with the idea of social justice as foundational to the social work profession in Canada. Eight of the pieces of social work legislation reviewed in this paper refer to the place of social justice within the practice of social work or the role of the regulatory body. All the professional regulatory bodies examined in the research identify social issues that they have spoken out on, taken a position on, or highlighted as important in their public representations on their websites.

Conclusion

Limitations for this study include the small sample size of participants and the purposeful selection method. Although theme saturation was reached within the interview process (Birks & Mills, 2015), it would have added value to the research to have a larger sample size (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2019). Social work in Canada encompasses more than 52000 professionals (CASW), and a larger scale sample size, coupled with a mixed methods approach, may have garnered additional data. Using a purposeful sample selection process limited the researcher's ability to consider the position of individuals from outside of the regulatory scope (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2019). Individuals who are educated in social work and not registered, or individuals that have retired and are no longer members of their profession regulatory body, may have provided additional and interesting views of this topic.

Data shows that the provincial regulatory bodies support the pursuit of social justice in Canada. This is illustrated by public statements, political influence, media releases, and partnership building. The value contradiction that was presented at the beginning of this paper and in commentary from practice participants is important to consider, highlighting the importance of increasing the social justice voice of the profession of social work in Canada. For some participants who actively seek professional satisfaction from social justice, the current efforts of the regulatory bodies do not reach far enough. The regulatory bodies are engaging in social justice movements through the brokering of ideas, support of change, political interventions, speaking out in support of reconciliation, and program development. To support an improved relationship between the regulatory body and their members, this research indicates the regulatory body should increase its public voice. Participants from this study want to see an outspoken representation of the profession from regulators, and they want to see them confront controversial issues. As increased public presence and improved communication with members is important, the regulatory bodies should also catalogue and publicize their social justice efforts to ensure that their membership is aware of their values and actions. The burden of improving the relationship between practicing social workers and regulators, and garnering support of the membership, falls on the regulatory body. They will have to engage in constant dialogue and information sharing, to ensure that

the current pattern of supporting social justice continues and the value contradictions felt by registered social workers is alleviated.

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Critical Conversations in Compensating Social Work Field Education: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This article challenges social work programs to have the critical conversation of paid/compensated practicum education experiences. The social work profession is embedded in identified values and ethics. Reviewing the historical practice of unpaid practicum education placements from a lens of the social work profession's fundamental values and ethics is essential for the continued success of social work education and its programs. A systematic review was completed to locate literature that either substantiated the need for paid and/or compensated practicum education placements or provide guidance to social work programs on how to engage in critical conversations regarding the implementation of paid / compensated practicum education experiences. There were no results found in the literature that substantiated the need or reflects that

social work education, within the USA, are having conversations on compensated practicum experiences. A call-to-action challenges social work programs to have these conversations as to support the success of social work students. Implications of compensated practicum education for social work students, social work programs, practicum sites, and scholars will be discussed.

Keywords: Social work practicum education, paid practicum placements, compensated practicum education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has deemed field education, also referred to as practicum education, the signature pedagogy of the social work profession (Council on Social Work Education, 2008). As such, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide equitable practicum opportunities to social work students. Since deeming practicum education as the signature pedagogy, the responsibility of practicum education, as it relates to the student, has not been revisited. The practicum education experience is widely recognized as the most significant component of social work education (Bogo, 2010; Cleak & Smith, 2012; Wayne et al., 2010) as this experience allows the social work student the opportunity to integrate what was learned in the classroom to the development of social work practice skills that will be applied in tangible practice situations. However, in this era of diversity, equity, and inclusion, what has the academy conceptualized, as a collective, in ensuring that all aspects of our social work and practicum education programs are equitable for all students so that practice skill development can be at the forefront of student concern? The National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics (2021) calls social workers to be mindful of the inequities and injustices within our communities. Assuredly, social work programs must do the same when analyzing the economic inequities that practicum education may cause for our students, communities, practicum instructors, and community agencies.

Practicum education experiences, in social work education, are highly valued as it plays a critical role in preparing emerging social workers for the social work profession. Social work education researchers have produced substantial knowledge, over the decades, concerning what students believe are helpful approaches, as well as concerns, within their practicum education experience. It has been found that practicum education aims to achieve many goals, with one

major goal focusing on student practice competency as to obtain their degree, while concurrently performing well in academic course work. Yet another challenge is the phenomenon of consumerism within higher education. Students enrolling in social work education may have a consumer-focused mindset and make their demands known about what outcomes they expect out of their education (Lager & Robbins, 2004). Some students may approach the practicum experience with an “entitlement philosophy,” and their success, as it relates to their practicum placement grade, should be based on effort and not on the demonstration of skills (Tseng, 2011); all of which may or may not align with social work’s educational and professional competencies.

When analyzing the state of social service agencies and its influence on student practicum outcomes, tacit practice knowledge allows the realization that changes in public services have forced traditional practicum sites to offer more services with less resources. Economic downturns make it challenging to provide student opportunities; thus, social work programs may have difficulty locating timely practicum placements - a challenge that may cause students an unfair delay in practicum hour accrual. Further, the decline in state and federal-funded services has eliminated many positions, held by social workers. Social workers who may have potentially held positions as practicum supervisors; thus, causing an increase in practicum supervision outside of the student’s placement agency. In addition, enrollment changes within the academy have placed pressure on the expansion of social work programs. Diminished resources with increasing expectations for faculty to meet the demands of students with varied needs that are affecting their academics and practicum experience, have exhausted the amount of meaningful skill focused faculty-student engagement within practicum education. The State of Practicum Education Survey found that 47.9% of respondents reported that teaching and research faculty members serve varied and concurrent roles: practicum liaisons, assisting in student monitoring, and communicating with both placement agencies and agency practicum supervisors (Council on Social Work Education, 2015a, p. 17), all responsibilities that reduce faculty-student skill focused engagement. In an already overburdened system, practicum education is being perceived as “resource-intensive” by the placement practicum sites (Preston et al., 2014). When combined with limited resources within both agencies and the academy,

these are all assuredly contributing to the already established inequities within the strained practicum education process.

There are also competing demands, outside of the classroom, that the social work student must address if they are to succeed in their practicum education experience. Social work students are entering practicum with varied mental health diagnoses, substance use disorders, trauma histories, and other psychosocial histories that may be managed while engaging in the academic component of their social work education; but, when merged with the additional stressors of practicum education, subsequent psychosocial problems may arise (Bogo et al., 2007; Pooler et al., 2012).

Further, with the rising costs of student loans, unfunded loan forgiveness programs for social workers, and the stagnant salaries of social work professionals, the lack of direct and indirect compensation for practicum experiences may not attract potential social work professionals as in past decades. Social work programs may need to consider different aspects of compensation related to the labor set forth by social work students, so that the profession may attract students beyond those that can financially support their education. Cultural factors, while engaging in the practicum education experience, must also be considered. A study completed by Srikanthan (2019) reviewed the experience of “Black, minority, and ethnic” students and their accounts of their practicum education experience. A central finding of the study was that the practices of the institution and the context of the practicum education process created a racially stratified experience comparable to the labor market (Srikanthan, 2019). The social work profession is guided by a shared understanding of culture and its function within society and among individuals. This same ethical standard that focuses upon cultural factors, must be considered and applied when conceptualizing and formulating the student’s practicum education experience.

Significance of Social Work Practicum Education

Like other practice-based professions (e.g., education, nursing, and the medical practicum), social work education has both an academic curriculum and a practical component known as “field education” or “practicum education” and is viewed as social work’s “signature pedagogy” (Council on Social Work

Education, 2008; Holden et al., 2010; Shulman, 2005) and the “gold standard” (Mullen et al., 2007). Shulman (2005) stated that education for human service professionals socializes students: “to think, to perform, and to act ethically” (Shulman, 2005, p. 52) and better prepare students to provide services to clients. Within the United States of America, practicum education requirements are put forth for accredited schools of social work by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). CSWE recognizes the importance of practicum education:

The intent of practicum education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum--classroom and practicum--are of equal importance with the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Practicum education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on the criteria by which students demonstrate Social Work Competencies (Council on Social Work Education, 2015b, p.12).

The theory and knowledge learned in the classroom are executed in a micro, mezzo, and/or macro practice setting, which may be the most critical learning experience (Jones & Sherr, 2014). Practicum education provides an opportunity for students to apply evidence-based practices (EBP) and builds their knowledge and skills (Beiger, 2013; Washburn et al., 2021).

In addition to the number of hours that students must complete, multiple stakeholders are critical to the practicum experience. For a social work student, at a minimum, they engage with a practicum instructor and a faculty practicum liaison. However, additional stakeholders, in the practicum experience, may include preceptors, seminar instructors, and practicum coordinators. Social work programs may also include practicum directors and/or practicum coordinators that manage the practicum education program. Practicum instructors direct the daily activities of the social work practicum experience at the agency for the social work student, while practicum liaisons are faculty members and represent the social work department and/or school - performing the roles of advisor, monitor, consultant, teacher, mediator, and advocate. Hence, the social work

student must be attentive to these varied roles, adding to the additional use of the student's time and resources.

Uncompensated Practicum's Impact on Students and Families

Time is Money

While indulging in equitable considerations regarding compensated practicum internships, we must consider how the current structure affects the communities that we serve. Undoubtedly, social work students were considered “community members” before their interest in the social work profession and continue to be so upon entry into the academy. According to the NASW Code of Ethics, “social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully” (National Association of Social Workers, 2021, section 6.04a). If we, as social workers, apply this ethical code to communities and community members, do we not have the ethical obligation to extend this to social work students who are also community members? Are we ethically obligated to ensure that the time vested in completing social work curriculums do not undermine our students' ability to meet their basic human needs?

While accomplishing a remarkable feat, a graduate degree, this gain comes at an astronomical cost for many social work students, their immediate families, and their communities. Within the United States of America, at the undergraduate level (BSW), social work students complete a minimum of four hundred supervised practicum hours and at the master's level (MSW), social work students complete a minimum of nine hundred supervised hours (Council on Social Work Education, 2015b). The uncompensated practicum education hours, at the MSW level, equate to approximately 12-24 hours/week, the equivalent of part-time employment.

It is of note that the hours of supervised practicum do not consider the time spent in non-practicum education social work courses, the time utilized in engaging with their practicum education team, the time utilized in studying, and the engagement of practicum seminar course assignments. Time has

value; therefore, in conceptualizing the value of time into dollars by utilizing the federal minimum wage (\$7.25/hr.) within the United States of America; each masters level social work student “invests” an additional \$6,525 towards their education. This “investment” is in addition to the cost of tuition; thus, transferring wealth/resources from the student’s micro / mezzo construct to subsequent mezzo / macro entities (i.e., government-based practicums).

First Gen Families & Financial Hardships

When assessing the holistic construct of the student, social work programs must also consider the intersectionality of first-generation college/graduate students among communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BI-POC) and among those from disadvantaged socioeconomic communities. Although social work is a “calling” for many, the decision to enter social work programs is the expectation of acquiring an improved socio-economic status post-graduation by entering a “working” profession. At the same time, social work programs market the plethora of employment opportunities that the student will have access to post-graduation; a marketing strategy that is not entirely forthcoming in divulging the salary of a nuanced social worker within the profession. Social work programs are less transparent in divulging the debt (total debt the student will incur post-curriculum completion) to income (the starting salary acquired post-graduation) ratio for nuanced professionals. The reality is that for many nuanced social work professionals, it may take many years before one’s social work income surpasses the incurred educational debt. For others, it is possible that their educational debt will continue to absorb their social work salary, leaving the question that when considering the economic status of the student and their families, “is it more beneficial to have never embarked upon this professional journey?”

Further, social work programs must be attentive to the evolution of the family construct. Gone are the days when families offer full financial support to students entering higher education. Most students entering social work programs are considered “non-traditional,” including students who are head of household and students who are also parents of college students. According to Parker & Patton (2013), the “sandwich” generation carries the burden of caring for both elderly and/or debilitated parents while also raising their own children.

This shift in the family causes a financial burden upon the student and their family, which was not as prominent at the inception of practicum education's construction. This financial burden may lead to increased student stress, exacerbation in mental health diagnoses, and perhaps the catalyst in the student being forced to utilize the same services within the agencies they intern. Johnstone et al. found a relationship between unpaid internships and financial hardship on social work students in human service agencies that created stress and possibly compromised their learning experience (2016).

Spector & Infante (2020) explored best practices for social work practicum pedagogy and suggested that practicum supervisors should initiate discussions about financial hardships to offer resources such as stipends or vouchers through agency budgets or workshops such as financial literacy. In an exploratory study performed by Unrau et al. (2019), an anonymous survey was conducted on students enrolled in BSW or MSW programs and found that approximately one-third of respondents lacked awareness of the degree cost and received less financial aid than expected. Therefore, as it relates to the academy, uncompensated internships may inadvertently cause an increase in student attrition rates.

Compensation Defined

It is probable that historically, administrators within social work programs have avoided discussions regarding practicum compensation as it is a concept that generally equates to an increase in budgetary considerations. To the contrary, compensation for social work practicum students may include many different features, not just financial. Due to it being understood that “students” are not synonymous to “employees,” as to be considered as an operational definition, the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics defines compensation as:

the entire range of wages and benefits, both current and deferred, that employees receive in return for their work. In the Employment Cost Index (ECI), compensation includes the employer's cost of wages and salaries, plus the employer's cost of providing employee benefits (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2021, para 19).

Although financial compensation should become a consideration for students engaged in their practicum education, social work programs can include

indirect compensation for social work students under the auspices of “benefits.” Nonetheless, through the exploration of direct or indirect compensation, considerations should be through an equity-minded perspective as it is imperative that programs begin to formulate policies and procedures that identifies the individual needs of the student, determines if the program has access to the resources in meeting the identified needs, and how the student will be linked to the available resources or linked to subsequent programs that offer the supportive mechanisms needed for the individual student’s success.

Exploring Compensation

Although financially compensated practicum is not a nuanced concept as it is a practice implemented across the United States, the general concept of compensating students for their practicum placement is seemingly controversial. One argument is that practicum placement experiences are part of an educational process and should not incur financial compensation. Under this opinion, because the student is not an agency “employee,” and functions under the title of “student,” the “educational experience” itself is to be deemed as the compensation. In contrast, a more current opinion that is gaining popularity is that social work practicum time investment is being considered as “unpaid labor.” For many social work students, their productivity level, within their practicum experience, is equal to that of, at the very least, a “part-time employee.” Therefore, can social work education begin to change the narrative and view the practicum experience as an educational experience that also prepares students with realistic professional opportunities, including paid compensation? Social work programs must begin having dialogue surrounding themes that include: should social work programs consider the financial compensation of students when the practicum agency is financially reimbursed for the services provided by the practicum student? Is it unethical and/or immoral to compensate students for their practicum placement hours if it is indeed to be viewed solely as an educational experience? If so, how are students that are engaged in practicum experiences at more financially prominent agencies / institutions able to obtain financial compensation for their educational experience? Finally, if a practicum education program has opportunities for paid practicum placements, how are students informed of these opportunities---are there fair,

equitable, and transparent policies in place to decide who should be awarded these opportunities? Is this practice ethical? Was the student included in the decision-making process?

Again, the discussion regarding the financial compensation of social work students' practicum experience although seemingly controversial, warrants critical conversation and exploration. As social work educators, it is not only our responsibility to prepare future social workers to engage in competent practice, but it is also our responsibility in assisting our students with the practice of self-care. As it relates to this topic, self-care includes the awareness of feasible financial compensation, exploring if social work provides a livable wage for their family construct, and linking one to opportunities where the student may subsidize their income post-graduation.

Aim of the Review

This systematic review aims to locate a body of literature that may either substantiate the need for paid and/or compensated practicum placements or provide guidance to social work programs in formulating critical conversations regarding the implementation of paid / compensated practicum education experiences. This review would establish the foundation for social work education in having the critical conversations regarding the implementation of paid / compensated practicums that are not contingent upon federal financial aid, work-study programs and / or agency intern programs. With the high stakes to perform in practicum education and the noted competing demands on the social work student, it leaves one to question: is social work education providing support to the best of their abilities for the success of students during their practicum education experience, and is social work education supporting the best pedagogical approach to practicum education? Although institutions may have differing concepts of "compensation," the challenges go beyond students being offered antiquated compensation packages deemed suitable by social work departments and / or schools. Institutions must begin to have critical conversations regarding their responsibility in providing tangible compensation to their social work students, ones that include financial compensation for social work practicum placement experiences. It is also of note that within this study,

the MSW degree will be focused upon as the MSW is the terminal degree for the Social Work profession within the United States.

Methodology

This systematic review was completed using three distinct Boolean threads using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) Flow Diagram and PRISMA Statement (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA Statement and the PRISMA Flow Diagram allowed for the structured flow of information through the different phases of the systematic review. The authors completed a review of the literature that used explicit and systematic methods to collect the findings of the studies. The use of the PRISMA Flow Diagram allowed a consistent research design to review identified articles. The articles and book chapters were reviewed independently by three separate reviewers to identify inclusionary and exclusionary literature. Consensus was reached on the conclusion of inclusionary criteria. The data was organized in a document that included the title of the article, keywords, abstract, inclusionary criteria, and exclusionary criteria. Heterogeneity among Boolean strings were noted and considered.

The first literature review gathered generalized, operational, and current literature regarding paid practicum placements in social work education. To locate this body of literature, a systematic electronic search was performed utilizing the following databases: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsycINFO, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX w/Full Text. A 10-year review from June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, in the aforementioned databases, screening for: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “paid social work practicum placements” and “paid social work internships” was completed. In addition, inclusionary criteria entailed articles and book chapters published between the dates of June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021; the articles, journals, and books must have been peer-reviewed, published in the United States of America, in the English language, and with full text available. In contrast, exclusionary criteria included articles,

book chapters, books and journals that were not peer-reviewed, that were not published prior to the last 10 years, were not published within the United States of America, and were not in the English language. Further, exclusionary criteria were articles and book chapters that did not include Boolean search terms of: “paid practicum placements” and/or “practicums” as well as articles and book chapters that solely focused on BSW programs while failing to incorporate MSW programs.

The second systematic review looked for literature on the generalized concept of “compensated” practicum placements in social work education. To locate this body of literature, a systematic electronic search and 10-year review; from June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, was performed utilizing the following databases: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsycINFO, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX w/Full Text. The Boolean terms used were: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work placement” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “compensated internships.” Inclusionary criteria entailed articles and book chapters that were published between the dates of June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, were peer-reviewed, published in the United States of America, in the English language, and with full text available. Exclusionary criteria were articles, book chapters, books, and journals that were not peer-reviewed, were not published between the dates of June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, were not published within the United States of America, and were not in the English language. Further exclusionary criteria were findings that did not include the Boolean search terms of “compensated practicum placements” and/or “practicums” and articles and book chapters that solely focused on BSW programs while failing to incorporate MSW programs.

The third systematic electronic review searched for literature on uncompensated practicum placements in social work education. In an attempt to locate this body of literature, a systematic electronic search and 10-year review; from June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, was performed utilizing the following databases: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsycINFO, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts,

SocINDEX w/Full Text. The Boolean terms used were: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum placements” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “uncompensated internship or internships.” Inclusionary criteria entailed articles and book chapters that were published between the dates of June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, were peer-reviewed, published in the United States of America, in the English language, and with full text available. Exclusionary criteria were articles, book chapters, books, and journals that were not peer-reviewed, were not published between the dates of June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021, were not published within the United States of America, and were not in the English language. Further exclusionary criteria were findings that did not include the Boolean search terms of “uncompensated practicum placements” and/or “practicums” and articles and book chapters that solely focused on BSW programs while failing to incorporate MSW programs.

Results

In an attempt to capture all aspects of “compensated” practicum internships and / or practicum placements, three separate systematic reviews were conducted using the PRISMA Flow Diagram (Page et al., 2021). The first systematic review includes the search string: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “paid social work practicum placements” and “paid social work internships.” The second systematic review includes the search string: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work placement” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “compensated internships.” Finally, the third systematic review includes the search string: “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum placements” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “uncompensated internship or internships.” Each systematic review was cross-referenced against the remaining two reviews to exclude duplicate studies.

In the first systematic review, the Boolean search string of “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “paid social work practicum placements” and “paid

social work internships,” yielded a total of 148,266 results. Out of this total number, 148,217 were marked as “ineligible” by the EBSCO database automated tool. Of the initial total, 50 articles were screened, with one duplicate. Of the remaining 49 articles, all 49 were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. Of the 49 articles, 2 articles were excluded as the articles were not peer-reviewed. Of the 47 remaining articles, 27 articles had research not conducted in the United States of America. Of the 20 remaining articles, 19 articles were excluded as the literature did not mention the Boolean term “paid social work practicum and/or internships,” and 1 article was excluded as it solely focused on BSW practicum education. In conclusion, the first systematic review yielded zero inclusionary studies (Figure 1).

In the second systematic review, which included the Boolean search string of “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work placement” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “compensated internships,” 148,267 results were yielded in total. Out of this total number, 148,217 were marked as “ineligible” by the EBSCO database automated tool. Of the initial total, 50 articles were screened; however, when cross-referenced with the first Boolean string, 36 of the articles were duplicates and therefore, were excluded. Of the remaining 14 records, all 14 were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. After review of the 14 remaining articles, four articles were excluded as the research was not conducted in the United States of America, and 10 articles were excluded as the literature made no mention of the Boolean search term “compensated social work practicum,” “social work practicums,” and/or “social work internships.” In conclusion, this second systematic review yielded zero inclusionary studies (Figure 2).

In the final systematic review, the Boolean search string included the terms “social work education” or “social work practicum education” or “social work practicum placements” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “uncompensated internship or internships,” 148,664 results were yielded in total. Out of this total number, 148,613 were marked as “ineligible” by the EBSCO database automated tool. Of the initial total, 51 records were screened; however, when cross-referenced with the first and second Boolean strings, 27 of the records were duplicates of the first string and one of the records was a duplicate of the second string; therefore, 28 articles were excluded

due to these duplications. Of the remaining 23 records, all were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. After reviewing the 23 remaining records, 11 records were excluded as the research was not conducted in the United States of America, 1 record was published outside of the inclusionary time frame; 10 records were excluded as the literature made no mention of the Boolean terms “uncompensated social work practicum,” “social work practicums,” and/or “social work internships.” Finally, 1 record focused solely on BSW programs. In conclusion, this third and final systematic review yielded 0 inclusionary studies (Figure 3).

Discussion

This systematic review aimed to locate literature that (a) substantiated the need for providing differing types of compensation, including those that are financial, to social work practicum students for their time investment in addition to their educational experience; and (b) explored how social work programs engage in critical conversations regarding the implementation of compensated practicum experiences. Out of the myriad of reviewed articles, one article researched in Canada discussed practicum compensation. It is unfortunate that within the period of this systematic review, social work research, within the United States of America, has seemingly not produced accessible peer reviewed literature offering insight on such an important topic.

In a Canadian study, Srikanthan (2019) compares the process of preparing social work students for practicum placement as the equivalent to “securing paid employment” (p. 2175). Srikanthan also refers to the social work practicum experience as the “unpaid and invisible labour of students” and that for BIPOC students specifically, these students are often directed to practicum placements that are historically positions that are “devalued, of low status and underpaid within the labour market” (Srikanthan, 2019, pp. 2174-5). With the pressures of a global pandemic and sociopolitical unrest within the United States, student practicum compensation is needed more than in previous years. COVID-19, especially, has forced many universities outside of their comfort zones, allowing for financial relief that may not have previously occurred in the history of many universities. For example, through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), the Historically Black Colleges & Universities

(HBCUs) of Clark Atlanta University and Spelman College canceled outstanding account balances for students that COVID-19 impacted. CSWE, through policy changes, created accommodations for social work students and practicum agencies impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; these accommodations were nuanced, were implemented on a national level expediently, and would have never been previously considered, but are now considered “cutting edge,” and are integral parts of social work practicum curricula. The “so what” of this is that if institutions make the active decision to become mindful of student-centered practices, ideas that have never been previously considered can be actualized and implemented. As with the erasure of student debt and the launching of student and agency accommodations on a national level, all of which were conceptualized and implemented during a global pandemic, is it possible that social work programs can collectively conceptualize, actualize, and implement a plan for student compensation for their practicum hours on both a programmatic and a national level?

Future Implications for Social Work Programs

Social work education, and the profession, collectively agree that developing best practices for social work's signature pedagogy is of utmost importance. Because of this, there has been significant focus on the pedagogical benefits of social work practicum education. Consequently, there has been no significant focus on the differing financial burdens, stressors, and barriers that the practicum education experience potentially imposes upon the social work student. Further questions for programs to consider: are the cultural aspects of a social work student considered when making the practicum placement? Are practicum placements “driven by” the impact of market demand with the personal, cultural, and structural factors influencing the social work student overlooked or not taken into consideration? Is the allocation of resources influencing practicum placement decisions faithful to the program's pedagogical intent? Is the traditional practicum placement process a rigid format built for a particular group of individuals with privilege and power? Does the practicum placement process consider systemic discrimination and racial biases? These critical processing questions are imperative for social work programs to consider as research indicates that students in social work programs have experienced more

trauma than their peers that study business and even medicine (Black et al., 1993).

The practicum education experience, if supported by a structured, well-defined experience through the learning agreement, is an investment in the social work student's education, the mission of the practicum agency, and the social work profession. Social work education must protect the practicum experience and hold this part of the social work educational experience to a high standard. Challenges in the practicum education process can be at the policy, university, and the community organizational level, not just at the individual level with the student. Some of these challenges include finding qualified practicum placements, supervising students during the practicum placement, and providing quality training for practicum instructors. In addition, best-practice teaching strategies to integrate classroom theory into the practicum education experience whilst supporting the ongoing professional development opportunities for social work students may present further challenges.

There has been an accelerated level of discussion in academia, particularly in social work education, about "unpaid" practicum placements. Are social work practicum students "working for free," "volunteering," or shall we continue conceptualizing students' invested efforts as an educational experience? A solution to the financial burdens of practicum placements is to allow practicum placements that will intentionally serve as future places of employment for the practicum student. Although work-based placements may provide challenges, with the practicum student balancing expectations of being a student with the duties of being an employee (Pelech et. al., 2009), exploring and procuring this genre of practicum may alleviate many of the economic hardships incurred by practicum students. Although financial compensation is widely discussed, it is essential to be mindful that the practicum education experience may also be compensated with the development of social work skills, values, knowledge, and academic credit hours (i.e., academic hours earned via skills acquired through personal experiences). We have a responsibility in determining the relationship between unpaid practicum placements, the financial hardships this may cause, and the compromise these stressors may have on the practicum education learning experience.

Social work programs may consider alternatives to direct compensation (i.e., paid internships, stipends, etc.), such as indirect compensation models (i.e., tuition assistance, access to free licensure prep courses, continuing education assistance, etc.). Further, in the spirit of equity-minded practice, a subsequent alternative is offering choice to the student. Some students may view the act of providing their personal time to communities as a form of indirect compensation; thus, choosing “volunteerism” over competing compensation alternatives. The assessment of the student’s compensation preference can be initially explored during the practicum orientation.

Study Limitations

Notable limitations to this study are (a) exclusion of gray literature that may have addressed the topic, (b) exclusion of literature from countries outside of the United States of America, (c) exclusion of literature that was not encompassed within the chosen EBSCO databases; (d) exclusion of literature due to the date of publication, and (e) exclusion of literature that does not have full-text availability.

As to address the common journal bias of only publishing studies with successful outcomes, dissertations are sometimes included in research manuscripts (Campbell Collaboration, 2014). Although considered scholarly work, dissertations were not included in this study as dissertations generally do not comply with the inclusionary criteria of “peer-reviewed.” One article mentioned the compensation of social work students; however, this article was published in Canada. This article was not included in the systematic review, as it is probable that the socio-economic structure of social work and the cultural influences of social work students are different between students in Canada and students in the United States of America. Nonetheless, Covid-19 has caused financial strain to all world citizens on a global level and because of this, subsequent countries may have viable research that may assist the United States’ social work programs with these critical conversations. As it relates to excluded articles, it is probable that the articles which address the context of this research may not have been published in the databases used, may be outside the time parameters, or may not have full-text article accessibility; all of which are definitively limitations of this study.

Conclusion

This systematic review of the literature concluded that there has been no peer reviewed research, that is accessible, regarding either the need or benefits of compensated practicum education in social work programs within the United States. The validation of the importance of practicum education is well noted; therefore, it is critical for social work research to be conducted and accessible as to identify how social work students may be holistically supported throughout their practicum education experience. Conceptualizing research which acknowledges the need for varied types of compensation for student practicum participation, as well as research efforts that include equity-minded compensation opportunities for BIPOC social work students, are all needed to sustain the quality of social work programs and the social work profession.

As indicated by the results, there is a significant gap in the literature on compensating practicum placements, and this has implications for social work education and the future of the social work profession. Social work education aims to prepare competent and ethical social workers with practicum education being a critical component of the social work educational experience. It is clearly stated in the Practicum Education Survey conducted by CSWE in 2018 that “because students become practitioners, the functioning of social systems, the needs of clients and consumers, and the fabric of society are at stake” (Council on Social Work Education, 2018, p. 6). Practicum education looks different today, than in past years, due to a consistently changing world. The results of this systematic review clearly reflect that authentically utilizing compensation as an option in recruiting prospective students to the profession, retaining students, and allowing student success within the practicum education experience is not documented in the literature and shows that perhaps our understanding and verbiage is shifting, as it relates to student needs; however, our practices are not.

In conclusion, now is the time to perform further research and perform comprehensive reviews on the standards and policies guiding practicum education so that we may expediently implement equity-minded supportive solutions as to ensure student success while in practicum. It is not to be viewed as difficult for social work programs to facilitate critical conversations in determining if their individual programs authentically support the individual success

of their social work students. Continuing this critical conversation with CSWE, NASW, and subsequent social work programs, on both national and global levels; ultimately allows us to share ideas as one global social work collective, which is essential to the ever-changing dynamics and continued success of social work practicum education.

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Appendix I: Prisma Flow Chart 1

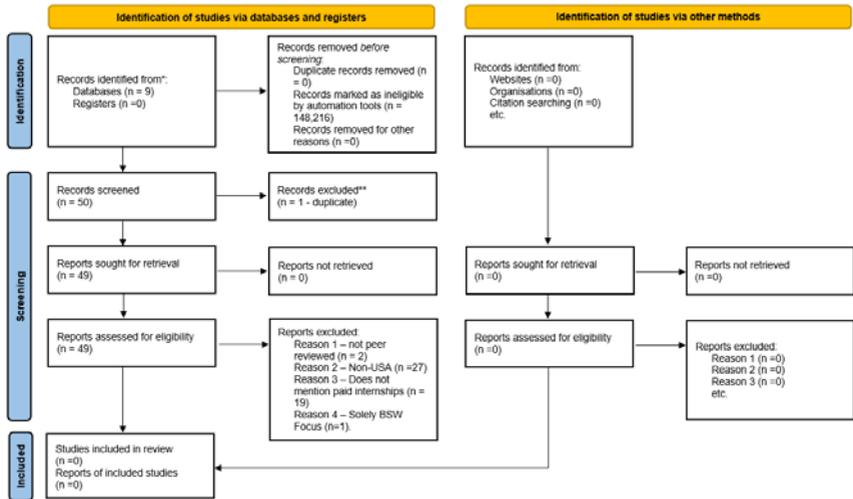


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram Boolean Phrase: “social work education” or “social work field education” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “paid social work field placements” and “paid social work internships”

*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

**If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Database: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsychInfo, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts, SocIN-DEX w/Full Text.

Dates: June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021

Appendix II: Prisma Flow Chart 2

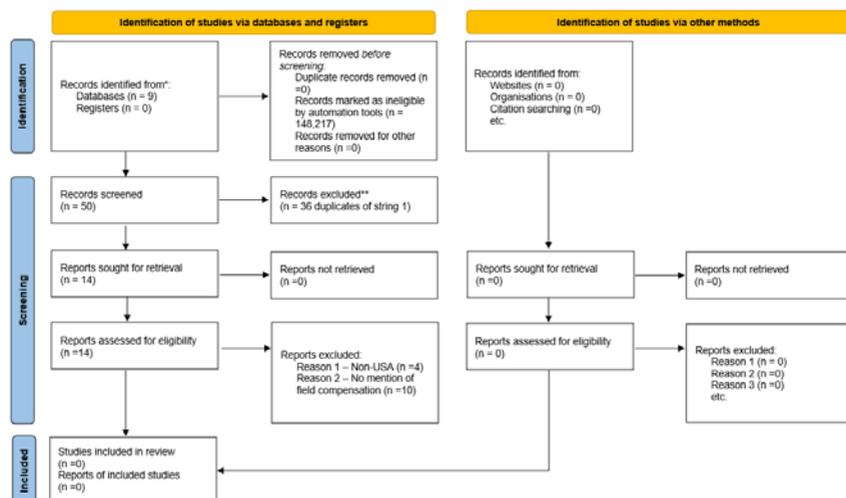


Figure 2: Prisma 2020 Flow Diagram Boolean Phrase: “social work education” or “social work field education” or “social work placement” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “compensated internships”

*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

**If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi:10.1136/bmj.n71. <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Database: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsychInfo, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX w/Full Text.

Dates: June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021

Appendix III: Prisma Flow Chart 3

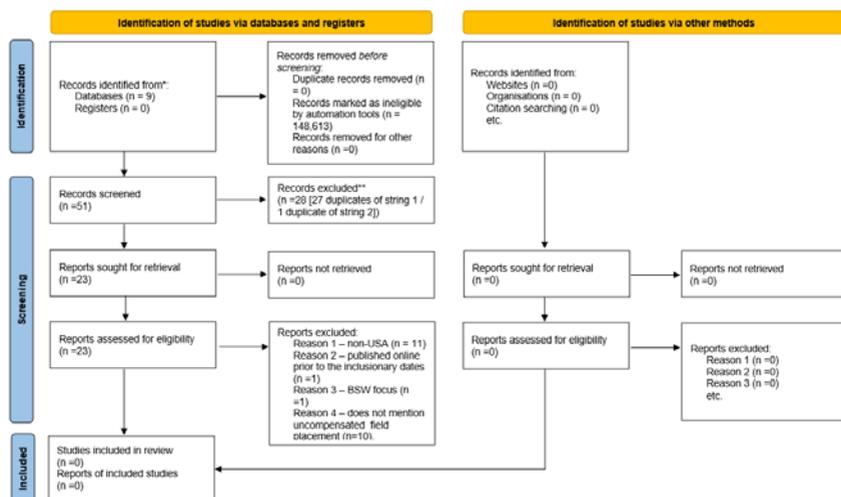


Figure 3: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram Boolean Phrase: “social work education” or “social work field education” or “social work field placements” or “social work practicum” or “social work internships” and “uncompensated internship or internships”

*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

**If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Database: EBSCO-Academic Search Complete, APA PsychInfo, APA PsychArticles, Educational Administration Abstracts, E-Journals, Professional Development Collection, Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX w/Full Text.

Dates: June 1, 2011 to June 1, 2021

Appendix IV: Prisma 2020 Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE Critical Conversations in Compensating Social Work Field Education: A Systematic Review			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Title Page
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist. (purpose, method, results, discussion, and conclusion)	Page 1
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Pages 2-11
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Page 11
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	Pages 12-14
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	Page 12
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	Page 12
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pages 11-14

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Page 12
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	Pages 15-17
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	Pages 9-11
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Page 12
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	Pages 15-17
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	Pages 11-14
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	Pages 11-14

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	Figure 1,2,3
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	Pages 11-14
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	Pages 11-14
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	Page 12
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	Page 21
Certainty assessment	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	Pages 11-12
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Pages 15-17
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	Pages 15-17
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Pages 15-17
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	Pages 15-17

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	Pages 15-17
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	Pages 15-17
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	Pages 15-17
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	Pages 15-17
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	Pages 15-17
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	Pages 15-17
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	Pages 15-17
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	Pages 17-21
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	Page 21
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	Page 21

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	Page 21
OTHER INFORMATION			
Registration and protocol	24a	Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered.	None
	24b	Indicate where the review protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.	None
	24c	Describe and explain any amendments to information provided at registration or in the protocol.	None
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	Page 23
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	Page 23
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	Page 14

Table 1: Prisma 2020 Checklist

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71

For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Forum: Incorporating the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models into Publication Standards: A Call for Editorial Policy Based on Social Work Values

DOI: [10.55521/10-020-210](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-210)

Dawn Apgar, PhD, JSWVE Policy Board

Apgar, D. (2023). Forum: Incorporating the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models into Publication Standards: A Call for Editorial Policy Based on Social Work Values. *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 20(2), 200-205. <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-210>

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Abstract

The use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) in research and scholarly writing has challenged editorial policy, with varying tolerance about the extent to which this technology should be allowed. Journals need to re-examine their standards to ensure transparency and accountability with regard to the use of AI and LLMs in the preparation of manuscripts and the scientific investigation upon which these articles are based. Social workers are ideally suited to assume leadership roles in the formulation of editorial policies given their core commitment to integrity and making certain that technology use is consistent with their comprehensive ethical code.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, research, values, scholarship, editorial policy

Over the last year, since the launch of ChatGPT, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) in research and scholarship has caused concern. Additionally, alarmed by the increasing access to and usage of generative AI by students, university faculty have scrambled to change the ways that they teach to ensure generative AI is not used in assignments and tests (Huang, 2023). Generative AI has also hijacked the focus of publishers as they wonder if its use will negatively impact online readership of their internet and open-access articles (Robertson, 2023) and/or the integrity of published work (Liverpool, 2023). Despite these concerns, there is a consensus that generative AI and LLMs have solidified a prominent place in higher education with many journals inviting scholarship on their use in teaching and learning (Bilal et al., 2023; Eysenbach, 2023).

Given this new landscape, there is a need for sound, comprehensive editorial policies with regard to the use of generative AI and LLMs to ensure both transparency and accountability. While Science has banned text generated by ChatGPT (or other AI tools) in journal submissions (Science, 2023), such a prohibition is not universal and considered naïve and even harmful by some (Claybourn, 2023; Heaven, 2023). Many journals and editorial societies, such as the World Association of Medical Editors, have developed recommendations for using chatbots and generative AI ethically in research and scholarly publication (Zielinski et al., 2023).

A recently published journal article, that relied heavily on ChatGPT in its preparation, states that LLMs have the ability to “revolutionize social work research,” calling for researchers and editors to mitigate any disrupting consequences through the use of quality controls and adherence to ethical standards (Victor et al., 2023). In response to this appeal, the Policy Board of the *International Journal of Social Work Value and Ethics* recently adopted and published standards to help authors understand the expectations when using generative AI in their submitted work (<https://jswve.org/manuscript-policy/>). The need for editorial standards is dire given that the number of manuscripts that use generative AI or LLMs in writing or research is likely to increase as scholars discover ways to use this technology more effectively and to be more prolific with less effort. Such policy makes transparent the agreed upon practices used to

evaluate manuscripts and strengthens accountability to readers who rely on researchers, reviewers, and editors to ensure quality of published scholarship.

Standards about the ethical use of generative AI or LLMs in research will likely change and evolve, necessitating constant monitoring and modification. For example, while most current editorial policies in scientific journals now prohibit ChatGPT from being listed as an author, views about this practice dramatically shifted in a short time period and are inconsistent within the publishing industry (O'Connor, & ChatGPT. 2023; Zarefsky, 2023). For example, a search of the Amazon bookstore reveals more than 200 books have ChatGPT as an author or coauthor (Nolan, 2023). Thus, what may be considered acceptable differs within and across disciplines and publication types, with changes likely as the uses of generative AI and LLMs in scientific inquiry and writing are better understood.

While there are tools to assist reviewers and editors with detecting the use of generative AI and LLMs in scholarly writing (Salleh, 2023), there is a need to ensure that volunteers and staff involved in editorial decisions and publications are well versed on their use. Reviewers may not be familiar with generative AI and LLMs so they will need education about their application in the research process and guidance about what to do if manuscripts do not adhere to established editorial standards. Editors and editorial staff will also likely need to make themselves readily available to answer questions and provide support to authors and reviewers during this transformative period.

Recruiting manuscript reviewers generally can be challenging as academics are often not rewarded for this labor-intensive professional service. Publishers may not be able to keep pace with reviews if there are increases in scholarly productivity due to the use of generative AI and LLMs. Ironically, this potential problem can be alleviated by the use of generative AI and LLMs to assist with manuscript reviews. Generative AI software, such as ChatGPT, can identify language-related errors; provide suggestions for improving clarity, conciseness, and overall readability; ensure adherence to journal specific style guidelines; detect plagiarism; verify and cross-reference information; and generate prompts or questions that could be considered when conducting human peer reviews. If used for these purposes, policies about generative AI and LLMs in

review processes will also be needed to ensure transparency and for accountability to both authors and readers.

There are currently unprecedented challenges related to how to appropriately use generative AI and LLMs in social work research, scholarship, and publication. Fortunately, social workers are well poised to be leaders in formulating necessary policy as they have a comprehensive ethical code and are driven by the professional values of integrity and competence. Generative AI and LLMs are innovative technologies that have significant benefits and risks. The need for leadership in editorial policy development has never been more important. Social workers are skilled at navigating complex situations and balancing competing interests, making them professionally prepared to ensure that generative AI and LLMs are used in a fair, just, and inclusive manner.

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Book Review

Androff, D. (2022). Refugee solutions in the age of global crisis: Human rights, integration, and sustainable development. Oxford University Press.

DOI: [10.55521/10-020-211](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-211)

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Key principles of social work practice link social justice and service to vulnerable and oppressed individuals. The introductory statements of this book highlight this issue with true examples of the dehumanizing approaches to people wishing to enter a country for asylum. Individuals who wish to know the logistics of asylum within immigration policy will find a good overview of the process and critical assessment heavily supported with examples. The text is organized by first outlining the magnitude of refugee displacements and the durable solutions for refugees established internationally. The discussion is clearly approached using the social work lens for both social justice as well as the role of social workers as agents of change.

Once the reader is provided the foundational concepts connected to policy, including the historical precedents as policy changes have occurred over time, Dr. Androff uses three case studies to further explore the durable solutions of voluntary repatriation (Somalian refugees), local integration in the country of first asylum (Kenyan settlements), and resettlement to a third country (Arizona, United States, project). Preceding each case study is a chapter with thorough discussion of the concepts around the example within the case study. The U.S. example is one in which Dr. Androff was

actively involved in program development and evaluation of outcomes. He emphasizes the community work in establishing a successful outcome, and social work's role in empowering individuals to find their voice is evident. It is in this chapter that social workers can consider the many ways social workers can impact refugees on both micro and macro levels.

The final chapter examines what is needed to manage the refugee crisis more effectively. Dr. Androff outlines ethical approaches to the growing magnitude of the refugee crisis and links policy to political and economic factors, outlining strategies that would serve to promote the well-being of those impacted by displacement in what he terms a "human made disaster." Displacement generally occurs due to war and other strife within a country. For those in macro practice settings, the conclusions focus on sustainable development and the need to address geopolitical and socioeconomic factors impacting refugees, as well as migration in general. The approach to examining durable solutions which don't address the problem provides a focus for further analysis. All these strategies reflect social work's ethical commitment toward social justice.

The materials are thorough, provide current examples and reflect existing research and best practice discussions. Ideological and political impact on policy and the outcome for refugees is clearly outlined on a global scale. The unenforceable nature of much of international policy is examined and critically assessed. As someone with only rudimentary knowledge about refugee policy, this reviewer wished for a diagram to aid in mentally organizing the history, concepts, and durable solutions as the policies and solutions are somewhat complex. Definitions and explanations of the concepts, however, are communicated clearly for those who wish to attain understanding of this policy arena. The text's organization of a chapter outlining the concept, followed by the related case study in Chapters Four and Five, Six and Seven, and Eight and Nine, respectively, did provide a focused means of examining each of the solution's outcomes. Within the paired chapters, allows deeper understanding and analysis of the three types of durable solutions; how the idea and then case presentation is organized helps those less familiar with repatriation, asylum, or resettlement.

This book would be a good resource for an international policy course and serves as education for anyone wishing to understand refugees and the process they go through once displaced from their home country. Dr. Androff emphasizes a rights-based approach which is consistent with social work's person-centered practice. His knowledge on the subject and life-long experience in promoting the wellbeing of this population is clear and an example to be replicated.

Book Review

Murray, S. (2022). [Community justice centres: New trajectories in law](#). Routledge.

DOI: [10.55521/10-020-212](#)

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International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics • Volume 20(2), Copyright 2023 by IFSW
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Three interwoven events in the mid 1980's to the mid 1990's converged to produce possible fundamental changes in the way justice is carried out in the United States: the broken window theory, the high crime rates in New York City (NYC), and the idea of community justice. The broken window theory of crime posits that when properties are neglected, it encourages further crime and disorder, including misdemeanors and more serious crimes such as felonies. The *New York Times* labeled 1980 the worst year of crime in New York's history. Research at the time suggested that when citizens came together to clean up distressed properties in the neighborhood, crime rates dropped. Broken windows theory strongly suggested that collaboration between criminal justice professionals and regular citizens can have a positive impact on crime rates. This collaboration was the birth of community justice and the topic of this book. Community justice centers fundamentally rethink the role of community in the justice process, and involve judicial officers developing connections within the community.

The community justice concept aligns with the solution-focused movement and aims to address underlying problems through a collaborative multidisciplinary approach. Key features of community justice include co-location of services, local knowledge, community engagement and

crime prevention, emphasis on process, and individualized judicial orders that fit not only the offense, but also the offender's community.

Community Justice Centres: New Trajectories in Law describes four justice centers in diverse cities: Red Hook Community Justice Center, Brownsville Community Justice Center (both in New York City), the Neighborhood Justice Center in Yarra, Victoria, Australia, and recent centers in Israel. The community justice model is not designed to be a one-size-fits-all approach. Each center presented illustrates unique features as well as the lessons learned, and the obstacles encountered. This book is an excellent description of how justice processes can be tailored to meet the community's needs, while strengthening society and the individual defendant.

Red Hook Community Justice Center began when a school principal was caught and killed in a gang shoot-out. Community members and justice system professionals joined forces in the planning of the center and its programs. This particular center houses the court and support services such as driver accountability, counseling, vocational training, and drug/alcohol rehabilitation. Court professionals, especially the judge, reach out to people/leaders who run the community garden, the local library, school officials, and residents of an apartment building called "the pharmacy" because of its frequent drug crimes.

While most support services are connected to the court, community members can take part in programs such as the Peacemaking Program, which trains residents to resolve neighborhood disagreements, and Bridging the Gap program that addresses improvement in connections between police and local residents.

Because the community justice systems are not one-size-fits-all programs, the evaluation measures will be somewhat different for each program. Evaluations must retain a central position in the overall planning scheme in order to ensure success. The Red Hook Center services assess whether or not an arrest is necessary, conduct an annual door-to-door survey, hold intermittent focus groups, and observe day-to-day interactions of participants. The Red Hook Center has reduced recidivism by 10% in adults

and 20% in juveniles, and compliance rates ranged between 63.7% to 75.5%, depending on the measures imposed.

Also, in New York City is the Brownville Community Justice Center which was originally intended to replicate the Red Hook Center. The Red Hook model did not work, as the nature of the neighborhood is quite different. Brownsville has been described as the deadliest neighborhood in NYC.

The Brownsville center was planned without a co-located court due to safety concerns. The primary issue of community safety seemed to be the most likely problem; however, safety was more of an issue for outsiders. Everybody in Brownsville knows everybody in Brownsville! Even with this lack of concern amongst the residents, 26% of community members could not identify a strength in the community. A youth space was created in a dis-used shipping container on an empty block, as an initial step to address this issue.

Another center, the Neighborhood Justice Center in Yarra, Victoria, Australia also used the Red Hook Center as a model with more success. The crime rate in this community was double that of Melbourne. Improving community safety and the residents' relationships with justice agencies were the primary intents. The planners focused on a welcoming building entry, and in order to avoid courtroom dominance, located the courtroom on the floor above the lobby. At every step, the community was involved.

A panel, which included justice officials and the public, chose the magistrate/judge for the Yarra center. This court adjudicated criminal cases of adults and children, excluding sexual offenses and indictable offences. Also, a service team was co-located in the center, which included caseworkers, drug/alcohol addiction specialists, and family violence specialists. Additionally, employment assistance, housing support, mental health and financial counseling programs were housed alongside police, prosecutors, defense lawyers and corrections staff.

In addition to services, program innovations such as educational programs, an all-stars soccer program, and the Smity Street Dreaming Music Festival were created, which encouraged a buy-in from the whole

community. The crime rate in Yarra significantly declined, and since 2007, \$4.56M per year was saved in avoided prison days.

Community courts in Israeli created a sense of community through social and religious activities, engagement with local business owners, mentoring, and social soccer. Community members and students volunteered to assist defendants and their families. Each community justice court has a small court team consisting of the magistrate, program coordinator, social worker, defense and prosecutorial staff, and probation officers. While the court operations tended to be more emotionally restrained, the ethic of care was strongly evident.

Quantitative and qualitative evaluations for the four centers assessed community trust, safety, levels of community embeddedness, and participants' experiences. Communities do not simply have one problem, but rather a set of interrelated problems that need to be addressed in the evaluations. The four examples described above were quite successful in many ways; there were also some concerns, such as the government being too involved in citizens' lives and an unclear role of courts and services.

Additionally, the definition of community could be a stumbling block. Communities could become objects as opposed to subjects of the actions taking place in the centers. The final two chapters go into greater detail regarding legal rights, financial outlay, and the belief that community justice is criminal justice-light.

In spite of the criticisms, community justice centers offer a model of justice that can improve traditional criminal justice practices and create communities with greater efficacy. *Community Justice Centres: New Trajectories in Law* presents alternative examples of successful programs that consider the individualistic nature of communities. This is an excellent book for anyone interested in improving the justice program.

Book Review

Reamer, F. G. (2023). Risk management in the behavioral health professions: A practical guide to preventing malpractice and licensing-board complaints. Columbia University Press.

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While most social workers are eager to assume clinical roles, there is less enthusiasm about the rules and regulations which influence their practice. A lack of knowledge and ability to implement appropriate standards of care may seriously endanger clients, colleagues, and organizations. And, while lawsuits and license board complaints are not common, social workers' negligent or intentional ethical lapses may invite repercussions which make them unable to continue delivering services. In his latest book, Dr. Reamer presents risk management issues of great relevance to a variety of behavioral health professionals, including social workers.

After a legacy of publications about social work values and ethics, the author's latest text is informed by his rich history as a practitioner, educator, researcher, and expert witness. This book examines in careful detail numerous issues related to risk management, including confidentiality, supervision of staff and clients, deception and fraud, consultation, and referrals. Reviews of legal histories, rules and regulations, professional standards, findings from peer-reviewed literature, and case materials are incorporated

into each chapter, critical content that frames ethical decision-making and promotes best practices. Importantly, strategies for reducing risk are frequently provided and can readily guide therapeutic processes.

While an array of topics are discussed, social workers may find a few sections particularly valuable. For instance, the author presents difficult confidentiality concerns that routinely appear in practice settings, such as discerning when to disclose information to protect third parties, managing information-sharing within families, and understanding the nuances of privileged communication. While considering the challenges they present, recommendations for mitigating confidentiality-related risks are also offered, including developing a clear informed consent process, distributing policies explaining communication practices, and establishing protocol to support the safeguarding of client records. Readers will also benefit from suggestions addressing common missteps in treatment, namely violation of client rights, unprofessional boundaries, inaccurate assessment, inappropriate utilization of interventions, and negligent interruption or termination of services. Social workers will also appreciate the sample forms in the appendices, which are examples of releases of information, policies for private psychotherapy services, and consents for remote treatment. In regards to this latter issue, Dr. Reamer's often-cited expertise in technology and social work practice is infused throughout the book, information which is only cursorily considered in many counseling publications. Future editions of this text will want to attend to the latest technology-related developments in clinical work, including advances in virtual reality and artificial intelligence. Increased consideration of ethical issues related to community-based social work practice, rather than privileging private practice settings, would also expand the book's scope and usefulness.

A more recent revision to the NASW *Code of Ethics* presents social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals with recommendations specifically related to impaired practitioners. Dr. Reamer dedicates an entire chapter to this issue of emerging significance, describing the forms of distress that may impact social workers' professional judgment and performance. These considerations are consistent with published findings from a study of

over 6,000 licensed social workers, recently conducted by a group of my colleagues, in which we found that professionals' problems with physical and mental health, substance misuse, and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences influenced their decisions to enter the field and impact their work, particularly their clinical practice. Acknowledging the need for more universal protocols to prevent and respond to these needs, the text recommends approaches for identifying and documenting these issues and supporting impaired practitioners through a process of rehabilitation. In this post-COVID era, social workers' heightened physical and behavioral health problems will need to be better understood and addressed, to support their wellbeing and their capacity to work most effectively with clients.

Social work educational programs, to their great detriment, include minimal curricular content on ethics and risk management. Rather than a standalone course, this information when made available to students is typically done so piecemeal, included in classes throughout the curriculum and without a unified approach or textbook to engender critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and implementation of clinical strategies which reflect these priorities. The lack of attention to the ethics of clinical social work puts students at risk for malpractice throughout their careers. This limited approach to the training of new professionals – and concerns about supports for social workers' ongoing development—support the necessity of Dr. Reamer's latest publication. Offering expert advisement, this resource has the potential to enrich direct practice courses in behavioral health training programs, continuing education sessions, supervisory relationships, and therapeutic processes, equipping social workers to provide sound clinical care in an increasingly complex service delivery environment.