PRAXIS

Where Reflection & Practice Meet

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Mission Statement

The School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago created *Praxis: Where Reflection & Practice Meet* to give voice to the scholarly work of students and alumni. Our mission is to encourage and support the development of social work knowledge that will enhance the lives of the clients we serve, embody the humanistic values of our profession, and promote social justice and care for vulnerable populations. *Praxis* respects and welcomes all viewpoints.

Editorial Policy

Praxis: Where Reflection & Practice Meet is published by students in the School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago. The editorial board is composed of masters and doctoral social work students. The board encourages students and alumni of the School of Social Work to submit papers that provide insight into clinical, policy, research, education and other areas relevant to social work practice. Submissions are accepted throughout the year, and the deadline for the annual Spring publication is December 1. The editorial board anonymously reviews submissions and edits accepted papers with permission from the authors. Papers should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages and submitted on a disk as a Microsoft Word document file (.doc). All identifying information, including contact information, should be on a separate page. Responsibility for accuracy of information contained in written submissions rests solely with the authors. Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the School of Social Work or the editorial board.

Editorial

In the compelling narrative, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (Fadiman, 1997), Anne Fadiman examines the cultural clash between the medical community of a county hospital in California and a Hmong refugee family with a seriously ill child. When Lia Lee is diagnosed with severe epilepsy as an infant, her Laotian family begins a tragic dance with Western medicine that culminates in Lia being removed from her parent's home and placed in foster care. Fadiman's exploration of how this heartbreaking event occurred unfolds two vastly divergent perspectives about illness and health. In Hmong culture, epilepsy is not only a serious medical condition as defined by traditional western medicine; it is also an indication that the inflicted person holds a special status in the spiritual world. So when Lia had her first seizure when she was three months old, her parents believed the tremors that shook her tiny body were a sign that Lia's spirit had been frightened and temporarily fled.

Fadiman juxtapositions the Lee's view of Lia's seizures with that of Dan Murphy's, the first emergency room physician to witness Lia seizing: "Dan had no way of knowing that Foua and Nao Kao had already diagnosed their daughter's problem as the illness where the spirit catches you and you fall down. Foua and Nao Kao had no way of knowing that Dan had diagnosed it as epilepsy, the most common of all neurological disorders. Each had accurately noted the same symptoms, but Dan would have been surprised to hear that they were caused by soul loss, and Lia's parents would have been surprised to hear that they were caused by an electrochemical storm inside their daughter's head that had been stirred up by the misfiring of aberrant brain cells" (Fadiman, 1997, p. 28).

In her interviews with forty professionals who had contact with the Lee family over a nine year period, Fadiman was surprised to discover that the only person who had ever asked Lia's parents what *they* thought was the cause of her illness was a social worker, Jeanine Hilt. Hilt explained to Fadiman that in her parent's eyes, Lia was "an anointed one, like a member of royalty... [I]n their culture [she was a very special person] because she had these spirits in her and she might grow up to be a shaman, and so sometimes their thinking was that this was not so much a medical problem as it was a blessing" (Fadiman, 1997, p. 22). Contrary to the "negligent" parents described in the child welfare records, Hilt recognized that Foua and Nao Kao loved their little girl deeply, and were doing everything within their power to provide what they believed to be the best treatment for her illness. Through her genuine interest in their world, Hilt earned the Lee's trust and helped them to regain custody of Lia before the twelve-month deadline, at which point they would have legally lost her for good.

As Fadiman observed, social workers espouse a holistic and multidimensional view of people, even when it is at odds with dominant societal narratives. We question assumptions about human motivation and behavior that serve to oppress, silence and marginalize, and we view the subjective experience of our clients as the most important "truth." In this volume of *Praxis: Where Reflection & Practice Meet*, students and alumni pursue these values by giving voice to the perspectives of families in poverty, foster children and foster parents, victims of domestic violence, immigrant and first generation college students, and grandparent caregivers. Likewise, it is important not to forget the influence of the clinician's perspective as expressed in the article on counter-transference.

As students of social work, we are fortunate to be learning at a time when postmodern and postpositivist ideologies are increasingly embraced, opening doors to ways of conceptualizing treatment and research that are in sync with the values that are at the very heart of our profession. And as students at Loyola, we are part of a scholarly community that values the knowledge generated from clinical work, and encourages the investigation of multiple theories and epistemologies in the learning process. Erin Scanlon's essay on a new epistemology for psychotherapy illustrates this exploratory style of learning, where the value base and utility of traditional methods of knowing are questioned, and new ways of understanding the therapeutic relationship are tried on for fit. In her analysis, Scanlon asserts that objectivist, positivist epistemologies create a dualism between "knower" and "known," whereas "psychotherapists think through 'we.'" Scanlon proposes a new epistemology for psychotherapy that is based on intersubjective theory and Martha Nussbaum's theory of "love's knowledge."

A pivotal characteristic of social work education is its dialogical nature. We learn in the context of relationships and we grow from sharing, debating and expanding our ideas with fellow learners and teachers. And because social workers come from all walks of life, the diversity of our backgrounds, experiences and interests makes the discourse rich.

Jane Addams wrote about the importance of the lively and often heated debates at Hull House: "The group of Hull-House residents ... differed widely in social beliefs, from the girl direct from the country who looked upon all social unrest as mere anarchy, to the resident who had become a socialist when a student in Zurich ... Although thus diversified in social beliefs, the residents became solidly unified through our mutual experiences in an industrial quarter, and we became not only convinced of the need for social control and protective legislation but also of the value of this preliminary argument" (Addams, 1910/1961, p. 131).

Addams makes the point that although residents held widely different political views, their social justice ideals united them. In her essay on postmodernism and social work, Laura Jacobsen Wrenn speaks to some of the divisions that exist in contemporary social work, such as between postpositivist and positivist philosophies. Using a social constructionist framework, she asserts that the divide between "clinical social work" and "social justice" perspectives is artificial and, like Addams, she proposes that the tie that binds us as social workers is our commitment to social justice. At a time when our world is so profoundly shaken by divisions, social workers should indeed unite around the humanistic ideals that we share.

Another example of a unifying perspective applied to two perceived "camps" in social work comes from Stanley Witkin in an editorial he wrote in *Social Work* about the tension between academics and clinicians. Contrary to the view that diversity is divisive, Witkin cogently explains why it is a strength: "It is only in relation to the other that "good ideas" can be generated. Neither can do it alone" (Witkin, 1998 p. 391). Witkin's "relationship paradigm" of learning and knowledge development resonates not only with our experience as students, but it also describes the developmental process of this journal. *Praxis: Where Reflection & Practice Meet* was created to enhance the dialogue between students and alumni. We are grateful for your support of *Praxis* and your feedback

on the first edition of our school's new journal. Your positive response lets us know that there is both a desire and a need for a forum that gives voice to the work, ideas and viewpoints of students and alumni. In working on the development of *Praxis*, the editorial board has generated ideas and developed solutions in the context of our relationships with each other, and we encourage students and alumni to join the dialogue. In this edition, Brenda Nelson extends the dialogue to include faculty by inviting their recommendations for literature that will extend the learning process beyond graduation.

One of our goals is to support and encourage students to write about their ideas and viewpoints by providing feedback on their work; our hope is that the review process will stimulate ideas and encourage discussion about writing and publishing. We also encourage you to enter into the exchange of ideas by responding to the articles presented in the journal. All of us will be enriched by this dialogical process and our clients will benefit from our ongoing effort to generate ideas and build knowledge that will enhance their lives.

Marian Sharkey, LCSW
Editor-in-Chief

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Toward a More Ardent Epistemology for Psychotherapy

by Erin A. Scanlon

Abstract

This essay explores the phenomenon of knowledge as it pertains to the therapeutic relationship. The author reflects on Jessica Benjamin's contributions to theories of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and mutual recognition. The author also considers "love's knowledge," a theory developed by Martha Nussbaum, as a complement to intersubjective theory and its central paradox.

Introduction

Upon reflection in my early training as a social work clinician, I wrestle with questions about the therapeutic relationship between my clients and me. At times I am mindful of a "mutual presence" in the space between us, and other times I question whether a therapist's office can be a place for true growth and exploration, or whether the complexes of authority cast too dark a shadow upon the relationship for any growth to occur. For consolation and clarity in these more difficult times, I turn to metaphor: in the therapeutic moments of mindful presence I am like a fiction reader, actively focused on the text and thinking through the characters' experiences. When I find myself questioning the potential for growth, however, I am the reader whose attention has lapsed while ostensibly reading. Somehow, I have disconnected from the story (my client) and I need to return. The metaphor helps me understand my errant path. Truly I have not been fooling myself, the story has continued to be told, just as pages continue to turn, but I have wandered from it. This kind of imagining buoys me as I go about becoming a psychotherapist, and I cherish my imagination as an instrument of knowledge.

So the central question guiding this paper is an epistemological one. Drawing on concepts developed by two contemporary thinkers, Jessica Benjamin and Martha Nussbaum, my effort is to make some suggestions for a sound epistemology for psychotherapy. To this end, I also hope to cast aside pretensions about the precision of psychotherapeutic knowledge: not to disparage my certitude that psychotherapists can know and do know, but to shed light upon the capacities and the limitations of that knowledge.

Subjectivity

In order to approach an epistemology for psychotherapy, I will start with the concept of subjectivity. Benjamin (1988) rightly contends, "No psychological theory has adequately articulated the mother's independent existence." I extend this claim to the subjectivity of a therapist. Classically, a psychotherapist recapitulates the mother/object role in her client's life. It is assumed that a new "object" provides the corrective environment for the client. But there are limitations to the "object" concept. As the introduction to this paper illustrates, even when I am practicing psychotherapy, I continue to be myself. I grow tired and frustrated at times. I try to be creative and reflective. I have feelings about and hopes for my client. I feel good about what I am doing, and I falter from confidence. I laugh, cry, remain quiet, answer questions and ask them. My experience is that of a human being affected by and making a difference in another life. Certainly my experience is not just that of an object used by or introjected by the psyche of my client.

We must remember the subjectivity of the psychotherapist because when regarded as an object, the psychotherapist loses her human contour, her particularity, her finite ability to remain focused or available, and her imperfect yet meaningful attempts to do so. When objectivity replaces subjectivity in a philosophy for psychotherapy, the object takes on an *uber* quality: beyond human, nearing perfect. And, to the contrary, psychotherapist as object conveys another message: that the object is one-dimensional and false. The commonly used concept "mirroring" embodies this problem.

> The mother cannot (and should not) be a mirror; she must not merely reflect back what the child asserts; she must embody something of the not-me; she must be an independent other who responds in her different way. Indeed, as the child increasingly establishes his own center of existence, her recognition will be meaningful only to the extent that it reflects her own equally separate subjectivity (Benjamin, 1988, p. 24).

Mirroring is not only a limited way to think of a mom's relationship with her child, and by extension for the psychotherapist *vis a vis* her client; Benjamin seems to argue that to consider the mother/child or psychotherapist/client relationship in terms of mirroring is a misconstruction. The thrust of Benjamin's argument is something like, "the more I am me, the more you are you," and thus is a radically different concept from the notion of nearly perfect objectivity of a classical psychotherapist.

Although the psychotherapist is a subject and the client is a subject, both equally independent centers of existence, that they are absolutely independent selves incapable of exchange or interplay is one seemingly logical, yet erroneous, conclusion. Benjamin (1988) recapitulates Hegel's hypothetical exercise in logic to illustrate this inviting, yet misguided, conclusion. Hegel postulated two hypothetical selves; in order for each self to remain absolutely himself (independent from the other's influence) each must ultimately say, "Nothing you do or say can affect me; I am who I am"(Benjamin, 1988, p. 32). Benjamin goes on to say that this "monadic, self-interested ego is essentially the one posited in classical psychoanalytic theory" (p. 33). Furthermore, this assumption of self as omnipotent leads to patterns of domination and submission between individuals. In order to avoid such a dangerous sophism, contemporary psychotherapists must disavow a philosophy such as Hegel's that locates the self as omnipotent and absolute. It is difficult to imagine that any ethical psychotherapist literally believes him or her self to be omnipotent and absolute. However, classical psychoanalysis epistemologically locates the faculty of the psychoanalyst as an unaffected, blank slate—a nearly perfect object. In pursuit of a new epistemology for psychotherapy the idea of psychotherapist as object (blank slate) and the idea of psychotherapist as omnipotent self (authority) must be left behind.

Intersubjectivity

When two selves meet there is a possibility altogether different from Hegel's absolutely omnipotent selves isolated from one another. Rather than solely relying upon a philosophy that leads to domination and submission, let us consider a philosophy that allows for mutual recognition and obviates domination and submission. This alternate modality is intersubjective theory, which "postulates that the other must be recognized as

another subject in order for the self to fully experience his or her subjectivity" (Benjamin, 1999). Furthermore,

> This theory attributes all agency neither to the subject with his innate capacities of impulses nor to the object which stamps the blank slate of the psyche with its imprint. It argues that the other plays an *active* part in the struggle of the individual to creatively discover and accept reality" (Benjamin, 1988, p.45, emphasis added).

The selves in such a philosophy are not in combat but in mutual recognition, a concept Benjamin says is at the center of intersubjective theory. "In mutual recognition the subject accepts the premise that others are separate but nonetheless share like feelings and intentions" (Benjamin, 1988, p. 53). Omnipotence and the absolute self are not reluctantly abdicated in an assent to domination or singular recognition, as in Hegel's hypothesis. Rather, mutual recognition and an actual appreciation "of the other being in his or her own right" develop because the tension between similarity and difference is a "continual exchange of influence" (ibid).

Intersubjective theory is not meant to replace or overthrow intrapsychic theory altogether. Benjamin (1999) suggests instead that psychotherapists "encompass both dimensions" and "account for the pervasive effects of human relationships on psychic development and for the equally ubiquitous effects of internal psychic mechanisms and fantasies in shaping psychological life and interaction" (p. 185). She contends that splitting apart intersubjective and intrapsychic theory only sets them in opposition to one another; to recast these two theories as complementary and in need of one another is her intention. So, intersubjective theory and experience are not contrary to intrapsychic theory and experience, but each helps fill the other out. Benjamin (1999) says intersubjectivity, a philosophical concept, is instructive to psychotherapy because it helps illuminate "the problem of defining other as object" (p. 186). Intersubjective theory is a kind of response to the dualism between subject and object that pervades Western thought. In a defining statement, Benjamin (1999) says that intersubjectivity "refers to the zone of experience or theory which the other is not merely the object of the ego's need/drive or cognition/perception, but has a separate and equivalent center

of self" (p.186). Thus, the theory of intersubjectivity, true to its very meaning, is not meant to oppose intrapsychic theory but meant to exist with it; if set in opposition to intrapsychic theory another dualism in thought obtains.

Recognition of the mother as a subject, and not merely an object, is a significant feat in early childhood development (Benjamin 1999). That this recognition of mother as subject shapes psychotherapeutic theory is equally important, given the mother/object parallel to the classical role of psychotherapist. Intersubjective theory, therefore, casts a new light on the experience of the psychotherapist. In addition to being a subjective self while I am practicing psychotherapy, I am also actively exchanging influence with my client; I am also an intersubjective self. As stated above, I am affected by *and* I make a difference in the client's life. This exchange of influence is not a function of authority and domination but is a function of my being another human self—equally active in my attempt to discover and create reality.

The Logic of Paradox

Before continuing my discussion toward a new epistemology for psychotherapy, I would like to reflect on the paradox central to the theory of intersubjectivity. This paradox is illustrated above in discussion of Hegel's thought experiment about two hypothetical selves. Hegel's theory and classical psychoanalytic theory try to resolve the paradox, whereas intersubjective theory accepts the paradox. This point is crucial. Because dualism largely pervades Western thought, paradox or contradiction is considered a fallacy of logic. Intersubjective theory, however, embraces paradox as its cornerstone, unwilling to resolve the paradox or to split the selves against one another. The theory does not use an either/or, ego/object formulation to explain human experience. Furthermore, the theory does not endorse this kind of thinking in psychotherapeutic practice.

In the absence of either/or thinking, both/and thinking prevails. Both/and thinking is the language of "we." This paradox of intersubjectivity is embraced at the heart of Virginia Woolf's reflection on the difference between the language of "I" which she attributes to hegemonic, male language and the language of "we," the voice women use, in *A Room of One's Own*. The "we" voice (both/and, subject/subject) is the inclusive counterpoint to the "I" (either/or, ego/object) exclusive voice. "I" presupposes "we" just as "we" presupposes "I." Rather than a fallacy in logic, Woolf uses the paradox as a vehicle that allows theory to circumvent dualism. Benjamin (1988) contends these phenomena of intersubjectivity are at the center of dogmatism in theory and domination in human experience. Indeed, there is no "I" alone, there is only "we"; and to proceed otherwise is to pursue a destructive fallacy.

Psychotherapeutic relationships are paradoxical as well—two selves trying to *be* together and trying to *know* together. Acknowledging this paradox calls for refining theoretical models that reduce the paradox, such as classical psychoanalysis. Given the evidence that all human relationships are intersubjective, including the psychotherapeutic relationship, a new philosophy about psychotherapy is emerging. This new philosophy considers the paradox inherent in intersubjectivity not as an impediment to logic but will take its power from the tension within the paradox.

Epistemological Fallacies

As I search for a sound epistemology for psychotherapy, I realize that the prospective epistemology needs to embrace the paradox of intersubjectivity. Because this is so, the epistemology will look quite different from objective science. Objective or positivistic science entails an unaffected observer who collects data and inductively builds a theory. Objective science purports to arrive at "hard" knowledge and claims that the object of its inquiry is knowable "as a thing itself." Objectivity of the observer allows for truth to be ascertained. According to this epistemology, interference with the object of one's inquiry corrupts the data and limits the certainty of the findings. But, positivistic science fails to recognize that the very act of observing influences the object and thus the findings. The theory fails to admit that the observer infers and interprets the data in the very act of observing and so overlays the object with meaning. Yet the detached observer is a fallacy at the center of positivistic science. Benjamin (1988) cites Barbara McClintock's reflections as an affirmation of this fallacy. Regarding her work in genetic research McClintock is quoted as saying,

When I was really working with them I wasn't outside, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big. I was even able to see the internal parts of the chromosomes. It surprised me, because I actually felt as if I was right down there and these were my friends...As you look at these things, they become part of you. And you forget yourself (Benjamin, 1988, p.192).

I cannot know an object in itself. I can only know what sense I have made of the object, how I relate to it. To overlook the regard for her subject embodied in McClintock's calling the chromosomes "friends" is to risk missing the qualitative difference between a positivist and post-positivist or intersubjective epistemology.

The import of this affirmation for psychotherapy is that I cannot know another subject as an object, either; I can only know the subject via his or her self and via my self. Such an admission is central to a new epistemology for psychotherapy. Psychotherapists think through "we," for what we know is contingent upon what other human beings convey to us. For a psychotherapist to proceed as if the arena of psychotherapy is immune from the exchange of influence, to proceed as detached observers, is a problematic fallacy. The fallacy not only affronts the humanity of the client—"I am knower, you are known." It also limits the possibility for growth because it limits the other's potential for complexity. In other words, the other will only be that which I allow her to be because she is the object of my knowledge, not the center of another experience. This is an enormous dilemma at the heart of a psychotherapy that proceeds along a theory of objective science. Insofar as the guiding theory or epistemology sets up a dualism between knower and known, between subject and object and insists on the language of "I," the authority of the psychotherapist *does* cast too dark a shadow upon the other for any growth to occur. Intersubjectivity can be a knowing arena without being an objective, positivistic arena. Knowledge does not depend upon objectivity; rather, knowledge is a function of the relationship between the knower and the subject that self reveals to the knower.

Learning to Fall

Although it is a departure from psychotherapeutic theory, I find a concept that Martha C. Nussbaum

unfolds in her essay *Love's Knowledge* particularly illuminating for a description of a new epistemology for psychotherapy (1990). The concept is love's knowledge. In a definitive statement, Nussbaum describes love's knowledge: "[It is] 'kind of slow'; it unfolds, evolves, in human time. It is no one thing at all, but a complex way of being with another person, a deliberate yielding to uncontrollable external influences. There are no necessary and sufficient conditions, and no certainty" (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 281). She contrasts this concept with a cataleptic or disinterested way of knowing. Love's knowledge is more like certitude than philosophical argument.

Nussbaum (1990) extends the difference between a cataleptic condition and the condition of love in her discussion of the different ways one reads a text. She says that when we read literary stories and narratives, we read and come to know by love, by suspending skepticism and disbelief in order to receive the story. When we read tracts of philosophy, on the other hand, the cataleptic posture is more appropriate. The nature of the material, philosophy, requires that we question it and argue against it in order to assent to its claims. Just as Benjamin argues that intersubjective theory cannot usurp intrapsychic theory, love's knowledge need not replace cataleptic knowledge. Rather, it is a matter of discerning what epistemology is appropriate for which areas of inquiry. Nussbaum writes, "Before a literary work...we are humble, open, active yet porous. Before a philosophical work, in its working through, we are active, controlling, aiming to leave no flank undefended and no mystery dispelled...[In the cataleptic condition it's] not just emotion that's lacking, although that's part of it. It's also passivity; it's trust, the acceptance of incompleteness" (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 282). The cataleptic posture is sufficient for philosophy, but love's posture is required to know a story, to know human experience.

Nussbaum explores love's knowledge as a concept in a discussion of a short story by Anne Beattie called "Learning to Fall," a story about a middle-aged, disenchanted suburban housewife who challenges, albeit apprehensively, the confines of her torpid marriage in an extramarital affair. This is a story of a woman who "learns to know her own love and not to fear her vulnerabilities" (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 275). The protagonist is a skeptic when the story opens— over time the protagonist learns to trust, to fall. Rather than a fall from grace, hers is a fall into grace. Indeed, the protagonist's skepticism kept her from grace (joy, play, self-acceptance and sexual

fulfillment). Only when her internal posture converts from skepticism to trust is the protagonist able to disavow her former, rigid self. The story does not endorse a submissive falling into the arms of a dominating lover out of fear of detachment and separation (see Benjamin's (1988) reflections on "The Story of O"). Instead,

> Love feared and avoided is not just sitting there beneath the skin waiting to be laid bare…It has to be created. The removal of self-deception is also a change in the self. Both discovery and creation are present on the general level too, as [the protagonist] both finds a vulnerable and passionate side of herself that had been denied and makes herself evolve into a more trusting woman. She decides to let those elements flourish (Nussbaum, 1990, p.279).

So rather than endorsing submission, Beattie's story endorses falling as a creative function of the self.

Conclusion

Nussbaum's interpretation of the protagonist's conversion from skepticism to vulnerability offers a beautiful metaphor for the shift from an objective to an intersubjective epistemology for psychotherapy. Just as the protagonist converts from a graceless skepticism and cataleptic condition, so too must psychotherapy cast away epistemologies of objective science to make room for intersubjective, loving knowledge. In that love's knowledge is the internal posture appropriate for knowing narratives and entails the paradox between activity and porosity (or availability), love's knowledge complements intersubjective theory and its central paradox. And, Nussbaum's concept of love's knowledge underscores intersubjectivity as a *human* way of knowing. Love's knowledge, in concert with intersubjective theory, allows for a more sound and ardent epistemology for psychotherapy.

Erin A. Scanlon will complete her Masters of Social Work in May 2002. Her 2nd level field placement is at the Outpatient Treatment Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

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Transition to College: An Exploratory Study of the Pressures Experienced by Immigrant and First Generation Loyola Freshmen

by Kelley K. Walczak

Abstract

This study explores the pressures that first generation and/or immigrant students experience in the Learning Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) at Loyola University Chicago. In order to obtain the subjective view of the students, an exploratory, qualitative study was completed. In a one-time-only focus group, seven students from the LEAP program described the pressures they experience in the areas of preparedness for college, family and friendships, academic success, and financial stability. Students most frequently acknowledged they felt the most pressure with regard to their underpreparation for college, financial instability, and lack of emotional support.

Introduction

Around the same time that I began working as a counselor in the Learning Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) at Loyola University Chicago, I became a graduate student in the School of Social Work. The LEAP Program assists immigrant and first-generation (neither parent has earned a college degree) undergraduate students with the academic challenges they face when they arrive at Loyola. The focus of the program is primarily to provide academic support. As I began to develop relationships with these students individually and in the classroom, I soon recognized that the cause of their academic problems was quite complex. As a counselor, I discovered that many of the struggles my students faced academically were not simply due to a lack of academic preparation for college. Rather, some of the difficulties these students experienced in making the transition to Loyola stemmed from emotional, social, and cultural issues. In my classes and field placements in social work school, I was learning about cultural differences and building therapeutic alliances. The social work principle, "meeting the client where he/she is," provided a good foundation to assess and understand the students' strengths and struggles. I wanted to learn from the students themselves about the pressures they experienced in entering university life.

The LEAP Program at Loyola University Chicago offers students an opportunity to attend Loyola who would otherwise not be admitted at the undergraduate level. LEAP admits no more than 72 freshmen who are considered underprepared for college; that is, they come from high schools not considered to have strong college preparation, as determined by the University Admissions office. The profile of a LEAP student is either a first generation student (neither parent has attended college) and/or an immigrant (within the last five years) who graduated in the top 25% of his/her high school class, but scored on standardized college entrance exams below Loyola's admission criteria (Learning Assistance Center, 2000). These students are traditional students, graduating from high school and directly entering college, all approximately age 18. The program works with these students to teach them study skills and monitor their academic progress to ensure success (Learning Assistance Center, 2000).

LEAP students potentially differ from other college freshmen in several areas besides academics. As defined by Loyola University's admission requirements, these students do not have the prerequisite skills or preparation to succeed at Loyola University. Many come from families with no previous history of collegiate success or have family responsibilities that could adversely impact their academic experience. Students' families may view college as unnecessary or place additional pressure on the student to succeed. Moreover, many of these students speak English as a second language or have diverse cultural experiences that may make the transition to college difficult. These differences are examples of some of the difficulties LEAP students may face while attending Loyola University.

An exploration of the pressures LEAP students face during the first semester at Loyola is necessary in order to fully understand the experiences of these students. It is conceivable that these students may experience a range of difficulties that LEAP staff are unaware of and, therefore, are not addressing. Once the students' experiences are better understood, the staff can design the LEAP curriculum to more fully meet the needs of the students, helping to lessen the gap between LEAP students and other freshmen.

While this study specifically addressed Loyola's LEAP population, the findings are useful for other first-generation programs, such as federal TRIO (or

Educational Opportunity) programs, to ensure that colleges and universities are meeting the needs of their students. Most of the previous studies on first generation and/or immigrant students have looked at students in community colleges and four-year public institutions. There is little research on programs that serve this population in four-year private colleges and universities. Finally, social workers who provide services to first generation or immigrant teenagers and young adults in schools and social service settings can also benefit from a fuller understanding of the challenges these students are presented with as they make the transition to college life. What follows is an examination of the professional literature on programs dealing with first generation and immigrant students.

Literature Review

Programs such as LEAP are necessary for first generation and immigrant students for several reasons. In a review of similar programs in the United States, Peterman (2000) identifies several factors that make these programs necessary. The programs are designed to help students adapt to college life and they allow students to establish an immediate network of peers and instructors who are available for support. These students are also taught study strategies that prepare them for the rigors of university academic life. Overall, these programs provide a mechanism for bridging the gap between learning experiences these students have had in high school and the rigors associated with a successful academic experience at the college or university level. The overarching goal of these programs is to utilize support programs to retain students in a collegiate program (Koehler and Burke, 1996).

First generation and immigrant students frequently contend with economic constraints that require creative financial solutions to help fund their education. Oftentimes, first generation college students come from low-income families and have parents who do not have college degrees (McConnell, 2000). These students are more likely than their peers to work off-campus and to work more hours in an effort to bolster the family's financial situation (McConnell, 2000). In addition, the economic constraints often translate into wanting to stay close to home, thereby saving money and benefiting from in-state tuition (Inman and Mayes, 1999, Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998, Mitchell, 1997).

Research indicates that students enrolled in such programs as LEAP often struggle with feelings about

their family and themselves. Many students identify a loss of support as a primary source of difficulty when they enter college (Smith and Smith, 1995, Jay, 2000, Peterman, 2000, Inman and Mayes, 1999, McConnell, 2000). Whereas some students experience their transition to college as a betrayal of family norms, others find themselves in a honored position that comes with weighty expectations (Jay, 2000; Mitchell,1997). Students express feeling torn between family and college with no room for their own wants and needs (Inman and Mayes 1999, Peterman, 2000). As a result, these students frequently judge themselves too harshly as they measure themselves against unattainable standards (Jay, 2000).

Often students struggle with cultural and social conflicts. On average, first generation and immigrant students have lower self-esteem and self efficacy than their peers (Inman and Mayes, 1999). They often struggle with acculturation not only to the university setting, but also to the United States (Jay, 2000, McConnell, 2000, Smart and Smart, 1995). These students may also face discrimination amongst peers and from professors. Whether because of fear, family issues, or economic constraints, these students tend to be less integrated into the university's social atmosphere (Inman and Mayes, 1999). These students often do not join clubs or socialize with peers on weekends (Inman and Mayes, 1999). This separation can lead to social isolation that further erodes the student's self-esteem.

In addition to the social pressures of college, students often face academic struggles as well. Academic competency in English as a second language (ESL) generally takes seven years (Smart and Smart, 1995, McConnell, 2000) and because many first generation and immigrant students are ESL students, they face language barriers in the classroom that often interfere with comprehension. Reading is often tedious and time consuming, leading to further frustration and often decreasing motivation (Trotter, 2001). In addition, such students may be less prepared for the academic rigors of college (Trotter, 2001). In summary, this literature review suggests that additional research is needed to address the gap in the knowledge concerning the needs of first generation and/or immigrant students who are enrolled in private, four-year universities.

Methodology

The dearth of knowledge about first generation and immigrant students in private four year colleges

and universities suggested an exploratory design in which qualitative data was gathered. This methodology was chosen because there is little known about the characteristics and experiences of LEAP students and it provides a way to obtain a comprehensive picture of this population. Data was obtained through the use of a focus group consisting of seven LEAP students.

To ensure validity and reliability, the research took into account the issues related to internal and external validity and overall reliability. To attend to internal validity, concepts were consistent with theoretical definitions. There were a few threats to external validity consisting of a lack of representativeness of the sample, impact of the researcher and participant relationship, and the impact of September 11, 2001. The sample size in the focus group was small; not all characteristics of the participants in the focus group matched the larger LEAP population. Further, a participant might have opted for conformity with participants who answered before him/her instead of providing his/her own answer. This was partially controlled for by allowing each focus group participant an opportunity to answer and by changing the order in which participants responded to each question. Another threat to external validity was the relationship of the researcher to the participants. The researcher served as a teacher for some of the LEAP participants. While this may have facilitated data collection as the participants were more comfortable with the researcher, some participants may have been uncomfortable revealing private information to their instructor. This threat was controlled for by selecting participants from both the researcher's section of LEAP and from another instructor's section of LEAP. To attend to threats to internal validity due to traumatic events, the research addressed the response that the focus group participants experienced in relation to the events of September 11, 2001(e.g. feeling uncertain about themselves and their future). Clearly conceptualizing all constructs, such as preparedness, family, relationships, academics, and finances attended to reliability. Other issues related to reliability included the timing of the focus group in relation to mid-term exams.

Selection of Participants

Participants were purposively selected from the LEAP student population and their participation in the focus group was strictly voluntary. Twelve stu-

dents initially volunteered; however, three students were eliminated from the pool as they represented the same ethnicity as participants who had already been selected, and two students dropped out of the study with no explanation. The final group of seven participants was closely matched demographically to the LEAP population. The sample included students of European-American, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Middle Eastern descent. The participants were 18 or 19 years of age; two participants were recent immigrants, one was both a recent immigrant and first generation college student, and four were first generation college students.

Data Gathering

The researcher audiotaped the 90-minute focus group. Field notes were also kept to support the audiotape. The researcher focused the questions on the key concepts identified in the literature and asked questions to clarify participants' responses as needed. The researcher asked participants a variety of open-ended questions designed to elicit information about academics, family life, socialization, and economics. Some sample questions include: "Will you talk about an event that caused stress in your life?" "Can you tell me about the stress with your parents? "Are there any cultural issues that cause problems?" This method of gathering data is consistent with theoretical validity because the questions were designed to define the concepts in the process of measuring them. Interpretative validity was less than desirable as only one rater interpreted and coded the answers to the questions.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were voluntary and each signed a consent form that assured them that all data would be kept confidential and that they could choose to end their participation at any time without penalty. Data was kept in a locked office at Loyola University Chicago during the research project, and was destroyed following the completion of the study. During the focus groups, participants were not addressed by name as a safeguard to protect their identity and to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Coding was generated from the audiotape and the field notes taken during the focus group. Statements related to stress, pressure, anxiety, or being overwhelmed were identified as pressures that

LEAP students/participants face. The method of coding was to review the answers given during the focus group and to extract common themes in response to the formed categories. For example, when asked about schoolwork stress, a participant answered that "College is so different from high school, it's not just homework, but having to read and analyze. It's not just doing assignments but independent learning and that's hard to get used to. I find myself never knowing if I'm on the right track or if I'm actually learning what I'm supposed to." This response was coded as academic pressure related to underpreparation for college. Other categories included family pressures related to academic success and independence/separation; pressures in relationships related to conflicts, intimacy, and time; academic pressures related to time and self-confidence; and financial pressures related to time management and financial freedom. The next section will discuss the results of the focus group based on the above coding of the data.

Results

The results of this study found that in addition to the pressures identified in the literature, LEAP students who were participants in the focus group face a variety of other pressures. For instance, they face family pressures to succeed and they struggle with independence/separation issues. Participants of the focus group felt their parents constantly monitored their progress in school and that if they were not doing well, they felt they had disappointed their parents. In addition, participants of the focus group also felt that even if they were doing well, their parents were constantly pushing them to do better. Some participants felt that their parents only cared about the grades received, not the effort put into the work. For example, one participant said, "They don't see the effort I put in, they just want me to get A's. I keep telling them, A's are a lot harder to get in college, but they don't understand." Several participants of the focus group identified that because they were the first ones to go to college, they felt the whole family was depending on them to succeed, and this was tremendous pressure to experience.

In addition to the pressure to succeed, many of the participants struggled with being separated from their parents and becoming independent. All of the participants of the focus group identified that their parents were having difficulty "letting me go." The participants further defined their parents' difficulty "letting go" as having to follow the same rules in

college as they did in high school. For example, one participant stated that she was never allowed to go out in high school unless her homework was done and checked by her parents, and she was experiencing this same rule while attending the university. Others expressed the difficulty of having a curfew when they visit parents after living on-campus. Several of the participants of the focus group gave details of arguments they had with parents, citing that they often were just beginning their nights on-campus at 11:00 p.m., yet their parents expected them to be home by 11:00 p.m. when they were living with them.

The LEAP participants represented in the focus group also felt that conflicts in familial relationships created significant pressure in their lives. The participants identified that because of the pressure to succeed and their search for independence, they found themselves arguing with their parents more often than before. This was especially true for those participants living at home. Frequently this source of conflict prevented the participants from talking to their parents about these pressures. Focus group participants also identified intimacy in other relationships as causing them pressure. This extended to intimacy in both platonic and romantic relationships. Participants identified they wanted someone to care about them either in dating relationships or friendships. However, several participants of the focus group felt that while they had met many people, they felt there were very few, if any, they could talk to about serious issues. They felt that the relationships they had in college were more about "having fun" than developing a caring relationship. With regard to sexual intimacy, focus group participants identified that sexual intimacy caused conflicts and pressure in relationships. They explained how the intimacy of sexual activity itself and the responsibilities of having a sexual relationship were overwhelming at times. Further, participants were concerned that the potential consequences of having a sexual relationship, such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, would get in the way of their goals in college. Focus group participants also acknowledged the stress they felt after discussing these consequences and responsibilities with a partner.

Participants of the focus group stated they felt pressure in relationships related to finding time for everyone. Every participant identified that one of the most stressful events of college was finding time to spend with friends and family. Participants reported that they were often unable to be with their family for

important events because of the demands of academics. One focus group participant noted, "The worst thing I've experienced so far is not being with my brother when he had surgery. I had to be in class, and I know he understood, but I still felt like I had to be in two places at once and I just couldn't do it. That pressure to be in two places at once is the worst." Her experience of having to choose between friends, family, school and/or work was common to all participants. Because they spent their time studying or at work, participants felt they had been unable to cultivate close friends.

This sample of LEAP students felt pressure to succeed academically. They identified that within the first month of school, they realized they needed to spend more time on academics than they did in high school. They also realized that they needed to plan ahead. For example, one participant said, "I always wrote papers the night before they were due. I did that once here (at Loyola) and I got an F on it. Now I spend a week writing each paper and I still only get C's." Another noted "studying two hours the night before (an exam) doesn't work." Focus group participants felt there are not enough hours to do all the readings for each class and their time management was problematic.

Participants from the focus group recognized that they were not sufficiently prepared for college. They reported not knowing how to read a textbook, prepare for essay exams, or write papers. They found themselves wasting time reading or studying material that was not on the exam. They also felt that they were expected to have background knowledge about subjects that they did not have. One participant said, "I'm supposed to know how to write papers that have the right grammar, but I never learned what the right grammar is. I got A's in high school so I thought I was doing everything fine." Many of the focus group participants lack self-confidence regarding academics and are fearful of answering questions in class because they feel that professors will think of them as being "stupid" if they answer incorrectly. Participants described feeling inferior to classmates: "(they) sound intelligent and give college-level answers that wow professors. I know I couldn't give answers like that so I keep my mouth shut." Students also reported being fearful of asking for help because they did not want professors to think negatively of them. Overwhelmingly, the participants in the focus group agreed if they were struggling academically or personally, they would rather try to "fix it themselves" than ask for help as this would prevent them from

looking incompetent to those in authority. Participants realized this may be culture-specific as many of them were taught that asking for help was a sign of weakness that was not tolerated in their culture. This finding indicates another pressure that LEAP students may feel that the non-traditional students might not experience.

Many participants in the focus group experienced financial pressure as it relates to time management and academic supplies. Some participants' parents paid for their education and those participants felt they had more free time. Whereas, the participants who were responsible for paying their own tuition did not feel they had free time. Those who were financially responsible for their own education felt they never spent enough time on academics or with family and friends because they needed to earn money. All of the participants in the focus group reported working two or three jobs just to cover their expenses, which meant that they were unable to afford the non-work activities that they would otherwise enjoy. For example, some participants had to limit their use of the telephone in an effort to minimize their telephone bills. Because participants in the focus group could not afford their own computers, they expressed frustration about having to use a shared computer lab.

Although all participants in the focus group described problems related to money and family, their concerns differed depending on their family's socioeconomic status. Those participants whose parents paid tuition felt an obligation to their parents to earn high grades or spend more time with their family. Those who paid their own tuition still contributed some income to their family household. These participants felt like they were less likely to change their financial situation even with a college education because they were incurring high debt loads by attending Loyola. Consequently, the participants in the focus group felt they would remain at the same socioeconomic status as their parents. One participant's comment echoed a shared sentiment in the group: "Why should I put myself under so much pressure if I'm going to end up just like my parents?"

Finally, focus group participants reported they felt overwhelmingly uncertain about themselves and their future following the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks on September 11, 2001. The immigrant participants felt particularly fearful because they had perceived the United States as "invincible" prior to the terrorist attacks. Many of these students had emigrated from countries that are in a

constant state of war, and the fact that this could happen in the United States left them feeling even more vulnerable and fearful. The participants also wondered how the repercussions of the terrorist attacks would impact their job prospects and economic stability upon graduation; this was especially concerning to those incurring significant debt through student loans. Many participants wanted to be with their families on September 11th, but were unable to do so because classes at Loyola's main campus continued that day. Overall, the participants agreed that the worst part of September 11th was that many professors did not discuss the event with their students, and the participants felt they had to suppress their anxiety and fear and continue with the semester as planned. This "silence" caused the most pressure for the participants trying to cope with the events.

Limitations

This research was completed for a course requirement that placed constraints on time and funding. The constraints and funding affected the design of the research and limits the results. The limitations to this study include the lack of inter-rater reliability, sample availability, and timing of the study with respect to an inevitable traumatic event and midterm exams at school. A major limitation of this study was the analysis of data by only one researcher. Having only one interpreter and coder may have influenced how the participants' responses were interpreted. Although the participants represented most of the cultures in the LEAP population, the current sample was not matched on all demographic characteristics. The percentage of Hispanic participants in LEAP is larger than the percentage of Hispanic participants in the sample. The overall diversity of the participants is sufficient to generalize to the entire LEAP population and perhaps to other programs similar in design and structure.

With regard to timing, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 may have heightened the pressures felt by students and therefore the pressures may have seemed worse than before. This particular event may affect generalization to other populations who did not experience the event during their first semester in college. However, the event may have only increased awareness of the pressures, while not actually causing any new pressures to develop. Another timing issue involved the effect of midterm reports; the study occurred within one week of participants receiving their midterm progress reports.

These reports may have influenced the participants' perceptions of pressure, particularly in the area of academics.

Implications for Social Workers

The findings from this study can be helpful to social workers employed at the university-level, either in university counseling centers or in educational programs themselves. Many programs similar to LEAP employ human service professionals, including social workers, and LEAP programs may utilize the counseling center staff to help students discuss the pressures they face. Since the findings suggest that these students are often hesitant to seek help, providing students with a forum for discussion as part of the curriculum eliminates the process of asking for help by incorporating help into the program. Social workers must be aware of the cultural differences that exist, and be sensitive to the needs of these students when working with them.

School social workers, particularly in secondary schools, should know that programs such as LEAP are available to students who would normally not be admitted to a university. Social workers may become instrumental in preparing this population for college. School social workers may become involved in early interventions that will better prepare these students for the rigors of college. Social workers may also offer support to parents by preparing them for the challenges that college life brings, thus easing the conflict between students and parents.

Finally, social work clinicians and administrators are often asked to evaluate their programs to see if the services provided are meeting the needs of clients. When focus groups are utilized in exploratory studies, the results from the study can provide important information about clients' subjective experiences, including how helpful a particular program or intervention is to them.

Conclusion

This study shows that underpreparation for college life is an academic phenomenon as well as an interpersonal phenomenon for first generation and/or immigrant students in the LEAP program. This study provides new knowledge based on the student participants' subjective experiences, and thereby personnel of LEAP and programs like it, as well as high school and university social workers, are better equipped to provide the support that underprepared students need to succeed in university settings.

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Making Work *Pay*:
The Future of Welfare Reform

by Jaimie Lyons

Abstract

This article reviews the implications of the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) welfare program reform of 1996 and recommends specific policy changes that are necessary to move individuals from welfare to a self-sufficient lifestyle. In light of the possible reauthorization of TANF, individuals who participate in this program must have available quality, high wage jobs and supportive services to become individuals who are self-sufficient citizens.

Introduction

In 1996, Congress made profound changes in the welfare system by passing the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (H.R. 3734). According to President Clinton, this act was intended to "end welfare as we know it" (Popple & Leighninger, 2001). The act ended the entitlement program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and replaced it with a new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The new program is a federal block grant in which state welfare programs receive one-time funding, giving state policymakers the discretion to create and operate their own programs. Even though the welfare programs vary from state to state, TANF programs set strict time limits on cash assistance (i.e. not to exceed 5 years), and on finding work (i.e. welfare recipients are required to work within two years of receiving funds).

The change from AFDC to TANF represented a major shift in how funds for welfare programs are allocated. As identified by Bernstein and Greenberg (2001), "[Under TANF] [n]o family has a right to assistance, and states have no obligation whatsoever to provide families with welfare benefits" (p.2). Since states are receiving one lump sum no matter what, they have an incentive to reduce the welfare caseload level. The more caseloads are reduced within each state, the more money they have to spend in other areas.

In 2002, Congress will consider whether or not TANF will be reauthorized. In making this determination, the focus of program effectiveness should be shifted from the current emphasis on decreasing welfare caseloads via job obtainment, to helping individuals obtain quality, high wage employment that will lead to self-sufficient lifestyles.

Indeed, if the TANF program is to succeed, the reauthorized TANF program must focus on promoting quality employment and improving the self-sufficiency (i.e. the ability to remain off welfare) of low-income families with children. If the TANF program is reauthorized without being modified, families are more likely to be living in poverty than ever before. Given that the U.S. economy is currently experiencing a recession, reauthorization without modification could put low-income families at an even greater risk of unemployment. Policymakers need to take preventative steps now before families end up suffering.

Background

The policymakers of AFDC, the precursor to TANF, designed the program as a temporary solution to the "problem" of children born to unwed mothers. After many decades, policymakers realized that the need for AFDC was not going away. In fact, the need for AFDC funding was growing as the number of single parent households began to rise. As a result, in the 1980's and early 1990's, welfare reform became a popular topic and policymakers drafted reform strategies in an effort to move individuals off assistance and into self-sufficiency (Popple & Leighninger, 2001).

The Republican Party gained control of the 104th Congress and made welfare reform one of their primary concerns. In 1996, President Clinton signed P.L. 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (H.R. 3734). The Act replaced the AFDC public assistance system with a new welfare program, TANF. The major difference between AFDC and TANF was the way in which the programs were implemented. Although AFDC was run through a joint federal/state partnership, TANF gave state policymakers almost total control in selecting programs. With the enactment of the TANF program, federal policymakers have minimized their level of involvement by providing only general program regulations, while allowing state policymakers to create policies. Each state is allocated TANF funding through block grants (at either their 1994 or 1995 federal funding level). As a result, state policymakers are allowed to use their discretion in choosing the programs they wish to implement. Many proponents see this shift in allocating funds

from the federal to the state level as a strength, because it allows state policymakers to experiment with programs they think will be more effective for their particular state. However, this flexibility results in wide variations and lack of uniformity from state to state. Popple and Leighninger (2001) describe the impact of the shift from federal to state funding:

> Benefits under TANF are even stingier than AFDC because the federal regulations require only that states spend an amount equal to at least 75 percent of their historic spending level and provide options for the additional 25 percent to be spent for purposes other than direct assistance (p. 145).

Other important provisions of H.R. 3734 are as follows:

1. States have more freedom than they did under AFDC, but once the money is spent, they have no rights to additional funds under the federal government.
2. Adults receiving cash benefits are required to work at least 30 hours per week or participate in a state designed program after two years of funding. If they do not fulfill these requirements their payments will cease.
3. States must have at least 50% of their total number of single-parent welfare recipients employed by 2002. States who fail to meet this requirement will have their block grant reduced by 5% or more the following year.
4. States can sanction cash benefits for people who fail to fulfill the work requirement;
5. All payments to recipients must end after 5 years.
6. Immigrants, after the passage of H.R. 3734, will be ineligible for all means tested programs for their first 5 years of residence. Undocumented immigrants are barred from welfare indefinitely (Popple & Leighninger, 2001).

Current Situation

By the end of TANF's first year, states reported that their caseloads had dropped by 50%. The sharp reduction in caseloads led proponents of welfare reform to hail victory. In order to evaluate

TANF's effectiveness, however, it is wise to consider some of the external factors that may have contributed to its perceived effectiveness in the early phases of the program. For example, it is important to note that welfare caseloads had actually begun falling in 1994, prior to the adoption of TANF (Bernstein & Greenberg, 2001). And when TANF went into effect in 1997, in addition to reduced caseloads, the economy was on an upswing and continued to be for several years after. As a result, unemployment rates dropped, and the number of available jobs grew significantly (Bernstein & Greenberg, 2001).

Although caseloads have, in fact, been significantly reduced, TANF's effectiveness should not be measured by caseload reduction. The true test of successful welfare reform should be whether it can *keep* people off welfare and out of poverty. Therefore, TANF should be evaluated on the basis of recipients maintaining long-term and profitable jobs. However, because a low-wage labor market and a slowing economy are challenges to maintaining long term profitable jobs, new programs should be considered. A weak labor market will, no doubt, increase the caseloads for TANF and possibly magnify the ineffectiveness of the program.

Keeping individuals off welfare will continue to be a challenge if the low wages of people who are working and are poor are not adequately addressed in the 2002 reauthorization of TANF. Low-wages have plagued the potential success of welfare reform, making it extremely difficult for families to escape their impoverished conditions. The majority of those who have left TANF, the "leavers," enter into the low-wage labor market (Anderson, Halter, & Julnes, 2000). Individuals who earn low-wages are usually paid hourly, work part-time, and frequently do not have sufficient job skills (Marson & Powell, 2000). In addition, approximately 25-60% of entry-level employment hires are done through informal hiring networks that tend to be tightly knit and ethnically homogeneous; typically, they exclude African Americans and other minorities (Kaye & Nightingale, 2001). Job turnover, slow wage growth, and little advancement opportunity are characteristic of the low-wage labor market. In order to address these issues, the Urban Institute (Kaye & Nightingale, 2001) has suggested the following steps towards assisting a former recipient to achieve self-sufficiency:

1. New policies to improve labor market access and job retention.

2. New policies to encourage or support occupational mobility and job advancement.

3. New policies to raise the incomes of low-wage workers and enhance employment security.

Because individuals who receive welfare may only qualify for low-wage jobs, these policies may provide them with the opportunities they need to climb the economic ladder. Indeed, people with minimal work skills need access to services that will allow them to "get ahead," and if they are in between jobs, they need "safety nets" to assist them in getting back to work. In addition, people who are minimally skilled and/or earn low-wages could potentially be the "hardest hit" during the recession. Outside of a recession, one-fifth of individuals who leave the TANF roster return to the system at least once for assistance. In a recession, the number of individuals who leave the welfare programs and return to the system dramatically increases. Most vulnerable during a recession, individuals who leave TANF are likely to re-enter the welfare system for assistance for unemployment insurance (Marson & Powell, 2000).

To address these issues, the Brookings Institute (2001) recently held a forum entitled "Helping Low-Income Workers Weather the Recession." The speakers focused their discussions on issues related to Unemployment Insurance (UI) for people who were former TANF recipients. According to one speaker, Harry Holzer, only 30% of people who left TANF are eligible for UI. In response to that statistic, Representative Ben Cardin (D-MD) stated:

> If you've just entered the workforce, …you've just come off the welfare system, you've been in the workforce for 6 months or 9 months and now you('re)… in a recession, there's a good chance that you're not going to qualify for Unemployment Benefits. If you earn $8 or lower an hour, you're fifty percent less likely to get unemployment insurance than someone who earns more than that (Brookings Institute Forum, 2001, p. 69).

Representative Cardin acknowledged the fact that some states may or may not be prepared to deal with a recession and layoffs, since every state has a different TANF program -- some have safety nets, and others do not (Brookings Institute Forum, 2001). To assist states financially, funds were set aside to help states in the event of a recession through the Federal Contingency Fund. Unfortunately, the Fund lapsed in October of 2001 (Brookings Institute Forum, 2001).

Bridging the Gap

In order for people who were former recipients of TANF to choose work over welfare and become truly self-sufficient, "living wages" need to replace minimum wages (Loeb, S., & Corcoran, M., 2001). Quality, high paying jobs with the potential for advancement are essential for the working poor to escape poverty. And if the private employment sector cannot provide jobs that people can live on, then states may need to consider developing publicly funded employment.

When people who receive welfare have entered the labor force, their economic capabilities have proven to be quite poor(Loprest, 1999). The majority of recipients have little education and few job skills, and the wages they earn tend to be so small that often they must make difficult decisions, such as whether to skip a meal in order to make ends meet. Typically, they are paid by the hour, not salaried (Hout, 1997), and the average hourly wage of a former welfare recipient is $6.61 (Loprest, 1999). In addition, most individuals do not receive any healthcare benefits and are seldom offered opportunity for promotion. Most low-waged, hourly positions also do not provide sick time, which means that in the event of health or childcare problems or any other unexpected emergencies, employees are forced to take a day off without pay. Too often, these situations result in the person being fired for taking unauthorized time off work. This can be especially harmful when the wage-earner is a single parent and his/her wages are the sole source of family income.

The current economic realities of TANF single parent families are by no means an incentive to get off welfare. First of all, it is virtually impossible for a single person to support him/herself on $6.61 per hour, let alone for a parent to raise a family. And "employed mothers may be worse off economically for working than remaining on public assistance because they may lose their benefits tied to welfare eligibility" (Jackson et al., 2001, p. 328). Jackson,

Tienda, and Huang (2001) illustrate how mothers who formerly received welfare usually did not receive enough income to meet their family's needs. If an individual who formerly received welfare worked 40 hours per week, they made just slightly over the poverty line. (According to the Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, the poverty line for a family of three was $13,003 in 1998). Moreover, the children of these families usually did not benefit from the same economic resources, as did children of two-parent families.

The economic vulnerability of individuals who formerly received welfare is exacerbated further if, in addition to having little education and few job skills, he or she is struggling with other psychosocial problems. For example, a significant number of welfare recipients are victims of domestic violence. Personal problems such as domestic violence are typically not addressed under the current welfare system. Individuals who receive welfare and who are victims of domestic violence take longer to secure jobs due to emotional problems they experience as a result of the abuse (Danziger as cited in Jackson et al., 2001).

In addition to addressing issues related to domestic violence, another provision of TANF is the issue of "father involvement." Garfinkel et al. (2001) fear that there may be negative consequences to garnishing the wages of fathers: "If conflict is high and if fathers are violent, greater father involvement might reduce rather than increase child well-being" (p. 278). These authors also believe that TANF's regulations will only work if a father wants to be involved.

Reform Proposals

The real opportunity for economic advancement and self-sufficiency for individuals who formerly received welfare is the ability of a person to earn a wage that will support them. Often they have proven false the assumption that if one participates in the labor market, one will succeed. Despite these individuals' good faith efforts, their wages have not grown significantly enough to pull them out of poverty. As a result, they are often forced to re-enter the welfare system. If the system starts turning them away due to imposed maximum time limits, they may become homeless. Proponents of welfare argue that society has an obligation to assist the people who are poor (Popple & Leighninger, 2001). Progressive changes in the current welfare system can eventually help individuals become self-suffi-

cient; the higher the wages the greater the incentive to leave public assistance.

Becker (as cited in Loeb & Corcoran, 2001) suggests that the focus of welfare reform should concentrate on "increasing human capital" (p. 3). This human capital model emphasizes the need to invest in people who receive welfare through education and on-the-job training. When an individual is out of the labor force for a long period of time or their skills are "rusty" from lack of use, the wage growth potential for an individual who receives welfare decreases. With more education and training, they can compete for better resources. In fact, studies show that each year of schooling has been linked to approximately a 7% wage increase (Loeb and Corcoran, 2001). "Living wages" combined with better job opportunities may be the real answer to keeping individuals who formerly received welfare from re-entering the system.

When people returned to welfare and were asked what might have helped to keep them from re-entering the system, they said that they needed better transportation, more quality childcare options and access to better health insurance (Marson & Powell, 2000). In addition, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a program designed to give employees who file federal income tax returns a refund that exceeds the taxes withheld from their paychecks, should also be retained. The EITC program is designed to save taxpayers money and is an effective incentive for individuals who are employed. However, aspects of it should be modified so that individuals are not penalized for higher wages (Hout, 1997). All in all, one key to making a welfare program successful is to meet the needs of the individuals who receive welfare with an array of supports.

If the end goal is to get individuals off welfare and keep them off, then policy must reflect the realities of the situation. Some may argue that progressive proposals are too expensive. However, if the U.S. government does not take preventative steps, the crisis of poverty will cost the government a lot more in the long run. The saying, "one paycheck away from being homeless," is not a far stretch for many Americans. The welfare system needs to help former recipients take positive steps towards their future -- towards self-sufficiency. Bernstein and Greenberg said it best:

> Certainly, the 107th Congress may not
> be very receptive to a progressive set

of reforms, especially since many will be arguing that the program has been an unqualified success. Yet as has been written in these pages in recent weeks, this is a fine time to introduce a progressive agenda built around work. The core idea is that those who make a good-faith contribution to the nation's economy should never live in privation. They and their children should see their living standards rise over time, and if the market fails to deliver that result, then there is an explicit role for public policy to do so (p. 2).

Representative Patsy Mink (Hawaii) has drafted a bill, H.R. 3113, Temporary Aid to Needy Families Reauthorization Act of 2001, in an "aggressive effort to combat poverty in America by offering genuine paths out of poverty and addressing individuals' barriers to economic security" (Mink, 2001, p. 1). The bill addresses the challenges that individuals who formerly received welfare have faced in the last five years, and presents a plan to assist them in overcoming some of the obstacles. All of the aforementioned items, including the need for quality childcare and transportation, are valued in the proposal as necessary supports. And perhaps the most significant modification of the TANF bill H.R. 3113 is that "[t]he [Mink] bill directs work efforts to permanent, sustainable, high wage employment opportunities through education, training and targeted high wage jobs" (Mink, 2001). The provisions focus on the following:

1. Supporting caregivers so that their children may be cared for in their own homes;
2. Promoting education, training, work supports, and access to jobs that pay a living wage;
3. Assuring access to Medicaid, Food Stamps, child care, and other such assistance;
4. Assuring access to services to address barriers such as mental illness, physical disability, substance abuse, and domestic and sexual abuse; and
5. Reducing poverty of families with children.

The Mink bill is an extraordinary example of the kind of humane policy needed to keep individuals from returning to welfare and/or becoming dependent on welfare. The bill clearly defines what changes need to be made to the welfare system to achieve the goal of supporting individuals on the road towards self-sufficiency. The bill highlights some of the obstacles which individuals who receive welfare face, and defines programmatic changes that are absolutely essential for success. This bill builds and expands upon the positive aspects of welfare reform. Mink's bill will, in fact, make work pay. Both people who receive welfare and formerly received welfare can achieve economic independence only when their needs are met.

Although there are numerous advantages to modifying and reauthorizing TANF, opponents are likely to argue that Mink's proposal is too expensive. Again, this begs the question, do we want to pay now or pay later? If we do not take preventative steps now, then we will pay the costs associated with homelessness that will escalate far beyond the costs of the proposed program. We have, as a society, failed to acknowledge the collective responsibility for individual problems. As a result, we end up paying for problems as a reaction, rather than as a preventative measure. Welfare policy needs to concentrate on the individual's economic self-sufficiency.

Since lawmakers tend to be much more empathetic towards suffering children as opposed to adults, proponents of social welfare policy should concentrate their efforts in that direction (Popple & Leighninger, 2001). With this in mind, perhaps a name change is in order. Instead of calling the bill "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization," perhaps a name that includes children—for example, "Poverty Reduction for Children and Families"—would have more impact. According to Cook (1992), "The public does not favor 'welfare' but is willing to 'assist the poor'"(p. 29). It is imperative that this concept be considered when social workers attempt to gain support for policy proposals. After all, there is a strong correlation between public opinion and the fate of a particular policy (Popple & Leighninger, 2001).

Implications for Social Work Practice

The social work profession has a long history of understanding and advocating for issues related to welfare reform, beginning with the pioneers of social work, Dorthea Dix, Mary Richmond, and Jane Addams. Social workers have been an integral part of a collaborative relationship to bring attention to the supports that are critically needed to make welfare reform effective. Social workers

have also been sensitive to social justice issues and continue to empower their clients by allowing them to take an active role in the change process. Because the outcome of welfare programs is not clear cut, social workers need to continue to advocate for not only the single-parent families attempting to live without welfare, but for the people who struggle with problems of domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health, to ensure that they receive the financial and supportive services that will allow them to become self-sufficient citizens.

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Reflections on Foster Parent Training and the Impact on Foster Children

by Sara Czerwinskyj

Abstract

This article reflects on and explores some of the literature regarding foster parent training. With 560,000 children in foster care in 1998, this area is of vital importance to the well-being of children who have experienced severe emotional and physical trauma. Studies demonstrate that foster children fare better when their foster parents have received training, yet few studies offer an approach specifically targeted for foster parents. Case vignettes show how foster parent training based in a psychosocial perspective can significantly enhance the care these parents provide for abused and neglected children.

Introduction

In 1998, there were 560,000 children in foster care in the United States (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, 1998). Children in foster care often face a series of severe emotional trauma as they are removed from their biological homes due to abuse or neglect and then placed in several different foster care placements. Foster care itself often presents an additional risk for behavioral and emotional problems because of the stress of adjusting to a new family or disrupting placements (Orme & Buehler, 2001).

As a social worker in the foster care program of a child welfare agency, I realized how much influence and impact foster parents can have on the development and well-being of foster children. Foster parents are the primary caregivers for these children, often for several years. While foster children typically participate in weekly psychotherapy, foster parents face the daily task of supporting and encouraging their child's emotional and developmental growth. I began to wonder how social workers prepare foster parents to take on this enormous task.

At the very least, foster parents must receive extensive training in order to enhance the care foster children receive. Unfortunately, foster parents are often not equipped with the experience or information to best help their foster children with the issues they face as a result of being in the child welfare system. In conducting my research, I expected to find articles addressing how foster parent training is designed and implemented, as well as information on how the training helps parents to deal with the severe trauma often experienced by children in foster care. I was surprised to find that most of the literature did not directly address this issue. While the literature supports the effectiveness of foster parent training, demonstrating that children remain in placements longer when foster parents receive training, little is written about how to help foster parents with the severe and troubling nature of children's symptoms resulting from their experience of abuse and neglect. Successful placement requires that foster parents understand and meet the emotional needs of foster children. While studies have been undertaken to document the effectiveness of training for foster parents, few have provided specifics on how effective foster parent training is linked to increased functioning and decreased behavioral and emotional problems of foster children (Orme & Buehler, 2001). Moreover, few studies on foster parent training specify the content or theoretical foundations of these programs (Lee & Holland, 1991; Matthews & Hudson, 2001; Polster, Dangel, & Rasp, 1987). Therefore, the necessary data on which to base the development and replication of effective programs that address the needs of children and parents is not yet available.

In order to consider developing training to address the needs of children and their foster parents, in this paper I will review some of the outcome research on foster parent training programs, look at what the research tells us about the content of current foster parent training programs, and consider how foster parent training could be improved using current research on foster parent training, as well as theories of child development and treatment. Finally, I will look at two different foster families, each of whom accepted a foster child with severe emotional and behavioral problems. One set of parents received parent training and support while the other did not. In looking at two families I hope to provide specificity and a "human face" to the dilemmas confronting foster parents.

Literature Review

Parent training is defined in the literature as a way to help parents understand child development and teach skills that can be utilized when difficulties arise (Baum, Crase, & Crase, 2001; Berry, 1988; Matthews & Hudson, 2001). The aim of training

is to "improve the skill of parents to promote the health, safety, and development of their children" (Matthews & Hudson, 2001, p. 77). Training for foster parents has been identified as a crucial factor in the success of foster care and has a significant impact and influence on foster parents and the way they treat their foster children (Boyd & Remy, 1978; Lee & Holland, 1991). Most training programs attempt to facilitate an understanding of child development, orient foster parents to the social service agency, and offer support to the foster parents, all of which support placement stability (Baum et al., 2001; Boyd & Remy, 1978; Lee & Holland, 1991). Training has also been linked to lengths of retention for foster parents, another area vital to the care of foster children (Rodwell & Biggerstaff, 1993).

Simon and Simon (1982) compared foster parents who received pre-service training with those who had not. The parents who received training maintained more difficult children (defined by length of time child had been in foster care) in their homes for a longer period of time than the foster parents who were not trained. This study indicates that trained parents are also better equipped to accept and deal with "more difficult" foster children's behaviors and emotional reactions.

Foster parents feel training content is more useful when it focuses on the child's specific behaviors or "how to get a child to behave" (Rodwell & Biggerstaff, 1993, p. 416). Carbino (1980) states that training often focuses on the unique interactions of roles and relationships in foster care, child management techniques, and parent-child interactions. Titterington (1990) concludes that training is a valuable way to facilitate networking and collaboration between foster parents. Other topics of focus in training include child development, working with children with special needs, communication skills, peer support, behavior management, and agency rules and orientation.

Parents struggle with the difficult and confusing behaviors exhibited by seriously disturbed children (Smith, 1992). Training that relies on shared experiences and foster parent support from peers and social workers has been found to be beneficial for foster parents (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996). Foster parents learn what to expect when children are placed in their homes, how to handle situations, and the effect that foster care has on the biological and foster families (Baum et al., 2001). Hearing personal accounts of others helps foster parents to feel supported and prepared.

Orme and Buehler (2001) conclude in their comprehensive literature review that very few studies address how foster family functioning impacts foster children's social and emotional development, despite the fact that foster parent and family characteristics have been linked to behavioral and emotional problems of foster children. Studies of the general family population, however, have shown that a number of factors of family functioning impact the social and emotional development of children. Some of these factors include parenting, home environment, and social support. "Given the pivotal role of foster families, it is important to understand aspects of the foster family that exacerbate behavioral and emotional problems in foster children, as well as aspects of the foster family that might prevent or ameliorate future problems" (Orme & Buehler, 2001, p. 3). This understanding could lead to a training orientation designed around how to help foster families specifically understand how their own functioning and response to their foster child's emotional and behavioral difficulties impacts ongoing development.

The conclusions from several different studies on families and specific parenting behaviors in the general population collectively demonstrate that the following factors are associated with a child's positive social and emotional adjustment:

- Higher levels of parental acceptance
- Lower levels of harsh discipline
- Higher levels of monitoring
- Lower levels of intraparental inconsistency
- Lower levels of intrusive psychological control
- Lower levels of parent-child conflict (Orme & Buehler, 2001).

Training programs can use these findings, as well as future research, in order to develop curriculum that address these important factors.

Theoretical Orientation

As I mentioned earlier, articles that address foster parent training often do not delineate the theoretical orientation of the training program under study (Lee & Holland, 1991). This is an extremely important issue in terms of evaluation and reliability (allowing other programs to duplicate successes in training). Success can only be measured when success has been defined within the framework of a theoretical orientation (Lee & Holland, 1991).

When discussing the effectiveness or success of a training program, it is important to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the program. "Although there exist a few training programs for parenting skills that are derived from a clear theory of human behavior (Dangel & Polster, 1985; 1988; Herbert, 1989; Stein & Gambrill, 1981), many of those specifically targeted on preparing foster parents appear to lack such groundedness" (Lee & Holland, 1991, p. 172). Matthews and Hudson (2001) agree "there should be both theoretical and empirical support for the parent training methods employed" (p. 80). Basic theoretical groundwork needs to be completed in order to design a conceptual framework for a training curriculum as well as implementation (Lee & Holland, 1991). This development will impact the ability for further research to be completed in this area.

Case Vignettes

These examples are based on observations of actual foster family situations. While no specific theory is used in the training program that the families participate in, the training in these examples uses a psychosocial approach. This approach utilizes techniques such as assisting foster parents to imagine the perspective of the child and supports foster parents by empathizing with the difficult task of caring for severely traumatized children. All identifying information has been changed to protect the families' identities.

Two families, the Logans and the Parishes, were foster parents through a private social service agency in Chicago and had similar experiences. Each foster family received an eight-year-old boy. The Logans, first time foster parents, had recently finished a ten-week training program offered by the agency in addition to the standard pre-service training required for all foster parents. The Parishes, on the other hand, had been foster parents for five years for several different children and had attended only the standard pre-service course at another agency, which they felt focused more on agency policies than on how to work with a child.

Both eight-year-old boys presented with severe emotional and behavioral problems such as crying at night, enuresis and encopresis, secretly shredding paper and collecting it under the bed, and hoarding food, sometimes from the garbage can. While the Parishes's previous foster children exhibited some of these behaviors, the parents were extremely puzzled and angered by these behaviors, accusing the foster child of making a mess and disobeying their requests to stop.

The Logans spoke with the social worker conducting their training about potential behaviors of foster children, as well as the underlying motivation. The social worker explained that many foster children exhibit these behaviors as a result of the care they received in their original homes. For example, sometimes the boys needed to scrounge for food when they were hungry, or they hoarded food for comfort. Other behaviors, such as enuresis and shredding paper may have been caused by anxiety from moving to a new home or from the fear of continued abuse. There were many reasons for these behaviors, the social worker explained, but the important thing was to try to think about each situation from the perspective of the child. The Logans learned that the child's symptoms may represent an attempt by the child to cope with overwhelming anxiety and are not a malicious attempt on his or her part to defy the foster parents.

The Logans tried to use these ideas when caring for their foster child. They remained empathic and supportive and tried not to interfere with symptoms unless they were harmful to the child. Also, the Logans utilized a foster parent network developed from their training classes. The Logans spent time talking on the phone with more experienced foster parents and gained support and comfort from hearing that other foster parents had experienced similar situations with their foster children.

After 10 months, the Logans's foster child was able to get up in the night to use the toilet and hoarded food less frequently, usually only after a stressful day at school or after a visit with his biological family. At these times, the foster parents talked with him about the feelings he was experiencing which helped him feel comforted.

The Parishes did not have the same kind of support as the Logans and were less informed about the possible causes of their child's behavior. The child continued exhibiting behaviors when the foster parents scolded him and he continued to feel frightened and anxious about being abandoned. The Parishes eventually became so distraught over their foster child's behaviors, they called the social service agency to ask to have him removed from their home.

These examples demonstrate how training for foster parents, along with continued support and information from professional staff and peers, can specifically create a better living environment for a foster child. In turn, the family with the support and information experienced less stress, and kept the foster child until a permanency goal was reached. Their foster child benefited emotionally from their empathy and support and was better able to transition into permanency.

Conclusion

The evidence that family functioning is associated with children's emotional and behavioral problems indicates that the better prepared and supported a family is, the better the child will fare. This points to the need for responsibly developed training programs solidly based in a theoretical understanding regarding child development, family functioning, and the needs of foster children. Since foster parents are on the front lines with foster children everyday, it only makes sense that they be armed with the latest knowledge and techniques designed to help their children mourn losses and regulate behaviors. Based on my experiences, it seems that some training programs for foster parents do not necessarily include instruction on coping with the type of extreme vulnerabilities and mental health issues faced by children in the child welfare system. Consequently, foster children may not be receiving help around these issues if the foster parents have not been adequately trained in these areas. Foster children also may be at additional risk if their caregivers are not aware of the complexities represented by the problem behaviors.

Although placements for foster children are more stable and enduring after foster parents receive training, the research fails to demonstrate that children are receiving better care or help for their feelings of loss, abandonment and displacement. Future research should focus on how children can directly benefit from foster parent training beyond placement stability. Coupled with this research, there needs to be study of how to base foster parent training on clinical theories that offer foster parents established and realistic techniques for caring for children with severe emotional and behavioral problems. These programs should be continuously evaluated so that the training foster parents receive is updated to include the most valid and current methods available to provide the kind of responsible and educated care that foster children desperately need and deserve. Work in this area provides an invaluable opportunity for foster care staff and professionals to impact an extremely vulnerable population in powerful and lasting ways.

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Postmodernism and Social Work:
Bridging Clinical and Social Justice Perspectives

By Laura Jacobsen Wrenn

"Saying words as long as there are any, and speaking the multitudinous truths of life however troubling until they find us, until they recreate us, may enable social work to withstand the sharp gusts that shake our souls at modernity's end (Irving, 1999, p.47-48)."

Abstract

Today there is growing concern that social work has lost its social justice perspective. Multiple divisions exist within social work; there are divisions between a clinical or social justice emphasis, and between postmodern, social constructionist thought, or traditional, positivist philosophy. A constructionist perspective is applied to bridge the split between clinical and social justice perspectives in social work. A social constructionist philosophy acknowledges that there are multitudinous voices and emphasizes processes of meaning making, both as individuals and as a society.

Introduction

Many question the ability of the social work profession to meet the challenges embraced by a new era in which postmodern thought has cast doubt on cherished tenets of research and practice. Postmodernism has led to consideration of how power (and by implication access to "knowledge") held by predominant, majority groups in society, culturally suppresses the voice and opportunities of disenfranchised, minority groups. There is growing concern that social work has lost its social justice perspective (Chambon, Irving and Epstein, 1999; Weick, 2000; Simon, 1994; and Goldstein, 1980), and is hiding from overwhelming social pressures by focusing on micro client issues. Historically, both micro clinical perspectives and macro social justice perspectives have influenced the profession of social work. These twin influences have struggled for central stage during changes in a society that has largely embraced postmodern thought. The division between clinical social work and the ability to preserve a social justice perspective is an artificial one. A postmodern perspective acknowledges that there are multitudinous voices and emphasizes processes of meaning making, both as individuals and as a society. This essay will examine contributions from postmodern thought in the areas of historical narratives and hermeneutics, social constructionism, and language to construct a bridge that unites social justice and clinical social work practice.

Historical Narratives and Hermeneutics

Certainly, historical narratives play an important role in understanding culture, whether it is the culture of our profession of social work or in understanding our society that privileges some groups over others. John Hope Franklin, a leading historian, has made a significant contribution to fighting the racism that is evident in the biases of American history. Similar to other theory, history is shaped by the predominant views of the majority that holds power in society. John Hope Franklin writes (1982, p. 42):

> But it is all too clear that what has actually happened is one thing, and what has been described by writers of history as having happened is quite another thing. The changes that have occurred in the writing of the history of the Negro are as significant and, in some ways, even more dramatic than the very events themselves that the writers have sought to describe.

This passage boldly illustrates the difficulty in separating fiction from nonfiction. Historical narratives evolve to suit society at large. History, like other theory, is valued if it helps society 'make sense of the world.' Unfortunately, 'history' often meets the needs of the majority group without consideration of the voices of the disenfranchised, the powerless, and minorities.

The historian reconstructs the world of meaning related to an event and tries to understand the world from "its own intrinsic structure" (Stolorow and Atwood, 1984, p. 2). Since the phenomena under scrutiny cannot be stripped of context or environment, the art of interpretation is involved.

Much of constructionist thought has emanated from the philosophy of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation). In the past two decades there has been a shift in social work education and research to embrace a more interpretative or hermeneutic approach. The study of hermeneutics involves "making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 285). Both processes of individual perception and research are acts of interpretation. When we speak or write or look at the world, it is always in terms of our prior understanding of "something else" in the world (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000). Thus, we cannot escape the contextual, relativistic nature in the pursuit of knowledge. Hermeneutic analysis is used to understand many disciplines such as history, cognitive psychology, and linguistics.

Adopting a hermeneutic perspective changes the way we conduct clinical practice and research. As part of hermeneutic methodology, focus has shifted from a natural science investigation of observing objects from the outside, to a focus on meaning as part of the human subjective experience (Stolorow and Atwood, 1984). Knowledge lies in our shared subjective experience; we cannot escape subjective experience in the pursuit of meaning making. The researcher or clinician must draw upon his/her own experience and self-knowledge to guide interpretations of the people we encounter (Stolorow and Atwood, 1984). Consequently, the social work practitioner moves away from the one-person psychology position that she/he has the answer for her/his clients to a two-person psychology that values the intersubjective domain.

The shift to a hermeneutic, phenomenological philosophy from the logical positivist thought, which predominated since the Victorian era, has pervaded many areas of scholarly thought particularly in human sciences research. Logical positivism assumes that objective truth can be demonstrated by controlled, empirical study, assuming that the observer should be free of bias. Positivism includes the following tenets (Tyson, 1995): 1. Observations are made independent of theory-bias. 2. Social science should prioritize proving or testing theory over discovery. 3. Concepts should be defined in quantifiable, observable terms. Since the 1970's, there has been lively debate about what position social work knowledge should assume, a logical positivist or a postmodern view (Payne, 1997). One benefit described by Payne

(1997) of postmodern/constructionist thought over positivist thought is the acknowledgement and celebration of diversity of social and personal experience; the experience of marginalized groups can be explored. A postmodern, social constructionist view accommodates the subjective experience of individuals and groups, and values the qualitative research that allows these voices to emerge.

Social Constructionism

In addition to the influence of hermeneutics on research and practice, constructionist theory has important practice implications. Saari (1986) describes how the traditional scientific view describes what is "real" as "external, objective, concrete and rather stable" (1986, p. 13). The stories told in therapy do not reflect life in a concrete dispassionate way; life is always in motion. Whether one espouses a theory that sees the world in a concrete, objective way, or a theory that views the world as a subjective, meaning making process, is reflected in clinical practice. In the classical practice of psychoanalytic treatment, it was assumed that the therapist by the process of interpretation could transcribe what is real by decoding the latent meaning of the client's language. The therapist assumed a role as 'expert' in the ability to translate the 'meaning' of the client's symptoms. Freud assumed a representational reality fixed in memory that could be altered by defenses against drives and forbidden wishes. "Freud's approach to cognition and reality was based partially on the representational approach taken by the philosopher John Locke. Locke saw mental content as a series of internal representations or pictures of the external world. Perceptions, therefore, were rather like photographic images of an objective external reality" (Saari, 1986, p. 15). In the Freudian narrative, we store 'true' representations of the world in our memory bank. This perspective continues to be predominant in our society as evidenced in the search for literal repressed memories, rather than seeing memories as always including an element of construction.

Weich (1993) discusses how a constructionist view describes objective 'truth' as a poor standard against which to measure our behaviors and choices. "The notion that there is some truth safely preserved 'out there' for us to discover fails to account for the ways in which humans constantly construct and reconstruct interpretations of their social and

physical worlds" (p. 24). The implication of a constructionist view is the debunking of the search for a scientific explanation of an objective reality that is provable (such as in the scientific process of hypothesis testing). While it may be difficult to shed cherished assumptions about interpretation and meaning, accepting a constructionist philosophy expands the scope of exploration, and empowers clients and the social group in which they participate.

Language

Language plays an important role in meaning making and interpretation both on individual and societal levels. Language delimits and informs the processes of meaning making. Linguist Robin Tolmach Lakoff (2000) describes language as "the transference of meaning from mind to mind" (p. 9). According to Tolmach Lakoff:

> We often consider language no more than mere effusions of breath, a representation of reality, not reality itself, and therefore incompetent to be the motive force behind social change. And the power to make language and through it meaning has been vested in one powerful group (typically middle-and upper class white males) for so long and so totally that perception became a transparent lens through which we viewed 'reality': the view of that group seemed to all of us the plain, undistorted, normal and natural view, often the only view imaginable (if you weren't totally crazy) (p. 19).

There are multiple examples of the potency of language in our culture. In the socio-political climate of the 1960's there was great polarization between the races, especially between Caucasians and Afro-Americans. Racial polarization was even evident in how people identified themselves. Due to polarization, being 'mixed' (racially), put one in an ambiguous position. People were either 'white' or 'black.' If you were biracial, such as myself, you were in a categorical limbo. When the language spoken does not acknowledge your existence, it is difficult to have a voice or representation. Thus, language delimits social reality. As society has accepted biracial people, racial categories have broadened to allow for multiple cultural influences.

For example, the presence of the term biracial allows me to identify with my father's Cuban identity and my 'Americanized' identity, which in turn shapes how I view my world and myself. By giving phenomenon a voice, it becomes real. Until social groups are given a voice, there cannot be empowerment or social justice.

Another example of the influence of language in cultural meaning making is the term sexual harassment, which came into the vernacular in the 1980's. It does not mean that 'sexual harassment' did not exist before this time, but it was not recognized as such by our culture. Sexual harassment was considered part of the status quo. Basically our language has reflected the reality of a patriarchal, white male dominated culture. The pronoun 'he' has been used as a substitute for a person. As our society has evolved socio-politically, so has our use of language, but we still have a long way to go. Undoubtedly, there are still disempowered groups awaiting a voice.

Conclusion

This essay has explored the application of postmodernism to the schism between micro and macro perspectives in social work. As social work practitioners, we cannot separate subjective experience from the creation of meaning in the therapeutic relationship. The clinical social worker has moved from the one-person psychology position that she/he has the answer for her/his clients to a two-person psychology that values the intersubjective domain. However, constructionist thought does not stop here. The two people in a clinical setting are part of larger cultural and societal contexts that construct meaning at a macro level. By embracing a postmodern view, we have the ability to shift perspectives from micro to macro levels. As social workers, we do not want to presume that we are one thing to one people. Our shared mission is to speak and listen to the silenced voices. What makes us unique as a profession is our social justice perspective. Considering the frequent role of the clinical social worker, to give a voice to the mentally ill, the physically challenged, children, and the elderly, we are furthering the cause of social justice. No sharp gusts can penetrate the soul of those united for social justice.

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Razing the Castle: Making Domestic Violence a Public Issue

by Julie M. Harcum

Abstract

Although domestic violence has increasingly become a public issue, attention must still be paid to controversial underlying issues. New policies are being proposed and implemented without examining their effects on the victim/survivor of partner violence. This paper will trace the legal and policy changes made in the criminal justice system since the 1970's regarding domestic violence. It will underscore areas where more research and education is needed before adopting policy recommendations, and propose that in order for changes in law to be effective, service providers and the larger community must be educated about domestic violence and its effects.

Introduction: The Scope of the Problem of Violence Against Women

Violence against women has long been considered a private, or 'domestic' issue. "A man's home is his castle" is a cliché reflecting the sanctity of privacy in family life. The legal system has, until recently, embraced this notion of family privacy, reflected by a longstanding trend of police noninterference in domestic violence calls. However, a woman is "more likely to be physically assaulted, beaten, and killed in (her) own home at the hands of a loved one than anyplace else, or by anyone else in our society"(Gelles & Strauss, 1989, p. 18). Indeed, the National Criminal Victimization Survey (NCVS) estimated that more than 50% of American couples have experienced one or more incidents of assault betwen partners during the course of the relationship (Feld & Strauss, 1989).

Victims of domestic violence are often asked, "Why don't you leave?" This question reflects the commonly held belief that by remaining with an abuser, the victim becomes responsible for the violence. This harmful societal attitude of victim-blaming needs to be replaced by concentrating on the perpetrator. Fifty percent of all the women killed in the United States are murdered by a previous intimate partner, and they are usually killed when attempting to terminate the violent relationship (Hansen & Harway, 1993). This suggests that the most dangerous period in a violent relationship occurs when the victim attempts to leave her abuser, thus debunking the myth of victim responsibility.

Many experts on family violence and the criminal justice response recognize the trend of noninterference. "Before the late 1970s, the statutory structure for handling domestic violence could charitably be described as 'benevolent neglect' of a 'family problem.'" (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p. 6). Thus, the absence of domestic violence statutes contributed to a 'neglect' of the problem. Over the past four decades, society's willingness to acknowledge the prevalence of family violence has coincided with the growth of social services (Fagan, 1990). And an increase in these services has led to greater public scrutiny of family life: "What had been condoned because it was 'private' was now defined in a social context and placed in the public domain. Accordingly, family social interactions were more subject to social intervention and sanction" (Fagan, 1990, p. 53).

This paper will trace the current legal efforts regarding violence against women, an issue that society increasingly recognizes as a problem needing policy, statutory, and attitudinal change. The paper will review recent policy responses and argue for the importance of maintaining the success of legal interventions by continually educating service providers and the community about domestic violence and its effects.

Tracing Development: 1970s – Today

The legal definition of domestic violence, as well as laws against family violence, vary from state to state. According to the National Institute of Justice:

> Battering – or domestic violence – may be defined as a constellation of physical, sexual, and psychological abuses that may include: physical violence, intimidation, threats, isolation, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, manipulation using children, total economic control, and assertion of male privilege (such as making all major family decisions and expecting the woman to perform all household duties) (Healy & Smith, 1998, p.2).

Any combination of these types of battering may be found in a state's legal definition of domestic violence. However, there is no nationwide definition of domestic violence.

Development of a legal response to domestic violence has taken two significant tracks, both of which succeed in the larger goal of adopting domestic violence as a public or state problem. The first track of changes in the legal response involves legislation. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 signified a powerful statement by Congress, recognizing domestic violence in federal law. The second track involves the criminalization of domestic violence, shifting the individual's notion of the 'problem' of domestic violence from the private realm (of the family) into the public realm (of the state).

Legislation

The concept of domestic violence is a relatively new invention in our legal history. Traditionally viewed as a 'private problem,' domestic violence remained real but publicly unheard of until the 1960's.

> Twenty years ago, there was no law that defined domestic violence in New Hampshire. There were no restraining orders for battered women. There was no mandatory arrest policy for batterers. There was just one shelter, and few advocacy services for battered women. There was no law against a husband raping his wife. There was no recourse, really (Shea, 1997).

The situation in New Hampshire represented the nationwide lack of resources available to victims as recently as 1970. In 1978, congressional hearings examined the problem of family violence. Several bills were introduced that would have provided funding for federal agencies to address domestic violence. Each of the bills failed. Sandra Wexler (as cited in Fagan, 1990) attributed the defeat to "growing opposition at that time to federal involvement in family violence; in effect, an attempt to reprivatize family matters despite almost a decade of federal involvement" (p. 61).

Despite the reluctance of federal agencies to be involved in family matters, many advances have been made since the failed bills of 1978. Shelters for domestic violence victims began to open in order to offer safe havens for victims. The federal government became increasingly involved in domestic violence issues. State laws began to recognize and define domestic violence. The late 1970's saw the dawning of the 'criminalization' of domestic violence.

Reforms gained momentum beginning in the 1980's when states began to pass legislation, amend police response procedures and policies, and recognize an abusive history as part of the legal defense for women who killed their abuser (Fagan, 1996). Reforms during this period included the following: states codified domestic violence as a criminal act; reforms broadened categories of offenses relating to domestic violence; penalties for convictions became harsher; coverage expanded to include couples living together (not only married people) and, in some jurisdictions, coverage extended to same-sex couples; domestic violence training for police was developed with the goal of changing police attitudes towards abused women; and civil protections came into existence as another legal recourse for domestic violence.

By the 1990's, "efforts were institutionalized in law and policy with significant changes achieved in statutes, the organization of investigative and procedural agencies, and the allocation of court services and resources" (Fagan, 1996, p.10). A coordinated and sweeping response by service providers became the aim of the system. In 1994, a major piece of legislation, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), was introduced and passed with bipartisan support. The Act "brought to fruition years of untiring efforts by advocates for women's rights and concerned members of Congress, supported by growing public awareness of strong evidence of the harm done to women through the violence directed at them" (The Urban Institute Publications, 1995, p. 6). Four areas of violence against women were directly addressed by this legislation: the Safe Streets Act, Safe Homes for Women, Civil Rights for Women and Equal Justice for Women in the Courts, and Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children. Further, grant monies were made available to develop state-level planning and implementation, and to create the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which receives approximately 7,600 calls per month.

Current legislation has passed the Violence Against Women Act II, confirming recommitment of the funds for VAWA 94. This reaffirmation and expansion of VAWA 94 addresses populations traditionally 'doubly displaced' in our society: elderly, immigrants, and the disabled. Another significant aspect of VAWA II is the initiative on college campuses, which underscores that partner violence between persons not cohabiting represents a related but distinct issue from domestic violence.

Despite the success of VAWA 94 and the recent passage of VAWA 98 through the House, new judicial

developments have impacted the legislation. A recent circuit court decision in Virginia ruled the VAWA 94 unconstitutional. In *Brzonkala v. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University 1999*, Christy Brzonkala sued two men for rape under a provision in VAWA 1994. The provision allowed that a victim of a gender-motivated violent crime could sue the perpetrator in a civil court for compensatory and punitive damages (including medical expenses and lost wages). Deeming the civil remedy of the VAWA 1994 unconstitutional, the 7-judge majority invoked a federalist argument and struck down the Congressional act as exceeding the powers of the commerce clause of the Constitution. The majority argued that in enacting the VAWA 94, Congress overstepped the limits of the Constitution and that gender-motivated violence has no bearing on the commerce clause set by the Constitution (Kilpatrick, 1999, p.A04). In other words, domestic violence and rape are individually unconnected to interstate commerce. The 4-judge dissent argued contrary, claiming that gender-motivated violence does indeed affect interstate commerce. In a report to the Senate during the debates over VAWA 94, the following research was presented to support this claim:

> ...approximately 4 million women are battered by their husbands or partners in America each year, 35% of women visiting the hospital emergency rooms have injuries due to domestic violence, domestic violence alone costs employers between $3 billion and $5 billion annually due to absenteeism, almost half of rape victims lost their jobs or are forced to quit in the aftermath of the crime, and problems of domestic violence transcend the abilities of state law enforcement agencies because of their interstate nature (Ely, 1999, p.6).

Since domestic violence greatly affects the workforce by way of absenteeism and job loss, and because domestic violence surpasses the scope of state law, it therefore must be addressed on a national level. The National Organization of Women's (NOW) Legal Defense and Education Fund also asserts that Congress was well within its power in enacting laws addressing private conduct that correct the effects of equal protection viola-

tions. The case has been appealed and is likely to be heard in the Supreme Court.

The Virginia circuit court decision is likely to halt progress or discourage support of the VAWA 98 proposal. The declaration detracts from the power of federal law and seeks to return that power to the states' discretion. A serious drawback in states' discretion is the fragmentation and unequal implementation of state laws that can be seen in the development of state domestic violence policy statutes prior to the 1994 Act. The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund argues that bias and discrimination lead to state courts treating domestic violence and sexual assault crimes less seriously than other crimes, denying women access to civil and criminal justice systems. Thus, federal law would remedy the lack of access and give women the opportunity to utilize the civil courts to sue assaulters for damages.

Criminalization of Domestic Violence

Criminalization means that the government and the courts consider domestic violence a crime with legal repercussions. It signals a clear transition of domestic violence from private matter to public concern. Criminalization manifests in many ways. First, the refocus of the problem from private to public necessitates better policies of *police response* to domestic violence calls. Second, *training* of criminal justice service providers such as police, prosecutors, and judges seeks to educate providers and improve treatment of victims. Third, the creation of *domestic violence courts* also testifies to the new emphasis in the public realm of problems of domestic violence. Together with specialized courts, specialized prosecution units address the devaluation of domestic violence cases in regular courtrooms. Lastly, the *restraining order* is an important tool for battered women in the development of legal responses.

Police Response

"The 'criminalization' of domestic violence cases beginning in the 1970's sought to increase the certainty and severity of legal responses, thereby correcting historical, legal, and moral disparities in the legal protections afforded to battered women" (Zorza, 1992). Though the severity of laws may have been formally altered, attitudes of service providers remained unchanged. Unless something could be

done to change police attitudes and responses to victims, the change in laws would be useless. One study found that police did not formally respond to a majority of domestic violence cases, they did not want to intervene in family disputes, and there was a strong bias against making arrests (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). The reluctance of police to get involved in 'domestic' situations reflects the notion that family violence is a private issue, not one intended for public response and intervention. During this period, police attitudes and responses to violence against women provided much room for improvement. Social and political pressures began to incite change in police response to domestic violence beginning in 1984.

A shocking example of detrimental police response to battering was revealed in *Thurman et al. v. City of Torrington, Connecticut*, a civil suit in 1984. Tracy Thurman brought this civil case against her town and 29 of its police officers for failure to protect her civil rights. In this sensational case, Thurman repeatedly asked the police to arrest her estranged husband after he made threats to shoot her and her son while he was on probation for damage to her property. The police told her to return in three weeks and to get a restraining order in the meantime. She obtained the order, but still the police refused to arrest her husband, stating that the only officer who could arrest him was on vacation. Thurman's husband finally attacked her, inflicting multiple stab wounds to the chest and neck, resulting in paralysis below her neck and permanent disfigurement. The court found that police actions appeared to be deliberately indifferent to the complaints of married women in general and Thurman in particular. The verdict awarded Thurman and her son $2.3 million in damages. This precedent succeeded in creating a fear of liability for police departments. Consequently, the Connecticut State Legislature passed the Family Violence Prevention and Response Act of 1986. The Act amended police response policies and curbed police discretion by enacting mandatory arrest policies with probable cause.

Domestic Violence Training

Even before VAWA 94, programs began to be funded to train criminal justice service providers. Training topics included education on the prevalence of family violence, dynamics of family violence, and local policies and resources. However, in researching this paper, only one study was found that evaluated the efficacy of training programs. From 1986 to 1992, the Office for Victims of Crime funded 23 programs nationwide to provide training to 16,000 criminal justice staff members to improve responsiveness to victims. This study asserted that "the training programs appeared to have brought more uniform and progressive domestic violence policies in participating jurisdictions, improved training participants' attitudes and services to victims, and enhanced working relationships among agencies" (Newmark, Harrell, & Adams, 1995, p. 2). Although this study stated that training seemed to be effective, most agencies neither tracked which officers had been trained nor whether new knowledge was passed on to other officers. Despite claims of improved police attitudes and response to victims, the study presents no hard evidence in support.

Unless police, prosecutors, and judges are aware of new policies and laws, the new legislation is likely to prove ineffective. For instance, research has found that one of the greatest inhibitors to the effectiveness of orders of protection is lack of education (Finn, P. & Colson, S., 1998). Under provisions of VAWA 1994, funds have been allotted to training programs for service providers such as police, prosecutors and even judges. According to the Urban Institute's evaluation of the VAWA grants, on the state level, thirty-nine plans included domestic violence training (The Urban Institute Publications, 1995). However, the research surveys reveal that there is no uniformity in the training. For instance, some states required 2 hours of training on domestic violence for new police recruits, with no training for in-service officers. In other states, officers received as many as 8 hours of training on domestic violence and 40 hours on sexual assault investigation.

Research is necessary in light of the VAWA 1998 request to re-fund these training programs. If programs prove unsuccessful, the money could be allocated to other initiatives. Unfortunately, scant empirical research has been published on the efficacy of these training programs. Studies to determine the difference between pre- and post- training services as well as the difference in treatment of victims would prove extremely useful (Susan Schechter, personal communication, 1999).

Courts

The creation of specialized courts represents another formal legal recognition of domestic violence as a crime. Specialized courts address the devaluation of these particular cases in the 'mainstream' of the legal system.

The "stream of cases" argument suggests that cases are prioritized for processing and allocation of punishment according to their relative severity compared with other cases in the same context. This framework suggests that domestic violence cases may be assigned a lower priority for prosecution and punishment when placed alongside other violence cases involving strangers (Fagan, 1996, p. 21).

This devaluing of domestic violence cases in comparison to cases of violence between strangers reinforces the traditional attitude that family violence should be relegated to the private realm of the home. It also demonstrates how domestic violence has been considered less serious than other crimes.

Another reason for the difficulty in prosecuting domestic violence cases is the attitude of court personnel, such as prosecutors and judges. While police officers are fully expected to follow the law, prosecutors have "expressly been given the power to exercise discretion in enforcement ... [and judges] ...have the express responsibility to adjudicate conduct of a particular offender" (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p. 171). Thus, specialized courts target prosecutors and judges for specialized training in domestic violence.

Specialized courts prevent cases of domestic violence from competing with other cases for docket time, resources, and attention of prosecutors. These courts intend to reduce the large number of cases dropped from the system because of "prosecution difficulties and the reluctance of many complaining witnesses to testify or produce evidence" (Chalk & King, 1998, p. 182). Thus, with the creation of specialized courts, experts believe that domestic violence cases will receive more attention. Specialized courts also expedite the request of orders of protection and their enforcement. Still, further research is needed to investigate the effects of these courts.

In addition to specialized courts, many courts provide specialized prosecution units. One characteristic of special units is to educate prosecutors on a range of domestic violence issues, including current laws, remedies available on protection orders, and resources available to victims. Secondly, specialized prosecution teams integrate vertical prosecution, so that the lawyer originally assigned to a case remains with the same victim throughout the entire process. Another aspect of the specialized prosecution teams is that it seeks to provide a more coordinated legal response to domestic violence. This includes the participation of prosecutors, police, and probation officers.

As with the specialized courts, special prosecution units warrant further empirical research "to confirm the ultimate impact or to determine if certain program elements might be adopted apart from the overall system" (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p. 181). Thus, while VAWA 1998 seeks to refund these programs, efficacy studies are in order.

Restraining Orders

Every state provides protective orders for domestic violence. The *criminal* order of protection is issued at the same time criminal charges against an abuser are filed. In criminal court, the woman is provided with an attorney, and the protection is filed right away. However, if the woman decides to drop the charges against her abuser, the order of protection becomes defunct.

Civil protective orders, or restraining orders, are civil injunctions that establish restraints against a person accused of threatening or harassing the individual who requests the order. Civil protections offer wider relief than the narrowly constructed restraints accompanying sentencing in criminal court, including child custody or support. A woman does not need to file criminal charges against her abuser to procure a civil order of protection, which allows for protection of women unwilling to prosecute their abusers. VAWA 94 funds many efforts to make this process cost-free for victims. Further, orders of protection can be filed around the clock.

Orders of protection provide several benefits for domestic violence victims. The remedies of protection orders may be tailored to each case and may, for example, mandate abuser counseling, limit visitation with minor children, vacate a shared living space within a certain time period, or allow the victim exclusive use of property (e.g., vehicles). The specificity of protection orders enables police to discern whether an abuser has violated an order. Studies have found that civil protection orders offer immediate relief from battery (Finn & Colson, 1998). Obtaining an order of protection provides a woman with a sense of well-being. When police respond to the call of a woman with a protection order, it is "more likely that police will act decisively" (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p.191). The order of protection indicates to police that the abuser is a recidivist.

To ensure effective orders of protection, police enforcement and sufficient punishment for violation is necessary. However, although protections are issued to the victim, police often do not have

copies available due to information gaps between the courts and police departments (Buzawa and Buzawa, 1996). If the victim does not have the order on hand at the time of violation, police may fear charges of false arrest.

New Policy Responses to Violence Against Women

The previous section traced legal developments in response to domestic violence. New policy responses being tested nationwide seek to implement uniform decisions by the legal system. These attempts include *mandatory arrest* for the police, *no-drop* and *victimless prosecution* policies.

Mandatory Arrest

In an attempt to limit police discretion and bias in arresting the accused in domestic violence cases, mandatory arrest policies were proposed. One such policy in Chicago mandates arrest for "serious conflict, ... use of weapons, ... previous injury or property damage, ... previous court appearances, ... or involvement of children, retarded individuals, or intoxicated parties" (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p. 155). Mandatory arrest policies have several advantages. First, mandatory arrest immediately removes the abuser from the domestic situation, and thus mitigates the amount of physical damage inflicted on the victim. Second, it may reinforce the criminalization of domestic violence in the eyes of the police and perpetrator. Third, mandatory arrest provides victims with access to services.

One difficulty with the criminal justice response lies in the effects of pretrial release policies. If arrests are made and victims choose to file charges, bond is set. If bond is made, victims frequently are not notified when their abusers are released. In a survey of large jurisdictions, it was found that "slightly more than two-thirds of prosecutors in jurisdictions between 250,000 and 500,000 notified the victim of the defendant's release, while only half in jurisdictions with more than 500,000 did so" (Rebovich, 1998, p. 60). New statutes are being instituted which will alert the victim of the offenders' discharge, from pretrial release to parole. Clearly, neglect to inform the victim could prove detrimental if she is unaware that her abuser has been released from jail: "Homicides committed by incarcerated offenders on furlough from correctional institutions in recent years have stimulated legislative activity to assure that victims of crimes are notified when the criminals involved are no longer in custody" (Hart, 1993, p.26-27). Unfortunately, not all legislatures have adopted statutes to increase the safety of victims.

Mandatory arrest policies have both proponents and critics. On the one hand, these policies suggest concern for reinforcing the criminality of domestic violence. In terms of criminal justice response, this notion is quite an accomplishment as compared to the 1970's. On the other hand, though criminalization of domestic violence has been established, critics suggest that progress has not been made unless victim discretion is upheld (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). In other words, one form of personal power and control (by the abuser) has been replaced by another form of domination (by the state via legislation, police, and prosecutors).

The Prosecution's No-drop Policy

Many states have been researching and adopting 'no-drop' policies for responding to domestic violence. No-drop policies force the victim to testify. Benefits are similar to mandatory arrest policies in that prosecutors would not be given the opportunity to dismiss cases. This is considered beneficial in light of the theory that victims drop their cases against abusers because they fear greater harm if they continue to press charges. They also fear retaliation if the abuser is convicted. Promoters of the no-drop policies purport that the abuser will not hold the victim responsible if she is given no discretion as to whether charges are held or dropped.

Victimless Prosecution

Victimless prosecutions would allow the State to prosecute without the consent and testimony of the victim; police officers would act as witnesses. This approach is relatively new and also controversial. Victimless prosecutions resemble the no-drop policy in that they also assume that the abuser will not hold the victim responsible if she is not the witness. Similar criticisms accompany this policy as the previous two. Again, the discretion of the case is removed from the victim.

Thus, all three new policy initiatives (mandatory arrest, no-drop and victimless prosecution policies) embody a sort of victim disempowerment. Just as the woman is given no choices by her abuser about experiencing violence, she is given no choice by the state about her own case. Victim discretion is removed, and the state's discretion is substituted. Victims are still being controlled with these types of policies.

Battered Women's Legal Defense

When discussing family violence, we need to address the issue of women who kill their abusers. Examination of penalties for women who kill their abusers further illustrates society's understanding of the victim's position. One study done in 1977 at the Women's Correctional Center in Chicago revealed that 40% of women in prison for murder or manslaughter had killed husbands or lovers who repeatedly attacked them (Browne, 1987, p.10). An overwhelming proportion of women in prison have killed a partner who was an alleged abuser. In the above-mentioned Chicago study, all the women who had killed abusive partners reported that they called for police help at least five times before taking the life of the abuser.

Historically, women found guilty of killing their partners have been sentenced more severely than men who killed their partners have been. This manifests in both more severe charges (i.e. men less often charged with first- or second-degree murder than women in the case of intimates), as well as longer prison sentences for women. This discrepancy has been attributed to societal and criminal justice attitudes. For example,

> In 1978 an Indiana prosecutor, James Kizer, refused to prosecute for murder a man who beat and kicked his ex-wife to death in the presence of a witness and raped her as she lay dying. Filing a manslaughter charge instead, Kizer commented, "He didn't mean to kill her. He just meant to give her a good thumping" (Jones, 1980, p. 308).

Because the man's intention was 'just' to beat his ex-wife, he could not be charged with murder. Contrarily, as the discrepancy in charges indicates, women who kill while defending themselves from beatings *intend* to kill and must be charged accordingly.

The battered women's syndrome as a self-defense plea has become increasingly recognized in court. Battered women justify killing their abuser by demonstrating that they were protecting themselves or their children from further harm, or even death. The 'battered women's syndrome' recognizes experts' belief that women's violence is brought on by repeated physical, mental, or sexual attacks by a spouse or partner, which may help to explain or extenuate these retaliatory attacks.

Reports on battered women make more general claims about the use of "battered woman syndrome" (Jones, 1998; National Institute of Justice, 1996.) Researchers suggest abandoning the term "battered woman syndrome" because it implies a single effect on each battered woman, and does not "reflect the breadth of empirical knowledge now available concerning battering and its effects" (National Institute of Justice, 1996, p.vii). The term 'syndrome' may also create the belief that battered women suffer from a mental defect or imply that the violent act is the result of inherent characteristics of the woman, not the effects of external factors - that is, battering.

Legislation and the Community

The community plays a necessary and important role in the treatment of domestic violence as a social issue. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 stipulates that education on intervention and prevention of domestic violence be extended to the professional realms. A circular pattern of awareness and change arises from attention given by lawmakers and society. In order to empower battered women, societal biases against victims must change. In order to change policies and laws with regard to victims, powerful sections of society must actively take interest. Though attempts at community education have been made, they are still not optimally effective. This is evident in criminal justice service providers' attitudes toward victims, which serves to reflect the attitudes of the broader community. According to Barbara Hart,

> Legal strategies collapse if the consciousness of the community is not aligned against violence, if emergency services and housing are not available to battered women and children, if employing strategies are not cognizant of domestic violence and are not employing strategies to safeguard victims and hold batterers accountable, and if the family and friends of the battered woman and the batterer do not reject violence as an option in intimate relationships and offer support for safety and change (Hart, 1993, p. 27).

The official government evaluations of VAWA 1994 grants also supported this notion of the value of community attitudes: "*Legal reform is not enough. Even when the laws change, if attitudes at every point do not change, little will have been accomplished for victims*" (author's emphasis) (The Urban Institute Publications, 1995, p.12). Thus, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 called for changes not only in the criminal justice sector, but also in community programs for health care providers, business and civic leaders, and other pertinent professional sectors.

Thus far, many corporations are joining the effort to intervene in and prevent domestic violence. State Farm Life Insurance Company, based in Bloomington, Illinois, changed policies after the media chastised the company for denying health and life insurance to a battered woman. The Body Shop donates profits from whistle sales to relevant organizations and sponsors public events to boost awareness of violence against women. Liz Claiborne Inc. teamed up with New York public relations firm Patrice, Tanaka & Co. Inc. to create the "Women's Work" campaign, donating money to advocacy groups. Finally, the Walt Disney Co. and the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence have co-produced the 'It's Not OK' video for children affected by domestic abuse (Goldberg, 1996). Thus, legislative changes affect sectors of the community not involved directly in the criminal justice or legal realm of domestic violence.

Conclusion: Have We Made Domestic Violence Public?

Legislative codification is meaningless unless accompanied by initiatives to translate theory and law into practice. The implementation of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 signaled a great change in the legal system's response to domestic violence. Though awareness and action had been increasing over the last thirty years, VAWA 1994 represented the largest and most widespread response to violence against women. While VAWA II called for the re-funding of training and education programs, research still needs to evaluate whether these programs effectively increase sensitivity and improve responses towards victims of domestic violence.

We must also examine proposed policy changes from the perspective of the victim. At face value, policies such as mandatory arrest, no-drop and victimless prosecution seek to protect victims. However, when the discretion of the woman is removed from her own case, we must ask whether policymakers are reinventing another way to wield power over victims. Victims are most satisfied when a coordinated, system-wide effort is made to respond to the victims' wishes. This necessitates adequate responses by the police, prosecutors, judges, and probation officers who have been educated about domestic violence and its effects. Victims must be able to determine their own ends at each level; these ends should be respected. Criminal justice service providers must be able to acquaint victims with their options at each stage. Coordinated responses must also ensure that the batterers do not slip thought the system.

Slowly, with the aid of activists and the battered women's movement, service providers' attitudes have begun to change. Changes must also extend to other strata of society, as VAWA 1994 strove to do, by involving health care providers, educators, corporations, and other businesses in the movement. Continued success necessitates the continued concern of society and increased community awareness and education about domestic violence and its effects. Without it, changes in law will be useless.

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Family of Origin Alcohol Abuse and Implications for Counter-transference: A Literature Review

by Ann Hermes, Rhonda Kelloway, Megan Lammers and Tracy C. Mairs

Abstract

Counter-transference occurs when a therapist brings her or his own personal history into the relationship with a client. While this can be a valuable tool in better understanding and helping the client, it can also be damaging if the therapist is not aware of the impact it can have on the treatment relationship. This paper examines the literature related to the impact of parental alcohol abuse on children, and addresses how counter-transference may be significant to social workers given the high reports of alcohol abuse in the family histories of social work students.

Introduction

Counter-transference has been defined as "the therapist's conscious or unconscious reaction to a patient" (Schwartz, 1978). While the view of counter-transference historically has been quite negative within the psychoanalytic community, this concept has recently undergone much revision. Now the therapeutic community largely holds that counter-transference can be used consciously as a therapeutic tool (Strean, 1999). That is, when the clinician is able to identify his or her "reaction" to the client and use it as information for the psychotherapeutic process, the client's well-being can be enhanced.

In a discussion of counter-transference, Schwartz (1978) notes, "Every professional comes to the therapeutic encounter with a backlog of fears, aversions, representations, and dislikes that certain clients can arouse." Recognizing this reality, Halperin (1991) warns that counter-transference can become a "trap" when the clinician fails to recognize his or her own reactions or unconsciously reacts to issues presented by a client or family. Failure to handle these reactions leaves the clinician at risk for projecting his or her own issues onto the client, further confounding client issues and creating an ethical problem. It struck the authors that new social workers might be especially vulnerable to this "trap," particularly those workers who have not made a concerted effort to become aware of family of origin issues that can be the fodder for many counter-transference reactions. The authors' observation that many of their fellow classmates grew up in families in which alcohol abuse was a problem seems to be consistent with the literature's findings that a significant number of

social work students have a history of family trauma (Bissell & Haberman, 1984; Black, Jeffreys, & Hartley, 1993; Marsh, 1988; Rompf & Royse, 1994; Russel, Gill, Coyne, & Woody, 1993). Accordingly, this raised certain questions for the authors. Are students who are adult children of alcoholics aware of their potential counter-transference implications given their family of origin experiences? Moreover, will a social work student's awareness of his or her own personal experience of a family member's alcoholism dictate the student's career choices, such as the choice of specialty area or client population?

To explore these questions and to give a possible framework for future research, the authors reviewed the literature concerning alcoholism and parental impact and the literature concerning counter-transference.

Alcoholism and Parental Impact

Numerous studies have demonstrated that first-degree relatives of alcoholics are two to seven times more likely than people with nonalcoholic relatives to develop problems with alcohol at some time in their lives (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1997). A relationship between parental substance abuse and subsequent alcohol problems in their children has been documented extensively (Chassin, Pillow, & Curran, 1993; Semilitz & Gold, 1986; Smart & Fejer, 1972; Windle, 1997), although one study found that parental substance abuse is not directly related to children's substance-using behavior (Havey & Dodd, 1995).

Past research has suggested that children from alcoholic families tend to have behavioral problems (Yu & Perrine, 1997). A study done by Bower (1999) suggests that children in families with widespread alcoholism may tend to find themselves withdrawing when confronted with unfamiliar people and situations. Children of alcoholic and other drug-abusing parents appear to be especially vulnerable to the risk for maladaptive behavior because they have combinations of many risk factors present in their own life (Chassin & Barrera, 1993). Research shows that children of alcoholics have more adjustment problems in home, health, social, and emotional domains (Kondandaram,

1995), even though these problems do not always meet clinical diagnostic levels. Behavioral problems frequently associated with children of alcoholics are:

- Lack of awareness of the perceived impression of one's behavior on others, lack of insight into personal relations, and lack of empathy for other persons (Jones, 1998);
- Decreased social adequacy and interpersonal adaptability (Steinhausen, Goebel, & Nestler, 1994);
- Increased levels of anxiety and depression, low self-esteem, and lack of control over the environment (Moos & Billings, 1982); and
- Higher rates of oppositional and conduct disorders, but not of attention deficit disorders (Reich, Earls, & Frankel, 1993).

Other research has documented that the influence of parental alcoholism on children's mental and behavioral problems persists into adulthood. Researchers report that children from alcoholic families are more likely to have increased risk for maladjustment (Yu & Williford, 1994) and to experience failed marriages (Rubio-Stipec, et al., 1991). Stark (1997) has argued that adult children of alcoholics frequently create trouble for themselves because they feel more comfortable when there is a crisis.

Alcoholic families report higher levels of conflict than do nonalcoholic families (Moos & Billings, 1982). Drinking is the primary factor in family disruption, and the home environment of children of alcoholics has been characterized by a lack of parenting, poor home management, and a dearth of family communication skills. This disruption effectively robs the children of alcoholics of models of effective parenting or family communication (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). The following family problems have been frequently associated with alcoholic families: increased family conflict; emotional or physical violence; decreased family cohesion; decreased family organization; increased family isolation; increased family stress including work problems, illness, marital strain, and financial problems; and frequent family moves (el Guebaly & Offord, 1977, 1979; Wolin, Bennett, & Noonin, 1980; Vaillant & Milofsky, 1982). Substance-abusing parents often lack the ability to provide structure or discipline in family life, while simultaneously expecting their children to be competent at a wide variety of tasks earlier than children of non-substance-abusing parents (Mutzell, 1995). Unable to do everything perfectly all the time, children in these families may perceive themselves as failures.

While a typical child of an alcoholic might be suggested as a result of this review, it should be remembered that there is no single profile of children of substance abusers. There are subgroups of children of substance abusers who, despite all odds, do enjoy good health from birth, experience a positive environment at home, and develop rather normally into socialized, competent, and self-confident individuals (Hunt, 1997). These individuals may be able to manipulate their environment by choosing roles and goals in life that stabilize their developmental process and bring them the positive reinforcement they need to develop a positive self-image and eventually a relatively healthy life. However, even when alcoholism in the family of origin does not lead to maladaptive behavior, it can still have an impact on the therapeutic relationship through the clinician's counter-transference.

Counter-transference

Counter-transference is an important concept for clinical social workers to understand because pressures from unidentified counter-transference stemming from family of origin trauma can add strain to the therapeutic relationship process. "Counter-transference arises out of the therapist's history, developmental assets or deficits" (Blank, 1979). By extension, because the therapist brings his or her human self to the therapeutic encounter, it is logical to conclude that counter-transference will occur within every encounter. Indeed, whether seen as a positive or negative, or as a tool in therapy, the existence of counter-transference as a phenomenon is widely acknowledged. In marital and family psychotherapy, for example, counter-transference is considered either an irrelevant or a disruptive clinical phenomenon (Strean, 1999). For the strategic family therapist, counter-transference is often considered a disruptive process that inhibits objectivity as well as the clarity and precision of observation that is needed to provide task assignments that will disrupt problematic interactional sequences (Lantz, 1999). Yet much of the therapeutic community holds that counter-transference can be used consciously as a therapeutic tool when the clinician is able to identify and apply their 'reaction' to the client (Strean, 1999).

While counter-transference has traditionally been regarded negatively and perceived as a flaw in a therapist's personality (Strean, 1999), it can prove to be a very useful tool in the therapeutic process if and when it is "given the right turn" (Blank, 1979, p 125; Gakis, 1990). That is, counter-transference can only be useful when the clinician is aware of the 'reaction' and can structure his or her feelings so as not to infringe on the client's process. An aware clinician will make a practice of revisiting his or her personal issues that arise when helping others. To facilitate this reflective process, personal therapy and/or supervision is essential in helping the clinician to maintain a healthy counter-transference relationship within the therapeutic relationship (Myers, 1998; Halperin, 1991; Schwartz, 1978).

A therapist's personality characteristics and awareness of these characteristic handicaps and strengths enter the realm of the therapeutic relationship. Gakis (1990) found that processes in therapy would be enhanced or critically hindered by the presence of counter-transference. Russo (1996) noted that the therapeutic relationship results in an even exchange for the client and the worker. This exchange, labeled transference and counter-transference, is a part of every relationship. Halperin (1991) warns that ultimately the reality of counter-transference becomes a "trap" when the clinician fails to recognize his or her own reactions or unconsciously reacts to issues presented by a client or family. Bowen (1978) found that those therapists who succeeded in resolving negative experiences in their family of origin were better prepared to deal with clients who were attempting similar changes.

The research on counter-transference covers a broad range of client populations and clinical issues. For example, counter-transference issues are recognized in working with clients with physical handicaps (Gakis, 1990), autistic clients (Spero, 1998), couples and families (Lantz, 1999), child holocaust survivors (Tauber, 1998), clients with eating disorders (Franko, 1996) and clients of a different race than the clinician (Javed, 1997). The research confirms that the experience of counter-transference is real and that it effects clinicians using all types of therapeutic models. For example, Schaeffer (1998) proposes that counter-transference is essential to consider in brief treatment or short-term therapy, even though it may be difficult to utilize as a therapeutic tool. This assertion is particularly important in the current era of managed care: "Managed care offers a challenge to clients and therapists alike not to abandon the treatment of unconscious issues" (Myers, 1998, p. 23).

Implications of Findings from the Literature

These findings suggest that counter-transference is a real phenomenon and does affect the therapist and client in the therapeutic process. The literature shows that children of alcoholic and other substance-abusing parents appear to be especially vulnerable to the risk of developing emotional, physical, or social problems related directly to the environment created by the substance abuser. Moreover, the literature suggests that these adult children are at risk of unconsciously extending childhood care-taking roles into their adult professional and personal personas. The effect of this dynamic on clinicians' counter-transferences presents potential complications for therapeutic relationships. On the other hand, positive resolution of personal traumas resulting from the effects of alcoholism in the family of origin can contribute to the effectiveness of helping professionals because it serves to clarify counter-transference reactions. Yet are social work students self-aware of the effects of alcoholism in their families? Specifically, what is the extent of self-awareness regarding alcohol abuse in the families of origin of graduate social work students? Have students whose lives have been affected by a family member's alcohol abuse considered the influence this experience might have with respect to counter-transference issues in their future practice? For example, might this background influence their choice of practice field?

Given the findings from the literature, the authors posit that self-awareness of a therapist's reactions is essential to providing competent professional service to the client. That is, the clinician's awareness of the role his or her family of origin played in his or her own development would seem to play a crucial role in assisting clients to overcome their own developmental struggles.

Implications for practice and further research

Research is needed to determine if students who experienced alcohol abuse in their family of origin differ with respect to issues of counter-transference from social work students who did not experience alcohol abuse in their family of origin. Specifically, research could focus on whether social work students

with a background of alcohol abuse in the family recognize possible counter-transference issues likely to impact their future practice. More specifically, research could examine if these students are making the jump from a conceptual understanding of counter-transference to a personal application of the concept given their family history. Another area for research could be the counter-transference implications of how having experienced alcohol abuse in their family of origin influences their choice of client population and area of specialty.

Information gained from this type of research will lead to consideration of possible gaps in the current social work curriculum regarding clinician self-awareness, substance abuse and counter-transference. This research will also help to inform curriculum and advising efforts at schools of social work, ensuring that graduates are well equipped to uphold the self-determination of the client and fulfill the professional role of social worker.

This paper was accepted for publication last year; three of the authors have since graduated from SSW (Class of '01). Ann Hermes Tudor works with children and families in foster care as a therapist at LIFELINK in Chicago; Megan Lammers is a service coordinator at New Avenues for Youth, a transitional housing program for homeless teens in Portland, Oregon; Rhonda Kelloway is in her 2nd year field placement at Warrenville Youth and Family Services and graduates in May '02; Tracy C. Mairs is a therapist at the Harry Stack Sulllivan Chenango County Mental Health Clinic in rural upstate New York.

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Grandparent Caregivers: Challenges They Face in Negotiating Service Systems

by Patricia M. Ziebka

Abstract

This article recognizes the phenomenon of a rapidly growing population of grandparent caregivers, and attempts to heighten awareness of some of the obstacles they face in negotiating the systems that provide services to their grandchildren. In particular, it looks at two systems that may need to be negotiated at the onset of placement: funding sources and school systems. It also proposes ways in which policy changes might ease the stresses during a vulnerable time of transition for both the child and grandparent caregiver. Further, some current resources available to caregivers are discussed.

Grandparent as Parents: A Growing Phenomenon

While the phenomenon of grandparents parenting their grandchildren is not a new one, its occurrence is becoming more frequent. In their special report for the Census Bureau, Bryson and Casper (1999) found that in 1970, there were 2.2 million children, or 3.2% of all children under the age of 18, in grandparent-maintained households. This number increased to 2.3 million in 1980, to 3.3 million in 1992, and to 3.9 million, or 5.5% of children, in 1997. While these figures include cases in which one or both parents may be present, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) there are currently at least 1.3 million children living in a grandparent-headed household with no parent present (2000). These numbers may be underreported since grandparents may be reluctant to acknowledge the permanency of their caregiver status and, instead, report that the situation is temporary until their own child's situation stabilizes.

In part, psychosocial problems contribute to this increase in the grandparent as parent phenomena (Poe, 1992; Illinois Department on Aging, 2000; Generations United, 2000). Some of these psychosocial problems are alcohol and drug abuse; neglect, abuse or abandonment; death/divorce; HIV/AIDS; incarceration; mental illness; family violence; and teen pregnancy. Such issues as these that necessitate a child being placed in their grandparent's care are often traumatic in themselves. As a result, the children often arrive with significant physical and emotional concerns. In grandparent-headed households, 5.2% of the children are in suboptimal health. In grandmother-households the rate jumps to 9.4%. This is significant given that, in grandparent-headed households, 36% of children are on public insurance, and 33% do not have any insurance. In grandmother-only households, 52% of children are on public insurance, and 33% do not have any insurance (Bryson & Casper, 1999). This is much more serious a picture than that of children in the general population, 22.8% of whom are on public insurance, and 15.4% of whom do not have any coverage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998a).

The lack of health insurance hinders adequate attention to the children's biopsychosocial needs. Regardless of the precipitating circumstances, when the children move in with their grandparents, they are dealing with the loss of a parent. They may be dealing with feelings of grief, abandonment, guilt and anger. Furthermore, they may come from backgrounds with physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. In an attempt to restore equilibrium, their anxiety, insecurity and depression may manifest in problematic behaviors (deToledo & Brown, 1995). This kind of emotional trauma may require professional intervention. In the absence of health insurance or adequate resources, services may be more difficult to obtain.

Along with trying to help their grandchildren cope with significant losses, grandparents themselves experience losses as a result of the major changes in their lives when they assume this responsibility (Poe, 1992). The situations in which grandparents find themselves are often as a result of a crisis and lead to the grandparents taking on a primary or secondary role as caregivers to their grandchildren. When they have taken on this secondary role, they are often continuing to function in a primary role as parent to their own adult child. Grandparent caregivers experience losses that may entail sacrificing future goals, curtailing their social lives, and altering their financial situations. There are many challenges in having to negotiate services for their grandchildren, and grandparents are in a vulnerable position. This paper will examine two of the more immediate needs that grandparents must address while in the throes of this transition: finances and education.

Financial Challenges

When grandparents assume responsibility for their grandchildren, they take on an increased financial responsibility. In 1996, the average household income of grandparent-maintained families ranged from $19,750 for those with only a grandmother to $61,632 for families with both grandparents and at least one of the grandchildren's parents present (Bryson & Casper, 1998). According to the Census Bureau, in 1997, 670,000 children in the U.S. lived in a grandmother's home with neither their parents nor grandfather present, and two-thirds of those families were poor (Ibid), as compared to one-sixth of children in the general population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002).

There are a number of financial supports available to grandparent families; some are based on family income and the rest may demand other certain qualifiers. Two programs in Illinois will be addressed to point to some of the discrepancies that exist. The first is assistance through Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the second is through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

If a child is under the guardianship of DCFS and placed with a relative, a monthly stipend is paid to the relative caregiver, but the amount is less than that paid to a non-relative caregiver. Furthermore, if the grandparent takes guardianship or if the grandparent takes the child prior to the case going through the DCFS procedure, the case will be closed by DCFS thereby eliminating funding through DCFS. If, on the other hand, the child is in foster care, and the grandparents take the child after going through the foster care training program, they will be eligible for the DCFS payment. Some grandparents are reluctant to take the latter course for a number of reasons, which include possible fear of alienating their adult child and concern about the reunification and adoption initiative programs.

The other possible financial resource is TANF. Within TANF, Illinois has established a grant called the "Child Only Grant." A number of factors make this program attractive to grandparents. If the grandparent is employed, day care is paid for the children; a child automatically becomes eligible for Medicaid by virtue of qualifying for the grant; and the grandparent does not have to be a legal guardian nor have legal custody of the children. Grandparents are asked to provide information about the birth parents for the purpose of DCFS attempting to obtain child support from them, but are not required to do so if it might jeopardize them or the children. If a grandparent chooses not to accept the cash grant, the children would continue to be eligible for Medicaid (Ill. Dept. on Aging, Tip Sheet, 2002a).

As a point of comparison, the chart below illustrates the difference in payment schedule provided by the Department of Children and Family Services and by the Department of Human Services. The figures are from payment rates in Zone 1, which encompasses Northern Illinois, Cook County, and Champaign.

Number of Children	Department of Children and Family Services Care Rates for an Unlicensed Relative (1997-1998)	Department of Human Services "Child Only Grant" (March, 1998)
1	$268.00	$102.00
2	$531.50	$201.00
3	$749.17	$249.00

In an effort to achieve some degree of parity, the Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren sent a letter to Secretary Baker of the Department of Human Services requesting that consideration be given to an incremental rate increase so that eventually, the rates would be more comparable. It appears that this will not occur because the increase in rates would create lack of parity within TANF. The "Child Only Grant" is a good program that is easily accessed, but the amount of the grant does not approach the realistic cost of caring for a child.

Another problem with the "Child Only Grant" is that it is underutilized: the population it serves is not taking advantage of what help it does offer. Based on figures available in July 2000, there were 70,000 children residing in grandparent headed households without a parent present; only 6,194 Child Only Grants were being utilized by all relative caregivers in the state, including grandparents. With funding that does not approach that of DCFS and the lack of publicity, the program does not address the financial needs of the children or their grandparent caregivers (Information on DCFS and "Child Only Grant" provided by Barbara Schwartz, Coordinator, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program, Illinois Department on Aging, 10/00 and 3/02).

Challenges in the Education System

Many grandparents encounter their next major obstacle when attempting to enroll their grandchild in school. At first glance, the policy seems to be a clear one, in that a child is entitled to attend school in the district in which he/she resides. As enacted by the 89th General Assembly, PA 89-480 (105 ILCS 5/10-20.12b): "A child is entitled to tuition-free enrollment in the school district wherein he resides. Residency, in this context, has a specific meaning in the law. *A child is presumed to be a resident of the school district wherein the persons who have legal custody of him reside*" (emphasis added). Further, residence is defined as "physical presence with an intention to remain on a permanent basis (Connelly v. Gibbs, 112 Ill.App.3rd 257, 445 N.E.2d 477 m 68 Ill.Dec 29 (1st Dist. 1983)). Complications arise, however, in the interpretation of both the concept of custody or guardianship, and the concept of residency.

Situations in which the grandparent has custody or guardianship are rather straightforward: in these cases, enrollment is handled as if the parent were the enrolling party. When the grandparent does not have custody or guardianship, the criteria for enrollment are less clear and the process of enrollment may be more difficult for the grandparent in such circumstances. According to a fact sheet published by the Illinois Department of Aging in 1997, school districts "cannot require [that a grandparent have] legal guardianship" (Public Act 89-480). However, many school districts continue to recommend this, stating that the grandparent needs to obtain legal guardianship (Dawson-Tibbits, 1999). Likewise, a district "cannot require written confirmation from the parent or legal guardian that the child is in the actual custody and control of a non-parent or non-guardian" (Public Act 89-480). In actual practice, many districts will require written confirmation that the child is in the custody of the grandparent. The Illinois Department of Aging receives many phone calls from grandparents reporting that a school district has advised them that they need to do so (Schwartz, personal communication).

The seemingly inflexible policies that districts frequently adopt often intimidate those attempting to enroll children who are not under their guardianship or custody. The district's intent may be to avoid legal complications, since, from the point of view of the district, issues such as permission slips for field trips and consent forms for tests are legal realities that a responsible district must take seriously. While that makes legal custody or legal guardianship desirable, there are other ways to handle these situations. For example, the school code provides latitude in defining legal custody: "Custody exercised by an adult who demonstrates that, in fact, he or she has assumed and exercises legal responsibility for the pupil and provides the pupil with a regular fixed night time abode for purposes other than to have access to the educational programs of the school district" (PA 89-480: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.12b). The language within the school code concerning custody is meant to simplify the determination of eligibility for registration.

There is no provision in Illinois law that defines proof of residency. Each district is free, within the framework of its school board's philosophy, to determine its own policy. This is significant in that latitude can be provided or exactitude can be required without passing legal scrutiny. The following three situations from the same school district demonstrate the inconsistency that can result when there is not a mandated standard. The identifying information has been removed in the interest of confidentiality.

I. Three boys reside with their maternal grandparents outside the parameters of the school district. The mother, who is a resident, retains legal custody. She has never had to prove that her children resided with her, since it was her residency in which the district was interested. Thus the children, with the knowledge of the district, attend school in a district in which they do not reside.

II. A father resides outside of the district, and the children reside with their maternal grandmother within the school district. The father retains legal custody, and the district demanded that the father prove that he was in fact residing within the district (i.e. with his mother) so that the children could continue to attend school. While he continued to live out of district, he was able to secure a utility in his name with his mother's address. In this manner, the children were able to continue to attend school in a district in which they in fact reside, although their father does not.

III. A mother and her three daughters moved in with the grandparents. At the time of the move, she was receiving public assistance. Since public aid's acceptance of residence is adequate proof of residence within the district, the two school-aged children were admitted to the school. During the course of the year, the mother secured employment, and the third child reached school age. Nothing in her circumstances had changed other than her source of income, and yet she was required to prove that she continued to live with her mother. Since she was unable to secure a utility in her name due to a poor credit rating, and could not prove residency in any other way (e.g. lease, renter's policy), her youngest daughter was not permitted to register for kindergarten. Thus, the older two children continued to attend school within the district and their youngest sister, who lived with them, could not register and had to be enrolled in a private school.

These three scenarios are consistent within the framework of that particular district's policy on residency but offer inconsistent results Furthermore, according to the Regional Office of the State Board of Education, had these families pursued legal action, the following would have been likely findings: in the first case, in which the children are actually living out of district, the district would be found to be in violation of school code; in the second and third cases, the families would have likely prevailed on the basis that the "circumstantial test" had not been extended by the district. In other words, while each district can determine its own criteria to establish residency, the district can and should make circumstantial exceptions to its policy when it is appropriate. In a memo from the Legal Department to the Regional Offices of Education dated 9/30/99, it is stated:

> The basic rule is that a student's residency for purposes of public school attendance is the district in which his parents reside. If a student is not living with parents, the inquiry turns to whether the student is living in another district solely for the purpose of going to school in this other district. If the answer is "yes," then the district of residence for this student who

has moved away from the parents' home nevertheless remains that of her parents for purposes of entitlement to attend public school tuition free. However, if the reason for the student's living away from the parents is not solely to attend school in another district, then the student is entitled to attend tuition free in that district where he or she actually has a regular nighttime abode.

The obligation is clear: any student residing within the district is entitled to an education within that district. In their efforts to assure that students are not living with relatives for the sole purpose of attending school in a more desirable district, boards have tended to develop strict guidelines that can result in illegal restrictions in some cases. Unfortunately, the district's interpretation of the law is often unquestioned by the caregiver, who likely has little reason to doubt the interpretation that has been provided.

Proposals

Within the Special Education Guidelines is a provision that each parent needs to be provided with a copy of their rights as they pertain to their child's placement. Included in that policy is a description of the procedure that a parent needs to follow in the event that they feel their rights have been violated. Each parent receives a copy of the policy when they enroll their child in the program. A similar policy of "parent/custodian and student rights" should be required within each school for all students, in order to provide full disclosure to the parent/guardian. Such a document would provide requirements about legal custody or guardianship and residency, circumstances that deem special consideration and contact information for the Regional Office. Further, the Regional Office would approve such a document for the purpose of consistency amongst districts.

Because of the wide range of attitudes and motivations in various districts, children can be barred from attending school for weeks or months at a time. In order to resolve matters in an appropriate, timely manner, consideration should be given to levying a fine on the district.

Another possible consideration would be adopting statewide guidelines specifically for relative caregivers. This may be the more reasonable course

of action since it specifically addresses the target population only and would continue to allow districts some degree of latitude in dealing with their primary concern, "boundary crossers." Boundary crossers are defined as the individuals who use a friend's, or relative's address for the purpose of having their child attend a different school.

Resources for Grandparent Caregivers

Procuring financial and educational services are merely two of the myriad of issues confronting grandparent caregivers. Several organizations have responded to the basic need for information in this growing population. In conjunction with the Brookdale Foundation, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has created the National Grandparent Information Center, a clearinghouse for issues of concern related to grandparents as caregivers (Kornhaber, 1996). AARP helps raise awareness of this phenomenon and regularly provides information through their monthly magazine and their web site. Also Generations United, a national organization, provides fact sheets for grandparents and relatives raising grandchildren. Generations United promotes intergenerational strategies, programs and policies. Additionally, there are several web sites offering information on legal, welfare, educational, housing and health issues.

Grandparents raising their grandchildren often find themselves with few family supports; therefore, resources for interpersonal support are as necessary as current information. In her book, "Grandparents as Parents," Sylvie de Toledo, a social worker, discusses her personal situation in which her parents assumed the role of caregivers for their grandson. In seeking out supportive services at the time, de Toledo discovered that there were none. She started the first Grandparents as Parents (GAP) support group in California: hundreds more had formed across the country by the time of the book's publication in 1995 (deToledo and Brown, 1995).

Considering that the issue of grandparents parenting their grandchildren only came to the attention of the media researchers and policy makers in 1990 (Bryson and Casper, 1998), it is rather impressive that the network of support services in Illinois is as developed as it is. For example, as a result of the White House Conference on Aging in 1995, the Illinois' Governor's Conference, and the impetus provided by a task force formed by the Jewish Children's Bureau, a $10,000 foundation grant was provided through the Brookdale Foundation. The purpose of the grant was to establish statewide support groups and a network of community based programs, as well as to expand the work of what became the Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. The first support program began in Illinois in 1995-96. In 1998, the legislature approved funds to expand the program and hire a program coordinator, bringing the total number of groups to 44. At present, there are 80 support groups, with the 2003 budget allocating funds to continue existing programs and assist in the development of new support groups (Ill. Dept. on Aging, 2002b).

The Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, along with the Illinois Department on Aging, sponsors programs and meetings focusing on issues related to caregiving, such as health, finances, housing and respite care. The Task Force is effective at examining existing policies and working with other agencies in identifying needs and working toward the development of new policies. Additionally, the Task Force has a resource guide, "Starting Points," and "TIP" sheets for informational purposes to assist in navigating through various systems. The Department on Aging has an Information and Referral HelpLine number to further assist in identifying and securing services (Ill. Dept. on Aging, 1999).

At present, there is a demonstration program underway called the Older Caregivers Project. It was developed jointly by the Metropolitan Family Service Bureau and the Office of the Inspector General. Funded by the Department of Children and Family Services, the Older Caregiver's Project is in process in part because of the permanency initiative on the part of DCFS and in part because of situations that have arisen as a result of instances of impaired judgment or serious health impairments on the part of the caregiver. One of the requirements for participation in the project is that the caretaker is or is in the process of becoming a foster or adoptive parent to one of the children in the household. Each service delivery team carries a caseload of 12 families, and is composed of one specialist in each of the following areas: child welfare, finances, and aging. Services include a home based assessment of needs, linkage to resources, and consultation in the areas of finances, housing and long term planning for the child in the event of caregiver incapacity or death.

From the standpoint of policy initiatives, this

multidisciplinary team approach appears to be the most useful model. It encompasses consideration of the full range of stressors, including the realities of incapacitation and death. The obvious limitation is that, at this point, it is a model. It is not available outside of the service area, nor is it available to anyone outside of the DCFS network. Further, given the small number of families able to be serviced by a given team, it will require significant funding. However, those aspects of the model program that prove most effective and budget-manageable will likely be incorporated into existing programs.

Conclusion

When grandparents accept the responsibility of raising their grandchildren, they must contend with a range of psychosocial issues. Many factors contribut-ing to the complexity of this phenomenon have not been addressed in this paper such as multicultural issues, legal services, housing, and developmental ramifications for the individuals involved. The issues concerning finances and education were singled out because they are the most immediate issues faced by caregivers at the pivotal point of placement. The intent is to heighten awareness of the needs of this unique, ever-growing population, as well as to direct attention to their specific service needs. An awareness of these issues appears particularly pertinent to school social workers: we are in the unique position of having the opportunity for early identification, since school registration occurs at the onset of placement. At what can be a stressful time of transition, we can provide grandparents support by identifying family needs and acting as a liason in negotiating service acquistion.

Patricia M. Ziebka, LCSW, is a second-year student in the doctoral program and has been a school social worker in the near western suburbs of Chicago for the past 20 years. Prior to that, she worked in child welfare and family services, as well as having worked as a social work consultant to a number of retirement homes in the Chicago area.

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Faculty Reading List: An Invitation to Continued Learning

by Brenda K. Nelson

With graduation approaching, I reflected on what I have learned from and value most about my professors and fellow students. I have come away from many class sessions inspired by lively discussions and excited by how the world of ideas connects so closely with the lived experience of us as students and of the clients whose worlds we seek to understand.

As students, we are drawn to the profession of social work because we know that this work really matters. We believe that we can make the world a better place by providing caring and empowering relationships for people who need them most. In our fieldwork, we experience how human beings who may be in pain can see themselves as worthwhile and can realize that with the support of others, they can create a better future and achieve a better, happier life. Even though this sounds simple, we are acutely aware that it can be quite confounding in the thick of a therapeutic relationship.

While we don't have all the answers, we have learned a *process* for exploring our questions — or, as my current supervisor would say, for considering the rationale for why we do what we do. We can and should take our continued professional development seriously. But once we graduate, how do we maintain a level of scholarly engagement in which we continue to learn and apply the knowledge we've gained? I suspect that many others feel as I do — that an MSW curriculum introduces a broad range of ideas, provides guidance and experience, and nurtures professional identity. Yet as graduation nears, I wish I could have learned even more. Here we are about to embark on social work careers — are we equipped with everything we need to know?

Of course we're not. That is what the learning process is all about; it is process of discovering what we don't know and actively seeking new knowledge. In my first Individuals and Families class, I recall several classmates saying they decided to pursue an MSW because they realized they needed to know more in order to better help the people with whom they were working. Having completed our degrees, we can look back and assess the gains in knowledge as well as areas for further inquiry.

To help guide this process of continued inquiry, I asked all full-time faculty from Loyola's School of Social Work to list the books or articles they consider central to social work practice, theory, or history. The list below represents the recommendations various faculty members made for us.

I sincerely thank the faculty members whose contributions to this compilation symbolize their inspiring commitment to student learning. And to my fellow students of social work — enjoy the list! My hope is that we can continue building our libraries and staying current with both foundational and new knowledge in the field, and that we continue sharing with and learning from each other. Let's keep broadening our horizons for the sake of our own development and for the sake of those whose lives are directly affected by the extent to which we keep our minds open to learning.

Jan Wolff Bensdorf

Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissim — Otto Kernberg
Ego Psychology and Social Work Practice — Eda Goldstein
In a Different Voice — Carol Gilligan
The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life — Miller and Stiver
Women in Family: A Framework for Family Therapy — Monica McGoldrick, Carol Anderson, and Froma Walsh

James Marley

"While books on social work by social workers are important, many folks writing in other disciplines can have (and they have had) a tremendous impact on social work practice. With that said, here is my list of books I would hope every social work student would eventually get around to reading."
Acts of Meaning — Jerome Bruner
Madness & Civilization or The Order of Things — Michael Foucault
The Interpretation of Cultures — Clifford Geertz
Difference and Pathology — Sander Gilman
Private Terror/Public Life — James Glass
The Psychosocial Interior of the Family — Gerald Handel & Gail Whitchurch
Subjects of Analysis — Thomas Ogden

Terry Northcut

"I would agree with Jim Marley about the need to read both in and out of our discipline. The cross-fertilization of ideas will enrich your life and therefore your practice. My list is long because books have always been essential in my life."

1. *Inside Out and Outside In* — Joan Berzoff, et al.
2. *Ego Psychology* — Eda Goldstein
3. Anything by Michael Basch — his writing is lovely and conveys how he chooses to intervene with clients.
4. Anything by Selma Fraiberg — her writing is so "reader friendly." Even though some of the classical analytic ideas are dated, she makes you proud to be in the profession.
5. *Enhancing Psychodynamic Therapy with Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques* — Northcut & Heller - hey, how could I not recommend this!? Anyway, the importance of integrative models for practice is what I value.
6. Something by Mary Richmond and/or Bertha Reynolds to remember why you love social work.
7. *The Power of Language in the Clinical Process: Assessing and Treating the Bilingual Person* — RoseMarie Perez Foster - to remind yourself of the importance of the cultural context in practice and to begin to think about how to understand and work with the differences.
8. Anything by Anne Lamott — to remember your sense of humor.
9. Anything by Elizabeth Berg — for the pure joy of reading contemporary literature that touches your emotions. Likewise, I would review all of your favorite poems periodically. For me it's e.e. cummings "somewhere I have never travelled" and Wordsworth's "Lines Written in Early Spring"
10. *Learning to Dance Inside* — George Fowler, for self-care.

Policy Faculty: Carol Amadio, Jan Wolf-Bensdorf, Brenda Crawley, Susan Grossman, Edward Gumz, Terri Kilbane, Maria Vidal de Haymes

Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present — Mimi Abramovitz

Twenty Years at Hull House — Jane Addams

Reveille for Radicals — Saul Alinsky

Rules for Radicals — Saul Alinsky

Habits of the Heart — Robert Bellah

A New History of Social Welfare — Phyllis Day

In the Best Interests of the Child — Goldstein, Freud, & Solnit

The Other America — Michael Harrington

Human Service Organizations — Yeshekel Hasenfeld

The Underclass — compilation by Christopher Jencks

"Burnout as Alienation" in Social Service Review (1981) — Howard Karger

In the Shadow of the Poorhouse — Michael Katz

There are No Children Here — Alex Kotlowitz

Rachel and her Children — Jonothan Kozol

Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools — Jonothan Kozol

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions — Thomas Kuhn

The Culture of Narcissism — Christopher Lasch

Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services — Michael Lipsky

Ethical Decision-Making in Social Work Practice — Lowenberg, Dolgoff, & Harrington

The Sociological Imagination — C. Wright Mills

"A Society of Organizations" in Theory and Society — Charles Perrow

Regulating the Poor — Frances Fox Piven & Richard Cloward

Poor People's Movements — Frances Fox Piven & Richard Cloward

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community — Robert Putnam

Social Diagnosis — Mary Richmond

The Triumph of the Therapeutic — Philip Rieff

Classics of Organization Theory — Jay M. Shafritz & Philip Whitbeck, Eds.

Unfaithful Angels: How Social Work Lost its Mission — Harry Specht & Mark Courtney

From Poor Law to Welfare State — William Trattner

Speaking Truth to Power — Aaron Wildavsky

The Declining Significance of Race — William Julius Wilson

Carolyn Saari

"Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Social Work Theory" in *Clinical Social Work Journal* (1998) — Jill Horowitz

"On the Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis" in *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (1960) — Hans W. Loewald

"Why They Don't Come Back: A Clinical Perspective on the No Show Client" in *Clinical Social Work Journal* (2001) — William S. Meyer

"Identity Complexity as an Indicator of Health" in *Clinical Social Work Journal* (1993)— Carolyn Saari

The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology — Daniel Stern

Shirley Simon

Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy — Irvin Yalom

Social Work Dictionary — Robert Barker

Katherine Tyson

New Foundations for Scientific Social and Behavioral Research: The Heuristic Paradigm — Katherine Tyson

Smart love: The compassionate alternative to discipline that will help you be a better parent and your child a better person — Martha Heineman Pieper & William Joseph Pieper

Intrapsychic humanism: An introduction to a comprehensive psychology and philosophy of mind — Martha Heineman Pieper & William Joseph Pieper

"Doing good science without sacrificing good values." *Families in Society: Journal of the Contemporary Human Services* (2002) — Jessica Heineman-Pieper, Katherine Tyson, & Martha Heineman Pieper

"The privilege of being a therapist: A fresh perspective from intrapsychic humanism on caregiving intimacy and the development of the professional self." *Families in Society: Journal of the Contemporary Human Services* (1999) — Martha Heineman Pieper

"The understanding and treatment of childhood hyperactivity: Old problems and new approaches." *Smith College Studies in Social Work* (1991) — Katherine Tyson

"An empowering approach to crisis intervention and brief treatment with preschool children." *Families in Society: Journal of the Contemporary Human Services* (1999) — Katherine Tyson.

"Using the teacher-student relationship to help children diagnosed as hyperactive." *Child and Youth Care Forum* (2000) — Katherine Tyson

Joseph Walsh

"These are at least some of my favorite books for understanding ideas and for appreciating both normal and not-so-normal behavior. Some are dated but still good."

Understanding Psychotherapy — Michael Basch

The Magic Years — Selma Fraiberg

When Bad Things Happen to Good People — Harold Kushner

Handbook of Clinical Social Work — Rosenblatt & Waldfogd (Editors)

Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy — Irvin Yalom

Dissertation Abstracts

Congratulations and best wishes to Shannon Dunn and Judy Ripsch as they move on to new career challenges and opportunities. The dissertation topics continue to represent the diversity of interests and the commitment of clinical practice of our Ph.D. students. Dissertations are available in the faculty lounge at the School of Social Work and at the periodical desk on the 8th floor of Loyola's Lewis Library, 25 E. Pearson.

Understanding Acute Psychotic Decompensation from the Patient's Perspective
Shannon Dunn, Ph.D., LCSW

Objective: Psychosis has been viewed as mysterious and elusive. Given conclusions of this sort, explanations for psychotic episodes have been premature, simplistic, and many times, inaccurate. The goal of this study is to explore the various contributing factors in the acute psychotic decompensation in people with severe mental illness. Method: This naturalistic study was designed with postpositivist assumptions and employs both quantitative and qualitative data. All data were collected from narrative formulations from 100 retrospective chart reviews of clinical interviews conducted in a natural clinical setting with patients experiencing acute psychosis. Factors were compiled from 4 perspectives: patient, mental health professional, psychiatrist, and "Axis V diagnosis." Results: Theme analysis revealed the most frequently reported factors influencing acute psychotic decompensation from each perspective. There is not just a singular cause of acute psychotic decompensation, but multiple influences. Psychosocial stressors, the most frequently reported being change in supportive relationships, are the origin of psychotic decompensation, and noncompliance with medication is only one of many factors that contribute to acute psychotic decompensation. People with severe mental illness report layers of stressors that contribute to psychotic episodes. People with severe mental illness live daily with internal and external layers of psychosocial stressors that keep them vulnerable. Conclusions: Patients are eager and capable of reporting their own subjective experience and caregivers must be equally as capable, eager, and willing to listen to and understand the experiences of patients. The experiences of patients who have been diagnosed with a severe mental illness can be understood. The viewpoint that devalues the subjective experiences of people who have been diagnosed with severe mental illness because they are psychotic is unwarranted and unsupported. Psychosis is caused by a variety of complex factors. The idea that medication noncompliance is the single cause of acute psychotic decompensation is reductionistic and overvalued. Mental health professionals of all training disciplines had difficulty folding patient quotes into final case formulations. If caregivers know more accurately what bothers an individual, he/she has a better chance of being helped. Policies should include third-party reimbursement for psychotherapy, not just medication management. Policies should stipulate more availability in supportive and therapeutic relationships in all levels of treatment programs, especially those that incorporate the understanding and treatment of dual diagnoses and traumatic experiences. Since patients are capable, eager, and willing to participate in research that allows them to share their point of view, then more research involving subgroups of severely mentally ill should be executed. More studies are needed that respect their points of view. The frequency, severity, and duration of psychotic decompensation can be decreased and even sidestepped.

Development and Maintenance of Positive Sense of Self in Successful Obese Women
Judy Ripsch, Ph.D., LCSW

Using grounded theory method, thirteen successful, obese women were interviewed to determine how they had developed and continue to maintain their self-reported, positive sense of self. They used a Likert scale to rate how positively they perceive their sense of self, which was then correlated with Antonovsky's Sense of Coherence Scale. Their theories of how they learned to choose to experience life in a positive manner, made possible by their relationships, competencies, and self acceptance were compared to Kohut's self psychology theories of self development. Their emphasis of continued growth in relationships, competencies, service to others, and spirituality, in order to maintain their positive sense of self, was explored.

Letters

I was so pleased to read the first issue of *Praxis*. A colleague and fellow alumni of SSW provided me a copy. It is a truly wonderful idea to provide access to social work student and alumni articles, while providing students and alumni a vehicle for publication. I found *Praxis* to be eclectic in topic and scope of practice — from one of the first articles, "Perspectives from Chicago's Homeless Youths: A Needs and Service Use Assessment," which relates to my current generalist work on a coalition addressing these same issues, to the last article, "Codependency Through a Feminist Lens," which I found interesting and engaging. I hope to see more issues of *Praxis*. Keep up the great work!

Beth Pettinelli, LCSW, MSW Class of '99
Jewish Children's Bureau

My compliments to the leadership and contributors of the first edition of the *Praxis* journal. I found the articles to be well-crafted, informative and authoritative, a solid testament to the tradition of scholarship associated with Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work.

Harry Bendicsen, LCSW
Director of Clinical Services, Family Care of Illinois

Congratulations on your exciting new journal! It is very professional both in content and appearance, and I am certain it will have broad appeal to current students as well as to the larger social work community. I find myself looking at *Praxis* from two distinct vantage points. As an alumna of Loyola's School of Social Work, I am proud to see this type of scholarly publication coming from my alma mater. Reading the work of your students offers me a window into what's happening in the program currently and gives me another way to remain connected to the school. It's great to be able to keep abreast of what your students are learning and thinking. I also applaud your decision to invite entries from alumni, which affords us one more way to bridge the worlds of present and former students and to help us stay connected. In addition to being an alumna, I am a doctoral candidate in social work (School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago), so I am keenly aware of how important it is for students to have opportunities to publish their scholarly work. *Praxis* provides a great forum for this, and your students are fortunate to have this important new resource. Please count me in as a long-term subscriber. I look forward to reading the next issue!

Katherine Puckett, LCSW, MSW Class of '94

Congratulations on the premier edition of *Praxis*! I am so impressed with the quality of the journal and with every article it contains. The opportunity it provides for connection between alumni and students of SSW is also very exciting. I look forward to the next edition. Thank you for *Praxis*!

Vicki Grunnet-Alden, LCSW, MSW Class of '98
SSW Alumni Board President

I am writing to express my excitement and appreciation for the creation of *Praxis: Where Reflection & Practice Meet*. *Praxis* gives Loyola social work students and alumni an opportunity to get their work published and share it with others in our field. The journal is unique in that it offers more than research; it incorporates professional experiences and personal thoughts. As a first year social work student, I find the articles insightful, informative and inspiring. It is of great benefit to the university and students to have a special piece of annual work, produced by social workers *for* social workers, and others who are interested. *Praxis* has the structure and the strengths for longevity and nation-wide recognition. I definitely look forward to the future of *Praxis*! Thank you for establishing such a positive addition to the Loyola social work community.

Jevne Lindeman
First year student in the MSW Program