

Book of Abstracts

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through and towards
human relationships

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Keynote Speeches

The intricate ethics of participatory research: negotiating partnership, power and boundaries

Sarah Banks
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Abstract

Participatory research is becoming increasingly popular. This entails people with direct experience of, or interest in, the topic of study playing a role in all or some of the research design and process. This presentation will discuss some of the ethical challenges arising in research that entails academics or professional practitioners working together with people who use social and health care services and/or members of community-based groups. It may be tempting to assume that potential ethical challenges (e.g. avoiding exploitation, ensuring mutual respect, agreeing ownership of intellectual property) can be anticipated, mitigated in advance and checked off by Research Ethics Committees or Institutional Review Boards. However, this rarely reflects the messy reality of what happens in practice.

This presentation outlines some of the day-to-day and unexpected ethical challenges negotiated by people from different backgrounds working together as co-researchers. It draws on case examples from around the world. Many are accounts of 'small' issues occurring during the research process, often not reported in publications, for example: should a community researcher in Southern Africa adapt research questions to avoid hurting people she knows?; how should a Dutch academic respond to a community based co-researcher's request to correct her written language?; where are the boundaries between 'friend' and 'co-researcher' for a UK PhD student?; should a Canadian researcher also function as a therapist during a research project? These questions are not easily answered by Research Ethics Committees, or through consulting ethical codes. The responses rely on careful reflection and deliberation between parties involved, based on particular

circumstances and relationships. This requires a situated, relationship-based approach to ethics, drawing on an ethics of care, virtue ethics and the practice of 'ethics work', details of which will be outlined in this presentation.

The Relational foundation of Social work and its implications for Social work research

Fabio Folgheraiter
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Abstract

The connection between Social work and social relationships can be seen as an obvious one, but it is complex indeed. The speech aims to explore a set of analytical concepts for a better understanding of the deep "social" (relational) nature of Social work practice. Some basic semantic, epistemological, and methodological issues regarding this connection will be briefly discussed, with particular attention to the dynamics of networking in coping processes.

The contribution's background includes general considerations about the scientific nature and the "epistemological object" of Social work, as well as about the best placement of the discipline in the ongoing debate between the classic paradigms of determinism, on one hand, and of phenomenology, on the other one.

The ambivalent meanings that the widely used term "social" can assume within the label "Social work" will be analyzed, as well as the various possible connotations of the term "relationship", which are not all equally significant and useful in the present scientific debate. A set of operative coordinates will be proposed to highlight the crucial points of a professional Social work that is authentically relational (or relationship-based). These concepts support researchers to better identify, within the broader field of social and sociological research, the specific/essential research focuses for theoretical and empirical studies about Social work.

Community-Based, Participatory Action Research for Climate Justice

Meredith C.F. Powers

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Abstract

As the global climate crisis and the intersecting injustices (e.g., chronic racism, sexism, poverty, human rights and nature rights violations) continue to exacerbate, community-based, participatory action research is becoming increasingly utilized. This presentation offers concrete examples from Dr. Powers' own community engaged research as an applied scholar, including an ecosystem enhancement project at a park connected to an active adult center, climate migration research, inclusive art-based and ecotherapy projects, and a photovoice project at a local sustainable farm, whose mission is to connect people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to the larger community through shared living and work. Dr. Powers will also include concrete tips when considering using these techniques, including pitfalls to avoid. Discussion includes implications for social workers, other professionals, and communities, as it relates to the importance of not only community-based, participatory research methods, but also the urgency of action-oriented research from an ecosocial worldview in times of climate crisis.

The rediscovery of community. Social work and the art of community innovation

Jean-Pierre Wilken

University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, Netherlands

Abstract

The field of community development is rapidly gaining interest as it comes to social work and social innovation. Community building can be regarded as a countermovement to neoliberal individualisation and its negative side-effects like loneliness and polarisation. It seems like the notion of community is rediscovered and reinstalled. Social workers can play an important role in supporting communities to recognize their own strengths and to use these for building social capital. Social work research can play a significant important role in community social work. Researchers can investigate, describe, and evaluate community interventions. They can support processes of community building by conducting participatory action research, and by designing new approaches that social workers, other professionals and citizens can use. In this presentation, Jean Pierre Wilken will highlight current developments, and illustrate with examples from research how social work can engage in community innovation.

Being co-researchers in Social work. My experience as young carers

Chiara Menescalchi

Young Care Italia Associations, Milan, Italy

Abstract

In 2018 I participated in a PhD research, thus becoming, without apparent merit, a co-researcher. I shared my experience as young caregiver with two girls, Samia and Margherita, whom I had never met before but who had in common with me a story of sacrifice, effort, and self-denial. I had never reflected on the meaning of my life experience as a daughter and very young caregivers of a woman with cancer, because she was my mom and I would have done anything to relieve her of pain and worries. The research, indeed, focused on the experience of children and teen caring for a family member in need. Our collaboration, which lasted for almost two years, resulted in the creation of the first Italian definition of young caregiver, a questionnaire to identify them among middle school students, and a focus group of young caregivers. During the research path, my participation took on different meanings for me. One of them is "remembering" because to get to know each other, we had to share our experiences and I wanted with all my heart to go back to when my mom was still here. Another one is "naming" as it helped me understand the meaning of my being a caregiver and how it affected my life. But I believe that the one that best defines my experience as co-researcher is the word "opportunity." Seeing myself in the other participants and feeling their sufferings was a powerful experience, which made me redefine myself, moved me into action, and gave me a sense of commitment, new possibilities, thus opening a new chapter in my life story. When the research was concluded, I decided with other one co-researcher and other girl to found the Young Care Italia Association, the first Italian association for young caregivers.

Geopolitics of knowledge and social work: decolonial perspectives for epistemic justice

Giannina Muñoz Arce
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Abstract

"Decolonising" implies dismantling the "colonial" criteria with which an object of knowledge is epistemically constructed. From a decolonial perspective, it is assumed that these criteria conceal a dark side: the imposition of a rationality based on "epistemicide", that is, on the annihilation of the original knowledge of colonised peoples, in addition to the dispossession of their material wealth.

This is not a story of the past. The "colonial" criteria of "valid" knowledge are reproduced today and are manifested in the claim to objectivity and political neutrality of social research, and in the silence of the research participants. The ways in which subaltern groups create knowledge are still invisible or ignored by mainstream academic communities. Particularly in the Social Work community, coloniality of knowledge is expressed in the publications of highly-rated journals. For example, authors whose mother tongue is not English are a minority, as the study published by Roche & Flynn in 2020 highlighted.

Is it possible to decolonise the logic of social work research in a world dominated by the rationality of cognitive capitalism, that demands us acceleration, measurable outputs, and competitive achievements? What can we gain and what can we lose in the adventure of decolonising social work research? What does "decolonising social work research" mean in practical terms? In this presentation I propose to address these questions, assuming that i) epistemic justice is a dimension of social justice - an ethical principle that guides the social work profession; and ii) while contributing to social justice, decolonising knowledge has ethical, epistemic, and methodological requests. From the above, a new question will be raised to critically reflect: are we still available - or not - to decolonise the way we do social work research?

Accepted abstracts

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Social workers' attitudes towards adoption of evidence-based practice

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an approach that purports to integrate professionals' personal knowledge, experience, and assessment skills with the most reliable and current research evidence, with the aim of promoting optimal intervention decisions for the client. Social workers' attitudes towards adoption of EBP were found in previous studies to be an important predictor of the actual implementation of EBPs amongst them. Hence, the aim of the current study was to explore the path through which organizational context variables are related to social workers' attitudes towards adoption EBP. Specifically, the current study explores the mediating role of work-related self-efficacy in the association between workplace social support, accessibility of work-related data and information resources, and role ambiguity, and social workers' attitudes towards EBP.

Methods: For the purpose of the study, 559 social workers were sampled by means of structured questionnaires. Structural equation modeling was conducted to examine the proposed model. *Findings:* Accessibility of data and information resources and workplace social support were positively associated with self-efficacy, and role ambiguity was negatively associated with self-efficacy, which was in turn positively related to social workers' attitudes towards EBP. *Conclusions:* The findings of the current study may assist policymakers and professional supervisors in developing interventions designed to promote more positive attitudes towards EBP among social workers. In the effort to promote the integration of EBP in social service settings, the impact of organizational factors on social workers' work-related self-efficacy should be taken into account.

Keywords

Evidence-based practice , Social workers, Work-related self-efficacy , Attitudes , Support

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Using the Ubuntu to strengthen children community welfare and social work in Uganda

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Ubuntu originates from Sub-Saharan Africa and has been described as “humanness, personhood and morality”. Ubuntu means to be human, which is claimed to have predated most of indigenous African knowledge. It is developed around a maxim: "a person is a person through other people". It infers to the moral quality of the person and the interconnectedness between people.

In the last two years ubuntu was the theme of the celebration of the International SW Day and integrated into the global agenda for social work and social development, and also as indigenous knowledge with huge importance in the profession core.

This communication aims to reveal how the ubuntu strengthens children community welfare and social work in Uganda. In these country, Ubuntu traditions and philosophy are carried out across many tribes but are more prominent in the Bantu speaking communities of Central, Western and Eastern Uganda.

We demonstrate and exemplify how the ubuntu could enhance the performance of community-level structures towards the improvement community in Uganda, and to enhance social work with as an indigenous approach.

To realise this, we present a literature review and documented practice examples from Uganda which we analyse and correspondingly highlight or illustrate the ubuntu informed patterns in them.

The results show patterns as community, voluntary, solidarity, vigilance, moral, hospitality, appear as indigenous knowledge related with ubuntu and are very important for social work in children protection.

The individual value-driven children welfare model and the social work case work which are well-known colonial or western approaches can be transform with these patterns of ubuntu in Uganda.

Keywords

Social Work, Ubuntu, Children, Community, indigenous

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Participation Experiences and Autonomy Development of Care Leavers from their Retrospective View

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the professional discussion about residential care, the necessity of the participation of the addressees, the affected children and adolescents, is increasingly emphasized (Reimer 2017). A claim for participation results in particular from the implementation of children's rights and the change of educational relationships from command to negotiation (Bertotti and Campanini 2012). The realization of this claim in form of comprehensive participation practices in residential care settings is associated with various challenges, including Pluto's (2018) definition that "the difficulty in addressing the participation claim" is that "no formal, universally valid determination can be made as to what exactly participation is in which situation. Ultimately, it must always be examined anew whether a situation satisfies the claim ... and how young people themselves assess their actions." (p.959). On the one hand, how young people themselves assess their actions has an everyday significance in the creation and establishment of participatory care-settings and arrangements, on the other hand, the retrospective view of the addressees is also becoming increasingly important for the improvement of the service-delivery of residential care. In this sense, it is possible to learn from care leavers how participation in residential care can be improved. The proposed oral presentation would like to contribute to these improvements, by analyzing participation experiences of care-leavers, who, in biographical in-depth interviews, report on decision-making situations, they have experienced in the context of their residential care placement, for example regarding their own school or professional career, regarding medical treatment, or regarding moving out. The decisions were perceived by addressees either as autonomously decided, negotiated in partnership, or in rare cases dictated by the institution or the child and youth welfare services. The presentation draws on data from the research project Occupational Aspirations of Care Leavers and their Pathways to Autonomy (Short Title: OCAS) and analyzes seven narratives of young adults in form of a comparative case-study, within the socio-political context of the Autonomous Italian province of South Tyrol. The aim is to trace a connection between experiences of participation and autonomy development that the interviewees portray on average five years after leaving the residential care setting. By shading light on the connection between participation experiences and autonomy development the results can help to identify crucial areas in order to improve participation in residential care settings.

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Keywords

care-leavers, autonomy, participation-experiences, residential-care, children-rights

Working with Family Members of Addicts: A Survey of Addiction Counselling Centers in Germany

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) developed in America is a innovative approach to treating relatives of addicts. The central idea is to enable the relatives to directly influence their addicted relative and to positively influence the motivation to seek help. In the master's thesis, the particularly appreciative and strengthening effect of CRAFT was worked out. This is an essential difference to other concepts for relatives. However, this is hardly ever implemented in Germany. In addition to the literature research, the practical implementation and use of the concept in outpatient addiction treatment facilities in Germany should also be examined in the research. Previous and predominantly quantitative surveys focused exclusively on the perspective of relatives. From the profession as a social worker, the perspective of the addiction counsellors was to be examined, because they play an essential role in the question of the social-legal recognition of CRAFT. The central research question was: How do addiction counsellors apply the CRAFT concept in their daily work? That is, those who use or could use CRAFT in their daily work. Qualitative survey methods are suitable for this purpose in order to work out the individual views of the individuals. The survey analysed where the positive effects of the CRAFT concept come from, whether it is due to the counsellor-counsellor relationship or whether the content alone is responsible for the positive results.

With the findings, the existing quantitative results are to be expanded by using some qualitative perspectives. Staff in nine addiction support facilities in Germany were interviewed. All interviewees were actively working with CRAFT in counselling and had attended further training beforehand. They were contacted in writing or by telephone to ask for participation. In a short preparatory interview, open questions were clarified and information on data security and anonymization was given. Subsequently, the interviews were conducted by telephone using semi-structured guided interviews. The evaluation was carried out with the help of qualitative content analysis according.

The main results of the survey are: The addiction counsellors see CRAFT as a very good alternative to existing programmes to support relatives. CRAFT is experienced as being close to everyday life and goal-oriented. The concept is implemented individually and targeted specifically to the needs of the relatives. During the interview it became very clear that the majority of relatives show an improvement in quality of life and improved communication during treatment. In addition, the counsellors themselves are more motivated and find their work more satisfying. These findings are significant in order to improve CRAFT's further training and to fight together with other counsellors for social legal recognition in Germany. CRAFT offers an effective concept through the combination of an approachable attitude towards relatives and well-founded tools.

The results can be integrated into further research aspects and research groups throughout Europe. Specifics for the respective cultural groups can be derived and thus the programme can be adapted precisely for the relatives. In addition, the further training for counsellors can be revised and adapted to the new findings.

Keywords

family members, qualitative research, addiction, research dissemination, Practice research

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Scoping the Australian Child Welfare Workforce: Emerging Trends and Needs

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Social workers employed in the child welfare field deal with some of the most complex problems, making practice emotionally challenging and ethically fraught. In the context of these challenges and continual growth in demand there are increasing calls for major reform towards public health approaches shifting from statutory systems to supportive services. To manage these challenges and enable reform, the child welfare sector needs to attract, recruit, support and sustain a reliable and appropriately qualified and skilled workforce. This paper presents findings from a recent study that adopted a public health perspective to examine the characteristics, trends and needs within the Australian tertiary, secondary and primary tiers of the child welfare workforce.

Methods: Publicly available data was examined using an exploratory archival approach to scope the Australian child welfare workforce.

Findings: The findings revealed significant gaps within the tertiary workforce, difficulties within the rapidly expanding secondary workforce and an ill-defined, data-scarce primary sector. Additionally, the education system produces insufficient graduates to meet the increasing service demand across all tiers.

Conclusions: These deficits draw attention the limited consideration afforded to the workforce within child welfare systems, let alone the workforce needed to enable a transition to more holistic ways of working. This is particularly pertinent for social work education, policy, and practice, which has always played a leadership role in child welfare. Without serious consideration being given to workforce issues within social work, systems will continue to function in crisis, making reform unachievable.

Keywords

Child Welfare, Social work workforce, Public health approaches, Higher Education, Care workforce

52

The Invisibility around Race in Gerontological Social Work

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The number of ageing migrants are increasing worldwide with international migration and globalization. However, there is inadequate evidence-based knowledge about these groups in gerontological social work (Torres, 2022, 99). Racialized older migrants are often disadvantaged by intersections of economic and social discrimination throughout their lifetime which are entrenched in interlocking systems of racialization, ageism, sexism, and classism (Ferrer et al., 2022). Their lived experiences are crucial to develop good policies in social work, but they are often under-represented in scholarly debates in ageing research. This article explores how older migrant women from non-European and racialized background in Finland narrate their experience of racism in their everyday lives. The data consists of semi-structured interviews with 20 older migrant women. This article embarks to address the gap in social work scholarship on how issues of race and racism impact the everyday lives of racialized older migrant women.

Keywords

Gerontological Social Work, Race , Intersectionality , Racialization , Social Justice

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Connecting Social Work Research and Practice: A case study on co-creation of practice knowledge about interventions to improve participation in political and democratic life of adults with intellectual disabilities

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Proposal type

Workshop

Abstract

Participation of people with intellectual disabilities in United Kingdom Parliamentary Elections has previously been found to be lower than that of non-learning disabled peers. This workshop shall present emergent learning from a

longitudinal social work practice intervention aiming to promote the right to participate in democratic and political life and increase participation rates.

Our emergent findings, 3 years into this study, are consistent with the hypothesis that people with intellectual disabilities are significantly more likely to register to participate and turn out on polling day to cast a vote if they are made aware of their right to do so by social worker who take a human capabilities approach towards their practice role. During the workshop the authors shall present analysis of secondary analysis which show the impact of the practice intervention.

Through the lens of a case study, the interactive workshop shall explore with participants:

1. how social work leadership can approach developing and embedding a culture of professional curiosity across practice.
2. divergent methodological approaches which build capacity and support the creation of practice based knowledge (of which traditional research methods are just one approach) including co-creation of knowledge with an emergent network of co-researchers with lived experience.
3. different approaches towards knowledge generation on the impact and effectiveness of adult social work practice, understanding from the perspective of co-researchers with lived experience how they attribute value towards outcomes from this approach.

Keywords

intellectual disabilities, knowledge co-creation, social work, participation, co-research

61

Working Conditions and Wellbeing: A 6-year longitudinal study and Co-Creating a Healthier Social Work System

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: During the Covid-19 pandemic, the social work role was described as 'critical' by governments across the world. However, in the years prior to the pandemic, nationwide surveys from 2017 and 2019 demonstrated that social workers in the UK had among the worst working conditions of any occupation in the country. Indeed, the UK government outlined that there has been a consistent lack of support for social workers' mental health and wellbeing. This talk will outline the findings of a 6-year multi-phase longitudinal study of social worker wellbeing in the UK, and the co-creation of a series of interventions to support and improve upon social worker wellbeing.

Methods: Three national surveys (2017, 2019, 2021) of working conditions, mental health, stress, and organisational outcomes were undertaken. Through interviews, focus groups, and expert panels, Ravalier and colleagues also worked with social workers from across the UK to develop a series of toolkit-based interventions to support social worker wellbeing, focusing on making improvements at an individual, team, and organisational level.

Results: Working conditions, wellbeing, and associated outcomes are continually poor in UK social work. Triangulation of survey, interview, and focus group data made it clear that social workers required support at political, team, and individual levels. Politically, social workers asked for greater activism toward funding of social care, and greater respect for the profession. Within teams, there needs to be better reflective and peer supervision, and moving away from a blame culture. Individually, psychoeducation could allow workers to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Conclusions: Significant support is required for the health and wellbeing of social workers. Interventions were co-created with social workers for social workers, and is a comprehensive resource for individuals, teams, and organisations in supporting their health and wellbeing. Indeed, the toolkit (which is available here) has been used with several social work teams across the UK in support their psychological health and wellbeing.

Keywords

Mental health, Wellbeing, Working conditions, Co-Creation, Interventions

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The circulation of flight narration. On the narrations of migration journeys and how they are dealt with in social work institutions

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

The movement of migrants across national borders – their migration journey – is often experienced as very precarious, stressful or even traumatizing (BenEzer/Zetter 2015; Ben Farhat et al. 2018; Mangrio/Zdravkovic/Carlson 2018; Crepet et al. 2017). An access to these subjective experiences of migrants can be provided by narrations of their migration journeys (Kaytaz 2016; BenEzer/Zetter 2015). This presentation takes a closer empirical look at these narrations and how they are co-formed in the interplay with research and social work.

Methods

The analysis is based on four qualitative interviews with refugee minors and two participant observations of asylum counselling sessions in a migration counselling agency. In both cases, narrations were included that address the migration journey.

Findings and Conclusions

Theoretically framed by Bruno Latour's concept of circulation, we follow the shifts of the narrations that circulate not only between professionals and clients. Rather, various non-human actors, institutions and the investigating scholars themselves emerge as actors who edit, translate and change the meaning of the migration journeys. It is not only social work research and practice that is involved in this co-creation of knowledge. Rather, it shows how normative requirements of the asylum regime lead to a repeated transformation of flight experiences into plausible, chronological, credible narrations. The definition of what is considered plausible and credible is embedded in migration-political, institutional logics of regulation and probation, which powerfully enter self-narrations, -thematizations and -understandings. However, both social workers and refugees use this desired narrative mode in a very empowering, idiosyncratic way.

Keywords

refugees, migration policy, counselling, empowerment, qualitative research

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Global social work working conditions across and beyond the pandemic

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Social workers play a key role in the lives of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people across the globe. However, there is no research which charts working conditions and wellbeing of social workers from a global basis. This study aims to bridge that gap in knowledge.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey of working conditions (measured by the Management Standards Indicator Tool) and wellbeing (via the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) was distributed by the International Federation of Social Workers to member and partner organisations in late 2019 and early 2020. Qualitative open-ended questions also asked what improvements needed to be made to better support the working conditions and wellbeing of social workers in the country. The survey was translated into five languages and 3,451 responses were gained from across the world.

Findings: Respondents in North America had the worst working conditions of the five global regions considered, with African respondents having similarly poor autonomy. Latin American/Caribbean respondents also scored more poorly on support received from management, and the relationships that they have with colleagues. Areas for improvement across the included countries included greater role recognition and pay.

Conclusions: Social workers play a key role in the lives of service users internationally. This paper has demonstrated that social workers in different global regions experience differing struggles, but that there are some common approaches that can be used to support their working conditions and wellbeing.

Keywords

social workers, global social care staff, wellbeing, working conditions, survey

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An Exploration of Resilience among Sex Workers of Mumbai, India: Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

In India, sex workers as mothers face many challenges such as difficulties that arise with feeding their children, providing childcare, and accessing education (Dalla & Kreimer, 2017; Dodsworth, 2014; Gezinski & Karandikar, 2013; Scorgie et al., 2013). Within other areas of the world, sex workers were found to build support systems to display resilience during challenging situations (Burnes, Rojas, Delgado, & Watkins, 2018; Gurav, Lorway, Janet, & J. Blanchard, 2013; Sardana, Marcus, & Verdelli, 2016; Yuen et al., 2014). However, current literature fails to address how support systems allow sex workers with children to build resilience in India. This paper explores the journey of female sex workers in Kamathipura, India, to understand how sex workers with children build support systems, provide for their children and remain resilient through challenges.

Methods: Qualitative methods were used to conduct in-depth interviews with 26 female sex workers. Participants were women who were or had participated in sex work and were between the ages of 25 and 48, with a median age of 34.5. All interviews were conducted in Hindi and addressed questions about the woman's journey, experiences with partners, pregnancy, and motherhood. Narratives were transcribed, translated, and coded in NVivo to identify relationships and themes. Interviews were conducted in part of a greater study to understand the maternal factors of sex workers; resilience was a significant theme of the results.

Results: Overall, the female sex workers displayed resiliency through their role as mothers with the social support from other female sex workers. While many sex workers lived in Kamathipura, their children lived in villages with other family members. Those with children shared childcare responsibilities with other workers or relied on older women and gharwalis (brothel keepers). Women also felt safer in Kamathipura than in other areas of India since women looked out for each other, shared resources, and provided information. Women with children were less likely to have an adami (partner) and were more focused on caring for their children. Mothers had strong future desires and displayed resilience through providing for their children.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates the resilience of female sex workers and the social support that the workers provide for each other. Since formal resources are often limited for sex workers, they must rely on and look out for each other. Therefore, it is recommended that NGOs and other organizations provide female sex workers with the knowledge and skills to remain healthy and provide resources to assist with their parenting role.

Keywords

Sex Work, India, Qualitative Research, Resilience, Mothering

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Social worker wellbeing and coping during the COVID-19 pandemic waves from March 2020-July 2022

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: The Covid-19 pandemic has been a difficult period for the social work workforce. A UK study by McFadden and colleagues, aimed to examine the impact on health and care worker wellbeing and coping through COVID-19 waves from March 2020-July 2022.

Methods: Cross-sectional survey measuring burnout (Copenhagen Burnout Inventory), wellbeing (Short-Warwick-Edinburgh-Wellbeing), and coping (Carver Brief Cope/Clark Coping Scales) and work-life quality (Work-Related Quality-of-Life -Scale). Qualitative questions and focus groups with front line workers, managers, and Human Resource Managers, provides further context for the quant results.

Findings: Results from statistical analysis shows the relationship between wellbeing, coping and work-related quality of life and burnout, from five time-points across three years (2020-22) with over 12K responses from health and social care workers. Burnout is reported to be high in relation to personal and work life, but is reported less around client related burnout, suggesting levels of compassion and empathy for service users despite impact on other areas of life. This interesting finding was common across all the disciplines in the study, but more so for social workers. Wellbeing was negatively affected if burnout was high, and this was associated with intention to leave. In the fourth and fifth phases of data

Implications: This paper will explore the impact on wellbeing and work-related quality of life, when burnout co-exists. We focus on an exploration of 'how' in particular, social workers coped in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic whilst maintaining compassion for service users. The study is strengthened by the multi-disciplinary comparison that is possible from the data.

Keywords

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An early-response, police-social work collaborative intervention: Perspectives of young participants

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

For society, measures targeted at early crime prevention pose a dilemma. On the one hand, there is a risk that an early intervention can label a young person as a criminal, and have negative consequences on identity formation. On the other, lack of an intervention can have the consequence of a continued lifestyle involving crime. Many are the stories from former prisoners who claim that an earlier intervention could have disrupted an identity trajectory leading to becoming a 'criminal' (Kacprzak, 2019). Other research indicates that young people – particularly those from ethnic minority groups – relate to police preventative practices with dissatisfaction (Wästerfors & Burcar Alm, 2020). However, there are also studies which demonstrate that young people experience interventions from police and social services as legitimate and valuable.

The current study seeks to explore the perceptions of young people aged between 11–17 who received an early intervention following the commission of a crime. In this collaborative project between police and social services, the young person received a coordinated chain of interventions involving first the police, thereafter a social worker, and, finally a qualified youth support worker. Each of the three elements occurred within a two-week period following the commission of the crime. The crime committed could range in severity from shoplifting to a drug offence, or a robbery.

Participation in the research was voluntary. Those taking part (N=21) were interviewed on a minimum of one and a maximum of three occasions during and after the intervention period. In total, 40 interviews were conducted. The interviews sought to elicit the young people's perceptions of police practices, the practices of the social and youth workers, the effects on the young people's attitudes, and their thoughts about the future. Data was analyzed using a narrative approach (Riessman, 2001). Focus was directed to how the young person perceived and understood the actions and practices of professionals involved in the project. In this respect, the interview functioned not only as a means of providing insights, but also a space for self-presentation and the construction of understanding.

Drawing on theories about procedural justice (Bradford, B. & Jackson, 2015) results reveal, firstly, that the participants experienced the intervention as an opportunity to reflect on the future. While the rapid response – from the police, the social workers, and the youth workers – came as a surprise, participants were positive about this swift reaction. In relation to the police practice of forcibly intervening when the crime had happened (frequently involving a shorter detention), this was perceived in a wider global context of police violence. For example, references were made to the George Floyd case ("I can't breathe"). Frequently, police actions created a tangible sense of fear. Many participants perceived the intervention as reflective of society's reaction to criminality. For some, experiences of being 'labelled' were prominent. While the results point to the value of a swift response, they also warn of the dangers attached to early labelling.

Keywords

Youth crime prevention, social services practice, police practice, procedural justice, labelling

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Getting research evidence into practice through building relationships and connections across organisations

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The use of research evidence is a central element in the transition of informal helping to the social work profession of today. Knowledge is crucial for shaping services, informing policies and informing the decisions of individual practitioners (Taylor et al., 2015). The importance of research knowledge is acknowledged by the international social work research community. However, the task of creating mechanisms to bring knowledge to the ‘front-line’ of services is still in its infancy. Addressing this challenge is becoming more pressing as the amount of knowledge available continues to grow, and increasing possibilities are presented by new technology.

This presentation draws on a collective initiative to create a framework of relationships, principles, roles, connections and approaches to getting research knowledge into use in social work in Northern Ireland. The presentation traces our journey from 2013, including the introduction of the first social work research strategy for social work and social care. Ten years later we are still on that journey! We outline challenges and our attempts to bridge the gap between research evidence and practice through the development of a supportive organisational culture receptive to learning and change.

This presentation will highlight the importance of inter-organisational strategic vision and implementation as demonstrating both an internal and an outward-looking commitment to social work research and its value. The presentation will consider the role of leadership and vision, and the availability of key people working collaboratively. It will also reinforce how the principles of equality, inclusion and co-creation have shaped our evidence and knowledge journey.

From the outset, our concern was to ensure a connection between research and practice supporting our belief that research knowledge empowers all. Consequently, any work emerging from the strategy is brought forward through the joint endeavours of what has come to be known as the Building a Research Community (Patton et al., 2021). The approach draws upon pragmatic and incremental strategies employed to embed research and build capacity.

Our approach started by focusing on strengthening the commitment of service delivery organisations to ensuring that they have some coherent approach to getting research knowledge into practice. This thrust has expanded to include the co-creation aspect with service users and carers, and also partnership with university social work

departments, resulting in a more balanced approach across the key elements of service delivery, co-creation and academic contribution. We have met many challenges in seeking to build a research culture to meet the changing needs of the social work profession in contemporary society. And we have much further to travel! We look forward to sharing with participants the fruits of our journey to date and to learning from the sharing of ideas across Europe.

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Keywords

Co-creation, Service Users & Carers, Research, Culture, Community

80

Participation of children in decision making in elementary schools

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In past years emphasis has been placed on the rights of children and their participation within the educational system which has led to increased general participation of children in matters concerning themselves and their environment. Even though in general children's participation has increased, research findings show that marginalized children that are in need of support from education and welfare services are not very visible. This group of children is still excluded from decision making processes and has fewer opportunities to express themselves about their lives and circumstances.

The purpose of these researches was to look at if the rights of those children that need special support are respected in decision making processes concerning their educational support. The main research question was; does the experience, view and rights of children that get special support taken into account when support plans are made?

Research data was acquired with semi structure interviews from seven youngsters at the age of 14-15 years and six focus groups with children 10-14 years old. Thematic analysis was applied to identify the main subjects in the data. In the coding process, a model from L.Lundy consisting of four categories of participation was used. This is a model of four categories, which consists of: space, voice, listening and affect.

First findings show that more education and information is needed for children about their right to participate in important matters concerning their own life and circumstances. Findings show that participants were not active in discussion on matters regarding what support they could get and therefore they did take a limited part in creating the support plan. The conclusion is that there is need to increase awareness of professional workers and children on their right to participate

Keywords

children, decision, participation, school, support

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“You’re bringing your stuff to the relationship...”: British female social workers’ understandings and experiences of the concepts of gender, sexual orientation and sex and how these impact their relationships with boys/young men who display harmful sexual behaviours (HSB).

Anna Hutchings

University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the UK, social work is a ‘female majority profession’ (McPhail 2004) and as such, most of the social work practice with boys and young men in respect of HSB will be undertaken by female social workers. Alongside this, those who sexually harm are mostly male children and adults (Hackett, 2014). There is a lack of research into the gendered nature of HSB and how gender stereotypes, victim-blaming attitudes and sexual assault myths might be thought about and addressed in this context. This PhD research project offers a qualitative exploration of how UK female social workers consider these ideas in their practice with boys and young men with HSB.

An IPA methodology using semi-structured interviews was employed to gain insight into the experiences of 10 female social workers from both HSB specialist and non-specialist practice settings. These data were triangulated with a year-long ethnography of an online mixed-sex group supervision of social workers and other professionals working with HSB. Analysis revealed that female social workers’ individual experiences influenced both how they thought about gender (in respect of themselves and the boys and young men they encountered in their work), and the specific ways in which they attempted to acknowledge, explore and challenge gendered beliefs and attitudes in their relationships with boys and young men who display HSB. This research contributes to understandings of how gender may influence practice in the HSB context and offers insights into how practitioners might negotiate and communicate about issues of gender inequalities with boys and young men.

Keywords

Harmful sexual behaviour, Boys, Female social workers, Gender, Qualitative research

A randomised trial of Mindfulness-based Social Work and Self-Care with social workers.

Alan Maddock

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to examine the effects of a bespoke and innovative six-week online Mindfulness-based Social Work and Self-Care (MBSWSC) programme on the stress, feelings of burnout, anxiety, low mood and wellbeing of a sample of social workers. This secondary objective was to examine the effectiveness of MBSWSC at improving a number of potentially important mindfulness-based programme mechanisms of action, including, mindfulness, attention regulation, acceptance, self-compassion, non-attachment, aversion, worry and rumination. A randomised controlled trial with repeated measures (pre-post intervention) was conducted to evaluate the effects of MBSWSC against an active control. The active control was a modified mindfulness-based programme which focussed on supporting increases in mindfulness and self-compassion in social workers with a view to improving the same primary study outcomes. Sixty-two participants were randomly allocated to MBSWSC (n = 33) or the active control (n = 29). When compared to the active control group, the MBSWSC programme was found to be significantly superior at improving stress, general burnout, anxiety and depression. MBSWSC was also superior to the active control at improving acceptance, mindfulness, non-attachment, decentering/attention regulation and worry of the social workers in this study. The results suggest that MBSWSC is a useful therapeutic programme, which has the capacity to improve a range of important mental health and wellbeing outcomes for social workers. The results also indicate that the MBSWSC programme has the capacity to improve a range of potentially important mindfulness-based mechanisms of action.

Keywords

mindfulness, stress, burnout, wellbeing, randomised controlled trial

Challenges in the transition to adulthood of young-adult Arabs who graduated from residential facilities in Israel

Yafit Sulimani Aidan, Ruba Abu Rass

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Although the literature regarding care leavers' challenges and outcomes in Israel is growing, research on Arab care leavers lags behind. Young-adult Arabs are part of a minority group facing social and economic marginalization, lower resources, and social discrimination and exclusion. The goal of this exploratory study was to delve into the challenges and barriers in the transition to adulthood of young-adult Arab care leavers, through their own perspectives. The aim was to broaden our understanding of their unique experiences, specifically in terms of their being part of a minority society in Israel.

Methods: The sample included 23 graduates of Arab residential facilities in Israel who had left care one to six years previously. The selection criteria were: youth in the early years of their emerging adulthood (i.e., ages 18-25) who had spent at least two years in a residential care settings. We also tried to include young adults who were in a variety of frameworks, such as those in school, those employed, and those unemployed. In addition, we chose young adults living in a variety of housing settings (e.g., living at home with their parents, living alone/with roommates). A semi-structured interview protocol was developed, consisting of open-ended questions.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The young adults were asked to describe themselves (background, occupation, age, etc.). They were also asked about their current life status and the challenges and barriers they faced in their daily lives and in trying to realize their goals. Analysis included theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Results: Three major themes arose from the young adults' descriptions. The first theme centered around "cultural and social expectations and limitations." This major theme concerned the challenges that participants had in terms of being part of their community in light of its norms, and expected behaviours and duties within their family as a result of these norms. Also, this theme related to their self-perceptions as a minority group. The second theme concerned their "social ties" and included three subthemes: harmful and unsupportive family relationships, lack of formal and informal guidance, and loneliness. Finally, the last major theme related to their limited "personal capital" and included their family's and own economic hardship and educational gaps.

Conclusions and implications: The study's findings illustrate the role of cultural and socio-political aspects during this transition, and emphasize the unique additional challenges for Arab young adults as a result of their being part of a collectivist and patriarchal society as well as being part of a minority. The discussion addresses the connection between these multiple challenges in the context of emerging adulthood theory. Implications for practice include developing new services that take into consideration the young adults' needs, and designing interventions that allow for the strengthening of family ties, as well as the creation of positive and supportive relationships with formal and informal authority figures.

Keywords

At-risk young adult Arabs, Minority, Transition to adulthood, Challenges, discrimination

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Social work and sustainable development: perspectives and possibilities

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Environmental problems are also social problems. In other words, it is becoming increasingly clear that environmental problems often affect all dimensions of human life. This close connection with environmental issues is especially relevant when it comes from profession of social work. Regarding that, in the first part of paper we will describe concept of sustainable development and short review of the social work profession. We will show how social work has responded slowly and inconsistently to the challenges posed by environmental injustice that has often been considered a concern of the natural sciences. In central part of paper we will try to explain important role of social workers in environmental and social justice through relevant researches and initiatives. At the end of work, we will left a room for new challenges in the context of social work about current and future environmental problems.

Keywords

Social work, Social worker, Sustainable development , Environmental justice, Social justice

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Perceptions of Vocational Social Workers Working with People with Disabilities.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Paid work is considered an essential activity providing people with financial, psychosocial and symbolic resources. Despite these advantages, people with disabilities face many barriers in their efforts to integrate into the labor market. In order to address these barriers, welfare state have developed various work-related programs, A key player in implementing these schemes are vocational social workers. However, currently, we know relatively little on how these social workers conceptualize and give meaning to their role and how their role advances their work towards human relationships.

Method: This study examined Israeli vocational social workers' perception towards paid work and the integration of people with disabilities into the labor market. Data was drawn from semi-structured interviews with 23 social workers employed by public and nonprofit organizations. All interviews were thematically analyzed.

Findings: This presentation will focus on two master themes:

a) The meaning of work: Social workers Regarded work as a meaningful activity in the life of their clients. This importance was rooted in a number of key advantages, including providing meaning in life, acquiring skills and increasing community integration. Conversely, creativity, satisfaction and income were rarely addressed. In

addition, a life without paid work, even when advantages were perceived as unattainable, was almost never considered. b) Barriers for labor market participation: Social workers tended to view their clients' barriers as located in individual characteristics, including their impairment and level of functioning and lack of sufficient soft skills. When social barriers were recognized, these were usually framed as located in employers' attitudes. These included ignorance, stigma, fears and distrust. In addition, the recognition of these social barriers was usually disconnected from their daily, individual-based practices.

Conclusion and implication: In our presentation we will frame these findings in light of the social model(s) of disability, and discuss some key theoretical and practical issues, including: the potential role of social workers in tackling social barriers (Kim, 2010); the need to expand the meaning of work and rethink the strict dichotomy between work and non-work (Carmichael & Clarke, 2022).

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Keywords

Disability, Labour Market, Vocational, Work, Social work practice

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Emerging issues in conducting ethnography in social work: Reflections from the field

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Conducting ethnographic research into social work practice is of great value for developing a nuanced understanding of the complexities and intricacies of everyday social working. Such understanding can contribute to policy makers, researchers, educators, social work practitioners, and the discipline of social work as a whole. Yet, ethnographic social work research is not widely common; interview research has gained prominence in qualitative social work research.

Based on my own experience in conducting ethnographic fieldwork into everyday social work practice in social services departments in Israel, I reflect on emerging issues in conducting ethnography in social work. These include gaining access as an ongoing process; seeing without being seen; staying humble; building strong relationships; and showing up again and again. In exploring these issues I wish to voice some of the challenges as well as the promises embedded in ethnographic fieldwork, in the hopes that this will spark interest and inspiration among social work scholars.

I argue that the discipline of social work could benefit immensely from more ethnographic research. Ethnography has the potential to shed light on the nuances of everyday social working through deep engagement in the field and the building of human relationships. Ethnography offers opportunities for *Social work research through and towards human relationships*, thus my presentation asks to encourage and promote ethnographic methods in social work research, while reflecting on the various challenges in this line of inquiry.

Keywords

ethnography, social work research, social work practice, qualitative research

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Cooperative inquiry methodology: A critical approach to bridging the gap between social work research and practice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The perceived gap between research and practice is an age-old problem for the social work profession. In current neoliberal contexts, bridging this gap is ever more crucial if the profession is to maintain its value base along-side a robust evidence-base for practice. How is it possible to bridge this divide in a world where research and practice are often considered as separate activities and where knowledge claims are continually contested? With this question in mind, this presentation explores the merits of cooperative inquiry (CI) as an inclusive and participatory methodology. Participation and inclusivity allow CI practitioners, researchers and those with lived experience to come together and express different world views in the process of co-creating knowledge. Its value base of equity and respect, which align with social work values, allow for the deep dialogue needed to develop theory from practice and lived experience and vice versa through research. The resulting co-created knowledge is then meaningful for informing responses to the complexities that arise in practice. In the International Network of Cooperative Inquirers, the relational foundation of this approach has shown to collapse the traditional boundaries between practice and research and the teaching of research practice. Additionally, this has enabled a generative process bringing praxis in the integration of research and practice. In this presentation we present evidence from cooperative inquiries and discuss the implications for bridging the gap between social work practice and research.

Keywords

theory and practice, cooperative inquiry, co-production, participatory research, Social work methods

Social work research and the streams of knowledge production

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose: The social work profession requires a body of theoretical knowledge and scientific evidence to support the development and enhancement of interventions, programs, and policies to promote social justice, and individual and social well-being. Yet, the social work academic and professional communities have not developed a unified definition of “social work research” nor agreed on what is unique or distinctive about social work research compared to research produced in other disciplines. This presentation reports on the quest to develop a universal definition of social work research that is both inclusive and expansive by asking the following questions: (a) What is social work research?; and (b) What makes social work research distinctive from other research produced in other disciplines?

Methodology: The above questions were posed and answered through written text by 18 social work academics residing in 14 different countries across the globe. The recorded responses for each question were separately analysed using content analysis.

Results: The findings for the first question revealed eight themes that together described social work research as: (a) systemically focused; (b) prescriptive and descriptive; (c) uses traditional and alternative research techniques and methods; (d) solves real world problems; (e) asks practice questions to guide and advance effective practice; (f) is used by social work practitioners, organisations, and policymakers to provide quality social services for people in need; (g) influences change, resists, and contests; and (h) promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. The three themes for the second question included: (a) applied, community-driven, and awesomely messy! Improves social well-being in general; (b) system change and advocacy, to develop a fairer, more democratic, sustainable world; and (c) touches reality, participatory approaches, and transformative and developmental in nature. The themes for each question were combined to develop a proposed definition of social work research that is both inclusive and expansive, and a statement of what makes social work research distinctive.

Conclusion and Implications: Social work research is debated and contested, both in its purpose, rigour, and influence on the profession and within the scientific community. This inquiry into how social work research is defined and seen as distinctive from the perspectives of social work academics from different countries has contributed to the ability to present a definition of social work research to a body of interested scholars, practitioners, and service users. Through this presentation, I hope we can further refine and produce a definition of social work research that may be universally acknowledged, and to distinguish the research produced as unique from other disciplines.

Keywords

social work research , defining social work research , qualitative research , international , theorizing social work

Mothering in a post-separation intimate partner violence context: Experiences of mothers from different cultural backgrounds

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a matter of concern for social work as it poses a significant threat to victims' social well-being, mental and physical health as well as human rights. As children are exposed to IPV, this is also an area of concern for social workers engaging with families. Separation as a route to safety and recovery is recommended by professionals and sought by mothers themselves. However, there is a lack of knowledge about abused women's experiences of safety and recovery post-separation and mothering their children in this context. This paper aims to address these gaps by analyzing how separated mothers rebuild their lives and do their mothering after leaving IPV relationships. It also explores similarities and differences in the experiences of mothers from different cultural and national backgrounds.

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 14 mothers (three Polish mothers in Norway, three Polish mothers in Poland, and eight Norwegian mothers in Norway) who were recruited through purposive and snowballing techniques. The interviews were conducted online and in person, in Norwegian and Polish. Norwegian Data Protection services NSD approved the processing of personal data and standard ethical guidelines were followed. The data was analyzed using constructivist grounded theory.

Preliminary findings show five overarching themes of women's safety and recovery experiences, and mothering in an IPV post-separation context: i) the fear, and experiences, of continuing victimization from ex-partners, ii) the ongoing struggle with the familial every day, iii) aiding children's recovery, iv) difficult collaboration with fathers and, v) navigating the complexity of social work professionals and services. Although the overlapping themes seemed common, the experiences of the mothers from different cultural and national backgrounds, revealed notable differences including, inter alia, trust toward institutions (or the lack thereof), language barriers and available support.

The study increases our understanding of how survivors of complex trauma navigate their life, look after their children, and deal with professional services after separation from abusive ex-partners and fathers while living with the ongoing post-separation abuse. Women need help from various professionals in this context, and some women reported to have received substantial support. Nonetheless, the experiences of the lack of sufficient understanding and support during the post-separation life and mothering in an IPV context had detrimental effects on the victims and their children's social, emotional and physical recovery. What is more, social workers might inadvertently become complicit in perpetuating domestic violence post-separation. Given the severity of IVP and its ongoing threat to women's and children's safety, this study indicates the need to further develop policy and professional practice with IVP victims and perpetrators. The study also shows that further research in this area is merited.

Keywords

cross-cultural social work, intimate partner violence, post-separation mothering, qualitative interviews, domestic violence

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User-Led Mental Health Service Evaluation: The Contribution of User-Focused Monitoring to Recovery- Oriented Quality Development

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

User-focused monitoring (UFM) is a method of user-led mental health service evaluation that focuses on strengthening user involvement and developing the quality of services. Despite an increased emphasis on user involvement and the recovery orientation of services, scientific knowledge remains limited regarding how such goals can be realised. In this study, our aim is to explore UFM with a specific focus on how recovery processes are examined through the method in order to discuss how UFM can be developed in order to support a recovery orientation in mental health service evaluation. We sampled 20 Swedish UFM reports for qualitative analysis, and we found that UFM is a promising method for integrating a personal recovery perspective in service evaluations. By being performed peer-to-peer, the method has the unique ability to gather experiential knowledge regarding the situation of service users. UFM especially contributes to exploring service users' experiences related to social connectedness and user involvement in services. We also discuss how the method can be developed to further support a recovery orientation in UFM. This might be achieved by integrating a process-oriented approach in the evaluations and by including the user informants' own goals and views on what constitutes meaningful support in UFM. Suggestions for future developments concern incorporating personal recovery perspectives in the training of user monitors and creating structures for aggregating the knowledge produced through UFM.

Keywords

User involvement, Mental health, Co-production, Service evaluation, Recovery

116

Challenges and opportunities for social work research when human relationships are affected by the principle of reflexivity

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Reflexivity which involves self-reflection and analysis is integral to not only the role of social work but also the role of a qualitative researcher. Strength of reflexivity can contribute to human relationship building because our role as researchers is to make sense of the life experiences participants tell us with a view to learning more about them, in order to facilitate change whether in terms of policy and practice or raising awareness. A reflexive approach can also contribute to retaining values of the profession of social work and ultimately impacting the welfare of the wider community during these complex times in which we live.

The study objectives were to, explore the experiences of being diagnosed with Usher syndrome; develop an understanding of experiences of living with Usher syndrome, including support, developmental opportunities and the role of the Deaf community; disseminate findings that can inform future practice, service development, policy and education and recommend areas for further research relating to experiences of living with Usher syndrome.

The two research questions were, what is the experience of being diagnosed with Usher syndrome? What is life like for people who are diagnosed with, and live with Usher syndrome on a daily basis? This presentation aims to demonstrate how social work research contributed to understanding how human relationships are affected by the principle of reflexivity, by discussing the literature which demonstrates lack of previous research and limited methodologies.

Methods:

The study included twenty participants, purposively selected, male/female (18-82 years) who experience a rare hereditary, genetic form of deaf blindness called Usher syndrome (Evans, 2017, Evans and Baillie, 2021, Evans and Harvey, 2022). The data from the qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study were thematically analysed. This study identified the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research, identifying a range of reflexive research traditions such as reflexivity as an introspection where the researcher primarily uses their own reflections; reflexivity as intersubjective reflection where researchers consider shared meaning emerging within human relationships and reflexivity as mutual collaboration which recruits participants as co-researchers. For this study, reflexivity as introspection was chosen because interest begins with discovering a passionate concern which engages the researcher, for example Usher syndrome related research.

Findings:

Four messages: diagnosis is the start of the experience; familial relationships across the lifespan; A sense of belonging and experiences of professional support.

Conclusion:

The study highlighted, the importance of using reflexivity in Usher research to build human relationships within social work research and practice. As Usher syndrome is an under-researched disability that presents challenges and opportunities for social work practice and social work research, as an early researcher raising awareness and disseminating the research from the study is essential. Understanding the importance of practicing reflexivity in practice and research has the potential to improve lives and give individuals perceived as voiceless a voice. There are few studies relating to Usher syndrome and reflexivity specifically, thus further research and international

collaboration is required to explore how human relationships can be affected by applying the principles of reflexivity.

Keywords

Usher syndrome, Sensory social work, Human relationships, Reflexivity, International collaboration

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Panels of children to ensure child participation

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: In this presentation we investigate potentials in using panels of children to ensure children's perspectives when researching child participation in social care for foster children.

Looked after children do poorly on a wide range of short-term and long-term outcomes compared to other children. Our goal is to improve the well-being and education of children in family foster care. Assessing the well-being and needs of a foster child is a prime task for social workers. Despite an increasing interest in child participation in social services, and many years of research to point out that children do not feel involved, we still not know how to involve children best possible (Lausten et al. 2020).

Methods: We invited children aged 10 to 13 to participate in a panel of children. In each panel, children met three Saturday afternoons to discuss and give their opinions on a subject. Amongst these their views on their meetings with social workers and social workers' questioning practices. In total 18 children have participated in three separate panels. The children in the panels were asked for their opinions, perspectives and suggestions with the aim of producing products which are used to educate social workers and social worker students on how to involve children more on the children's terms. Based on the work of Biljeveld et al. 2020 we used handicrafts to express the children's positions. We also played, ate candy, and talked about the special thing about being a child placed in care. As in other studies the children attending the panels expressed joy on meeting other children who experienced the same kind of difficulties in life.

Findings: As a part of our findings, we would like to show two stop motion films made in one of the panels where the children express how they would like to have the meetings with their social worker and how a meeting should not take place. The study reveals a resistance to engage with social workers among most of the children in the panels. The children want to make their own decisions and want to be like 'normal' children. But that implies, to them, a life without meetings with social workers who interferes. Or at least a participation practice which ensure participation on their terms.

Conclusion and implications: Children in our panels questioned the legitimacy of the questioning practices of social workers in general. In a Danish context, children who are placed in foster care must have a meeting with their social worker at least once every six months. This means that we as researchers and social work practitioners must

rethink how we can ensure to make space for children's right to set the agenda most important to them. We need to rethink, how we can ensure that social workers have knowledge about the children's well-being, the children's perspective and at the same time take their resistant towards being questioning by their social worker into consideration.

Keywords

foster children , social worker-service user relationships , child protection, participatory research, social workers

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An Anti-Oppressive Approach to Social Work Practice with Transgender Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose – Pathways to homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth are related to familial conflicts over sexual orientation and gender identity and to parental rejection. These experiences amplify social alienation and are related to the social exclusion of LGBTQ+ youth, which often leads to homelessness. Social services for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults are currently in their infancy in Israel. This qualitative study sought to learn and conceptualize the practices that have been developed for working with trans youth and young adults experiencing homelessness (TYA/EH) in three services in their initial years of operation. The article explores practices employed in services for TYA/EH in Israel from the perspective of the service providers, with a focus on their preferred practices.

Methods – This qualitative study combines individual interviews and focus groups with 28 staff members from three services. The study participants were staff members of the services in question. The sample consisted of 28 staff members, and six individual interviews were conducted, as well as 6 focus groups (each with between two and 8 participants, for an average of 4). Data analysis was based on the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once initial themes emerged, we conducted three additional focus group interviews (two-to-three interviewees per session) with the participants to get their insights regarding our analysis.

Findings – Thematic analysis of the interviews yielded two main themes. The first focuses on professional practices utilized in the services on the individual and inter-personal level, including creating a safe space, exploring gender identities, and imparting life skills and the ability to contend with bureaucratic systems. The second theme sheds light on practices on the societal level, including mentoring, guidance, and exercising rights, as well as anti-bias education.

Conclusions and implications – The findings highlight the importance that service providers ascribe to work relating to both "outside" and "inside" the services, and to toggling between micro and macro levels. Such movement

constitutes the practical implementation of context-informed approaches and anti-oppressive perspectives in work with TYAAEH , which emphasize the development of resilience and personal agency.

Keywords

Youth, Young adults, Transgender, LGBTQ+, Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice

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“I really wanted her to console me, and no matter what she did that damn screen was still between us.”: Clients’ Perspectives on the Therapeutic Alliance with the Transition to Online Therapy

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The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to advance theory concerning the experiences of service users and social workers involved in online therapy and the meanings they assign to them, with a focus on the therapeutic alliance. Using constructivist grounded theory methodology, in-depth semi-structured online interviews were conducted with 36 individuals who had participated in online therapy via videoconference. The analysis indicates three dimensions that impact the formation of the therapeutic alliance in online therapy: (1) intimacy, as a conduit for establishing physical or emotional space; (2) limited care, due to the clinician’s difficulty providing comfort and security; and (3) body language, as reflected in the lack of physical presence and the close inspection of the face, at two opposite ends of a continuum. A discussion of the findings will be presented through the lens of the closeness-distance dynamic, which posits that social workers/therapists' ability to regulate themselves depends on their clients' emotional needs. We conclude with implications for clinical practice.

Keywords

telehealth, qualitative research, social worker-service user relationships, psychotherapy, family therapy

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Can one reliably measure the quality of communication in statutory meetings with young people in social work? Results from My Social Work Partner

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose

Social work with young people is centered around meetings about what has happened and what can be done in a local statutory setting delimited by social workers' competences. My Social Work Partner aims to improve these meetings by building a theoretical model of communication quality for providing effective supervision to enhance social workers' communication, e.g., how to listen to, pose questions to, and empower a young person. Built on a foundation of qualitative research, the model was tested quantitatively to assess its value. The presentation will describe how we quantitatively tested the model using a set of scales and a codebook. Through this methodological development, we want to improve such communication in a reliable way.

Methods

In cooperation with 69 Danish social workers and 185 young people and drawing on social work and allied disciplines and a collection of 335 videotaped meetings, we developed a model of statutory communication identifying three focus areas (Contact and support, Meeting structure and organization, Statutory requirements) containing 11 dimensions of communication quality. The dimensions were measured using 11 seven-point scales and tested by five experienced social workers using data from six municipalities from 2015-2020. In the presentation we will show to what extent raters agree on the quality of films (inter-rater reliability) and to what extent raters agree with themselves over time (intra-rater reliability).

Results

Our findings suggest that it is indeed possible to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of social work practice in terms of the quality of communication in statutory meetings with young people. We discuss how the reliability of the scales may be further improved.

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Keywords

communication skills, staff development, innovation, staff supervision, quantitative research

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Meeting Social Needs and Loneliness in a Time of Social Distancing under COVID-19

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Background & Purpose: Loneliness has a significant negative impact on the health and wellbeing of people. The COVID-19 pandemic has demanded individuals to socially distance, which has implications for loneliness and social isolation. This study aimed to answer the following research questions: (a) What is the relationship between age and loneliness during a time of social distancing?; (b) How are different age groups (young, middle, old) meeting their social needs and to what extent are they perceived to be effective?; and (c) What is the relationship between engaging in activities to meet social needs and loneliness during a time of social distancing, and how does this vary by age group?

Methods: This cross-sectional study explored the ways in which people in the United States (N = 412) are meeting their social needs in a time of social distancing, how these activities relate to levels of loneliness, and any differences among young, middle-aged, and older adults. The data were drawn from an online survey distributed through Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an Amazon supported survey participant strategy that allows completion of tasks for monetary reward. The online questionnaire measured loneliness (overall, emotional, and social), social isolation, activities to meet social needs, and the extent to which the activities were perceived to be effective in meeting social needs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses.

Results: The findings indicated higher levels of loneliness and social isolation for the entire sample and across the three age groups from pre- to during COVID-19 with younger adults experiencing higher levels of emotional loneliness during COVID-19. The extent to which the activities were related to loneliness was only found among the young adults and older adults where outdoor meet-ups, talking on the phone, and texting was associated with lower levels of loneliness among the young adults, and engaging in social media and talking on the phone was associated with lower levels of loneliness among the older adults.

Conclusions & Implications: The findings support social work practice recommendations for addressing loneliness during times of social distancing under the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health crises.

Keywords

loneliness, social activities, public health, social networks, social isolation

Integrating environmental justice and sustainability into social work practice in Canada

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The impacts of climate change, ecological degradation, and environmental injustice are dramatically affecting the quality of all life on Earth and the social, political, and economic systems on which human communities depend. These impacts are not borne equally, with some regions and racialized peoples, along with vulnerable populations including women, youth, older people, people experiencing homelessness, and those living in poverty, bearing a disproportionate share of the consequences, leading to what is now understood as environmental injustice (Kemp et al., 2018; Wu & Karabanow, 2020). Social work in wealthy state contexts is as a consequence increasingly challenged to expand the scope of the profession to include greater consideration for environmental issues within traditionally human-centered domains of research, policy and practice.

Although social work in Canada is at the beginning of a recognizable environmental turn (Wilson et al., 2022), students and professionals report challenges incorporating consideration for the environment into their practice. Thus, there is a need to better understand how diverse areas of social work practice are integrating environmental issues and facilitating change that prioritizes equity and justice. This conference paper reports preliminary findings from an ongoing national research project exploring how environmental justice and sustainability can be advanced in social work practice in Canada. Informed by interdisciplinary concepts of environmental (including climate) justice and sustainability, and grounded in an eco-social work lens that foregrounds relations between humans and their social, natural and physical environments, along with the inseparability of environmental justice and social justice, the project explores the following research questions:

1. How are environmental justice and sustainability understood and applied in social work practice in Canada?
2. What new socio-environmental vulnerabilities, issues, or concerns are emerging in social work practice?
3. What is needed to transform social work practice to better integrate environmental justice and sustainability?

This paper contributes to conference sub-themes 1 (contemporary contexts), 5 (theorizing social work), and 6 (connecting research and practice) by presenting a preliminary analysis of quantitative data collected through a large-scale Canada-wide survey of social work practitioners and students, sharing preliminary analysis of regional focus groups with practitioners, and through a discussion of implications of these findings for policy, future research and direct practice.

Keywords

Environmental justice, Practice, Climate crisis, Sustainability

“Toughen up” –Traumatic childhood attachment and masculine socialization interacting: A qualitative study of men’s intimate violence

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Men’s intimate violence (MIV) is a global phenomenon. Several theoretical models attempt to explain men’s violence. This presentation will focus on two accounts of MIV: the first model argues that MIV can be accounted by men’s traumatic exposure to parental violence during childhood; and the second model argues that MIV can be accounted by men’s masculine socialization to aggression. Both models are separately underlining some features that can be associated with MIV. However, it may be valuable to further explore the mechanism that ties both features together, and their role in MIV. The presentation will discuss findings from a qualitative study which aimed to learn how men experience violent relationships, how they explained their experiences, and the origins of their experiences.

Twenty-five men aged 27-60 participated in the study. Eighteen were recruited from domestic violence centers, four from social services, one from online social networks, one from ads posted at a university, and one from a network of private clinicians. The sampling achieved a diverse cultural and socioeconomic status.

Since the research question was about experiences, data was analyzed in a phenomenological approach. The theme “dynamics of silencing”, captures the dynamics of violence from the men’s point of view. The men expressed difficulties to bear the women’s irrational emotionality, and the perception that women’s emotions are “contagious” and threatening to the men, who feel a need to suppress the women’s emotionality. The theme “Toughen up” illustrates the men’s experiences of growing up by a rough, fierce, and abusive father, that raised them to be detached from their emotions, and the impact of his ingrained image which drives them to end unbearable interaction with aggression.

The presentation will discuss the men’s explanation their violence. Their explanation emphasizes detachment from their emotional world with the exception of anger and fear. The interaction between men who are detached from feelings and emotional women and the gap between masculine detachment and feminine emotionality construct an incomprehensible experience that these men cannot bear. The more this experience grows, the men feel threatened by losing their place and masculine essence. To put an end to this unbearable interaction they turn to aggression, and since the source of the situation is the women’s emotionality, their aggression is therefore directed at her.

The presentation will accordingly discuss an apparent interaction between the developmental trauma model of intimate violence and masculine socialization to aggression, and the contribution of such interaction to clinical practice. Moreover, the presentation will argue that the interaction between developmental trauma and masculine socialization to aggression plays a key role for designing efficient therapeutic interventions with men’s intimate violence. The presentation will further discuss the relevance of the findings to prevalent intervention programs for men’s intimate violence, and the relation between theory and practice. Limitations of the findings and recommendation for further research will be discussed.

Keywords

Developmental trauma, Masculine socialization, Intimate violence, Phenomenological , Qualitative

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Images of the foster family from the perspective of Swiss professionals in foster care

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Throughout Europe, foster families are increasingly seen as the preferred placement model for children and adolescents (Reimer 2021) who cannot grow up with their parents. This also applies to Switzerland with its complex federal system. At the same time, society is subject to major changes, which reflects in the socially accepted images of family, and an apparent trend towards more diversity (Bauer and Wiezorek 2017; Waterstradt 2015; Wolf 2022). This raises the question of how Swiss professionals in foster care deal with societal pluralism and the heterogeneity of the children and adolescents for whom they seek and supervise suitable foster families. What mental representations of foster families are currently emerging in the professional field of foster care?

In our project at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), which is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, we are using grounded theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin 1990) to examine the mental representations of foster families that professionals in foster care display. The analysis is based on nine group discussions with a total of 47 professionals in foster care from German- and French-speaking Switzerland.

The main results of the study so far:

1. Our findings show a relatively homogeneous image of the foster family: Traditional, middle-class family models in which the foster mother does most of the family work and the foster father has paid work. Furthermore, the foster family owns a home or farm in a rural area and keeps pets. The foster parents are communicative, "open" and actively engaged in many ways. They provide a well-structured daily routine and have an impeccable reputation.
2. We demonstrate that the professionals in foster care often base their images of foster families on their own needs. Among other things, communication skills and a structured approach facilitate cooperation with professionals and authorities.

Based on these findings, we observe a discrepancy between the requirements of a pluralistic society and the heterogeneity of foster children on the one hand, and the ideas of professionals in foster care on the other.

With the presentation of the results, we would like to:

a) initiate a discussion about the importance of the mental representation of foster care among professionals and the situations in which the images affect the professionals' actions, such as selection processes, support and cooperation.

b) discuss how images in foster care can be broadened so that they come closer to the requirements of a pluralistic society.

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Keywords

foster care, professionals in foster care, image of foster families, heterogeneity, Switzerland

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Social work, mental health inequalities, and the sociological imagination.

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Working as a mental health social worker I encountered the impact of mental health inequalities on people's lives: the likelihood of becoming unwell, of access to services, and of the outcome of contact with services (Centre for Mental Health, 2020). My work as a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England, Bristol (UK) – and my doctoral research at Cardiff University, Wales (UK) – is focused on contemporary mental health social work practice.

My research aims to gain an insight into how mental health social workers understand the origin, presence and impact of the social determinants of mental health, and mental health inequalities, in their work with service users. The study's overarching question is:

How do mental health social workers articulate a sociological imagination when considering the social determinants of mental health?

The Sociological Imagination, created by American sociologist C. Wright Mills, suggests, “You can never really understand an individual unless you also understand the society, the historical time period in which they live, personal troubles, and social issues” (Mills 1959, p 11). It offers a way of interpreting practitioners’ accounts of their work with service users.

Twenty-two semi structured qualitative interviews were undertaken with social workers employed by, or working within, an English National Health Service mental health trust. Some interviews were undertaken online and some through in-person interviews at the trust. The presentation reflects this difference in the mode of interviewing, and also, the use of vignettes as a method to elicit practitioner accounts of their work. The transcripts – at the time of submitting this conference abstract – are being analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to identify key findings from the data.

Essentially, I want to discover if social workers are able to think broadly, beyond a medical interpretation of service users’ experiences, to develop sociologically informed accounts of their work to understand and address the impact of mental health inequalities. Could social workers, develop a ‘*mental health imagination*’ as a way to consider the wider, structural elements in society; to understand how social determinants and mental health inequalities affect people?

The presentation illustrates the background to my research, how I have taken my inspiration from the work of C. Wright-Mills, and presents the early findings from data analysis. The presentation illustrates the connection between my research and two of the key themes of this year’s conference. The research explores the impact of social workers’ practice (Theme 3) through its exploration of their accounts of engaging with service users and colleagues. Social work history and identity as a profession (Theme 4) is reflected in one of the central areas of investigation: how social workers construct their professional identity through multi-disciplinary working and, in doing so, contribute their specialist knowledge and expertise relating to inequalities and oppression.

As C. Wright Mills wrote:

“The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise” (Mills 1959, p12)

Keywords

Mental, Health, Inequality, Imagination, Practice

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Good Enough Residential Care Setting: Child-Parent Contact and Youth Adjustment in the Context of Staff Attitudes Towards Parent Involvement

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Social work policies emphasize the importance of encouraging child-parent contact to enhance the well-being of children in residential care. However, despite the central role of youth care workers in the lives of children in residential care settings, there is a lack of research on the role of residential care staff in child-parent contact. The current study examined the link between frequency of contact and quality of attachment between mothers and adolescents and adolescents' emotional-behavioral difficulties, and the moderating role of residential care youth workers' attitudes towards mother involvement in that link

Methods: The study is based on the reports of 240 youth, aged 14 to 18, in therapeutic residential care settings for children at risk in Israel. To test the moderating effect of perceived staff attitudes towards mothers' involvement on the relationship between adolescent-mother contact and adolescent adjustment difficulties, the study applied a PROCESS analysis using bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) via SPSS (Model #1).

Findings: The findings show adolescents' reduced emotional-behavioral difficulties was linked with better perceived quality of attachment to their mother. Frequency of contact was found to be non-significantly linked with adolescent difficulties. The attitudes of residential care youth workers towards mother involvement moderated the relationship between quality of mother-child contact and adolescents' adjustment difficulties, so that among youth who reported a more positive attitude of the staff towards mothers' involvement, the relationship between the quality of child-mother attachment and fewer adjustment difficulties among adolescents was stronger.

Conclusions and implications: The findings highlight the importance of the context in which child-parent contact in residential care occurs and the circumstances in which this relationship is more beneficial for the children. It emphasizes the central place that the residential care settings youth worker has in the connection between adolescents and parents. The study calls for a change in the definition of the role of the youth care worker to include responsibility for maintaining the parent-child connection. Time, training and budget resources must be assigned for this task. Training would allow the staff to better understand the needs of adolescents to connect with their parents. This will help the parents into partners who are involved in the life of the RCS, which is important for adolescents in residential care to thrive behaviorally and emotionally.

Keywords

residential child care, child care workers, attachment, birth parents, parent-child relations

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Families hosting Ukrainian refugees in Belgium. Challenging social work and policy?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Russian Federation's military offensive in Ukraine, many Ukrainians have fled their country. Based on data provided by authorities, UNHCR estimated that by September 2022, some 7,405,590 refugees had fled Ukraine to European countries. To deal with this influx, the 2001 EU Directive on minimum standards for giving temporary protection to displaced persons was activated for the first time. Among other things, EU Member States had to ensure that displaced Ukrainians had access to suitable housing or, if necessary, the means to obtain housing.

Many European countries called upon citizens to provide shelter to Ukrainians. So too in Belgium, where the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration launched the #freespot (#plekvrij / #placedispo) campaign in March 2022 with this appeal. In Belgium, as in other countries, the call for citizens to provide shelter should be seen against the backdrop of an overburdened reception network for applicants for international protection and a housing market under pressure.

After just one week, the response was overwhelming: 22,000 places were offered and the campaign was considered highly successful. Even outside the campaign's official registration channels, many people showed willingness to accommodate Ukrainians.

In this paper, we present the findings of an online survey of host families of Ukrainians in Belgium (N = 710, self-selection sample). The host families participating in our survey are mostly middle class families, but differ significantly in their motivation to start and continue hosting. Most host families (83.5%) described their experience of hosting Ukrainian refugees as "rather positive" to "very positive". At the same time, the results also point to many bottlenecks in the hastily established reception framework.

Based on the survey results, we present an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the hosting of (Ukrainian) refugees by host families by citizens. We address the pros and cons of integrating families into reception models and identify areas for improvement. In doing so, we pay special attention to the (possible) need for a legal framework for this formula, potential components of such a framework, and the role of social work. In this way, we aim to contribute to the development of policies and interventions that value the power of these human relationships and actively work for the wellbeing of both host families and hosted persons.

Keywords

informal care, reception models, social policy, displaced persons, social work

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Contemporary parenting and its association with parents' wellbeing in the face of COVID-19: The mediating role of guilt

Osnat Lavenda

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This study examines the association between the contemporary role of parenting and the wellbeing of its agent – the parent. The outbreak of COVID-19, in the beginning of 2020, has brought about an abrupt, worldwide need to constantly, rapidly, and all the more forcefully adjust to changing circumstances. These intense changes in “normal” life circumstances, alongside the great uncertainty and mental distress caused by a multitude of pandemic-related stressors have already been found to impact mental health. In particular, the effect of the pandemic is evident within the family, where the wellbeing of both parents and children has been impacted substantially. The presented study focuses on adjustment in the context of the family, particularly on the parenting role. In particular, the focus of the study is on parental feelings of guilt as a mechanism underlying the association between parenting styles and difficulties to adjust to changing circumstances, in the face of COVID-19.

The sample was recruited through social networks and included 382 Israeli parents, mostly educated mothers (ages 23–57, average education 16.4 years) who reported being the primary caregiver in a committed relationship. All participants filled out online self-report questionnaires that addressed their parenting style, parental guilt feelings, and difficulties to adjust in the face of COVID-19. To examine the study’s hypothesis, a mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS.

The analysis indicated a significant direct association between hostile/coercive parenting and adjustment difficulties, and an indirect significant association between engaged/supportive parenting and adjustment difficulties through parental guilt feelings. These findings are discussed in light of the Conservation of Resources Theory and in light of parental contemporary social imperatives. Such social imperatives that shape contemporary parenting force parents to attempt to be the “perfect” parents by intensively meeting their children’s needs. This study emphasizes the toll that such parenting takes on its agents—the parents—as it can provoke feelings of guilt that are associated with poor wellbeing.

Keywords

Parenting Style, Adjustment, Parental guilt, Wellbeing

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Take Me Home: How Poor Families Cope with Housing Insecurity

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Housing has historically been central to the lives of impoverished families. For several decades, however, social welfare scholars had not fully appreciated how housing dynamics shape the life conditions of people in marginalized communities. In recent years, many countries have experienced an acute housing crisis that placed a significant burden on poor families. In response to these developments, scholars have begun to explore the prevalence, sources, and consequences of housing insecurity for low-income families and communities. While scholars have made critical inroads into understanding housing insecurity in poor communities, there are still some important limitations in the literature. In particular, we know relatively little about how impoverished communities experience and confront housing insecurity. This paper examines how differently positioned impoverished families

in Israel cope with housing insecurity in the private rental market where many of them live. Drawing on a relational approach to poverty, which points to the centrality of socio-economic relationships to understanding the problem of poverty, the paper develops an empirical and theoretical understanding of housing insecurity based on the experiences of families living in poverty across different social categories.

The study utilized a qualitative-constructivist perspective, which seeks to capture the essence of a phenomenon through a close examination of people's individual perceptions and experiences in light of the broader social-political relations in which they are enmeshed. The sample was of 100 low-income families who live in Israel. The inclusion criteria were: participants who were married or single parents of at least one child, and participants who rent a home and are not homeowners. To achieve diversity, the sample included participants from four sub-groups: three Jewish (non-Orthodox native-born, immigrants, and ultra-Orthodox) and one Arab. In-depth interviews are the primary method of data collection in the study. Informed by an inductive approach to data analysis, all data were coded thematically.

Findings reveal that families' construction of housing makes a clear distinction between ownership of housing and rental housing. Participants benevolently represented ownership of housing as offering security, stability, and calm. In contrast, rental housing, especially the homes where they had lived over the years, was seen as exposing them to vulnerability, domination, and stress. Findings also show that participants develop a number of distinct coping practices in response to housing insecurity: (1) making compromises on housing quality; (2) engaging in negotiations with the landlord (e.g., over rent payments); and (3) overdrawing the bank account and practicing thriftiness simultaneously.

Several findings corroborate previous studies on the lived experience of poverty, which show among other things that low-income families overdraw their accounts and are frugal when it comes to their finances. However, making compromises on housing quality and engaging in negotiations with their landlord are distinct coping strategies which previous studies of poverty have not revealed. At the policy level, findings underscore the need to create housing policies that help low-income families maintain stable housing that is not only affordable but also of good quality.

Keywords

poverty, housing, social welfare

171

“Bottom line is you deserve these things”: Experiences of social security claimants as lessons for take-up advocacy

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Noam Tarshish

Symposium Convenor

no

Roni Holler

Symposium Convenor

no

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and objectives

Non-take-up of social benefits is widely viewed as a critical problem in the modern welfare state, undermining the social contract between it and its citizens. Social work has always been considered a key profession in promoting take-up of social benefits as part of its professional commitment to human rights and advocacy. Yet despite recent research efforts aiming to conceptualize take-up advocacy, there is a clear need to address the experience of claimants, especially those who have successfully taken up their rights and to learn from their experiences to identify best practices.

Methods

Qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 32 claimants of the Israeli National Insurance Institute.

Results

Our analysis reveals that despite successfully claiming benefits, the take-up process was experienced by claimants as highly burdensome. However, participants' views highlighted four key agentic lessons for increasing the likelihood of take-up in practice: (1) Take the first step; (2) Become an expert; (3) Use your strengths; and (4) Seek support.

Conclusions

Findings from this study highlight the importance of social workers' support as advocacy agents, able to amplify claimants' lessons to improve take-up advocacy using different practices: identifying eligible individuals and bridging the burdensome first step; disseminating general and "tacit" knowledge and using expertise of claimants as an important resource to advocacy; and identifying personal strengths alongside other sources of support in an effort to harness these as ways to increase take-up of social benefits. As a whole, claimants' lessons offer us a chance to improve social take-up advocacy to better meet the needs and obstacles faced by social work clients in the field.

Keywords

social work advocacy, take-up of social benefits, social general practice social work policy, social security, rights based approach

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Is it just a soccer game? An evaluation study of the "Fathers & Sons on the Field" program

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Despite of the crucial role fathers play in child development and specifically in their sons' risk behaviors, they are still rarely included in social services interventions. The aim of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of the "Fathers & Sons on the Field" program, an intervention that was designed to strengthen the connection between fathers and sons (aged 8-12) through soccer and group intervention. The program was developed by Mr. Eli Kushnir and the JOINT organization for at-risk families.

Methods: A mix method study was conducted. 110 fathers and 71 sons participated in baseline and outcome quantitative assessments between 2018-2019 and 2021-2022. Measures included socio-demographics, child's self-efficacy, fathers' involvement, sense of parental self –efficacy, and father – child relationship quality. Satisfaction from the program was also examined. In addition, fathers (n=75) participated in group semi-structured interviews.

Findings: Both fathers and sons reported high levels of satisfaction from participating in the program. We found positive correlations between satisfaction from the program and all outcome variables. Levels of participation and satisfaction from the program predicted higher paternal involvement. Qualitative analysis revealed two main themes: 1. The interpersonal dimension, e.g., improving the quality of the father-son relationship; 2. The personal dimension, e.g., positive changes in child's self-confidence and social skills as well as in fathers' ability to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors.

Conclusions and implications: The program contributed to strengthening the fathers and son relationship through the unique combination between a consistent playing space and a reflective space. The program may have a preventive role in youth risk behaviors. Future research with a quasi-experimental design is needed in order to strengthen the current study's findings.

Keywords

fathers, outcomes research , parent-child relations , family interventions, prevention programs

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Improving the transition between education to employment for new social workers: European perspectives, concerns, and recommendations

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This presentation will outline the International Federation of Social Workers European Region Project focused on New Social Workers. This presentation will explore the background, process and findings of this international research project spanning across 31 European countries and including almost 1,000 New Social Workers across Europe to improve the transition from education to employment for New Social Workers, benefiting both social work education and practice. Recognising that the future of the profession is with new workers and students, IFSW Europe started a project where each professional/member organisation of IFSW Europe was encouraged to nominate a 'new social worker' (defined as a final year student or a worker in the first five years of their career). These new social workers have been meeting together regularly and have progressed the project significantly. They used a research approach called collaborative autoethnography to share ideas through their lived experiences. This led to the group designing, translating and distributing a survey as well as undertaking follow up interviews to explore the experiences of almost 1,000 new social workers across Europe. This interactive presentation will be facilitated by the director of the project and will share the project findings, discuss the forthcoming IFSW Europe strategy paper and academic paper on new social workers, and outline advice and recommendations for new social workers, social work educators and employers involved in this transition. The director will go through the context, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. The director will focus on exploring the themes that emerged from this project and lead into a discussion session on these themes for the potential of rich discussions on how the transition from education to employment can be improved for new social workers across Europe and globally.

Keywords

new social worker, transition, education, employment, new graduates

184

Historiography of the Professionalization of United States Social Work

Katherine Lewis

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the first half of the 20th century, United States social workers, through many self-led associations, labored to establish themselves as professionals, akin to doctors, lawyers or ministers. Their merger into the National Association of Social Workers in 1955 began a period of stability in their identity. The publication of the first book-length histories of their professionalization soon followed. A historiographical review of these histories, published between 1965 and 2018, revealed that early social work leaders in America had adopted a functionalist approach to professionalization, e.g. social workers provided a structured, knowledge- and value-based service to increase society's function. Subsequent historians relied on the same themes of social order, specialist knowledge, and charity to explain how social work became a profession. Like the social work actors in their histories, the historians emphasized the role and influence of gender, class, and individual case work over social justice and community-based social work, which they saw as threats to the professionalization of social work. As leaders today continue to use the structures detailed in these histories to inform the development of social work as a profession, it is imperative to understand the context in which such histories were written and to identify gaps in social work history which may impede future growth.

This paper will show how historians of American social work softened crucial evidence of internal discord both in social work and in the sociology of occupations to support their promotion of social work as a profession. There was a persistent lack of scholarly examination of the role that rural, southern USA, Black, non-degreed, or community-based social workers had on the professionalization of social work. Historians' treatment of gender did not adequately address its intersections with class, race and religion. This was in part because the histories focused on institutions and policies, rather than people. Finally, historians generally placed the start date of American social work professionalization in the 1870s-80s, which ignored the rich evidence of casework performed in preceding decades. This paper is a call to arms not only for social workers but historians of social work, to face and address their shared challenges in presenting social work as a profession: disputed boundaries, oppressed identities, marginalized theories, and under-recognized paths to well-being and social justice.

Keywords

social work history, social justice, functionalism, feminism, professionalization

185

Status and position of social work perspectives and competence within the health and welfare services. A Norwegian study.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Over recent years, we have registered a concern both within research and from social workers that social work perspectives and competence have been weakened within the health and welfare services. This is linked to various trends, such as increased individualization, specialization and standardization, as well as a shift from focusing on social problems to health problems and/or disease (Hansen et al., 2015). Over the past two years, a research group with seven members has carried out a project where we explore this issue through empirical investigations in Norwegian health and welfare service:

What is the status and position of social work perspectives and competence within various parts of the health and welfare services, how has this developed over recent years, and what conditions have contributed to such a development?

Perspectives are operationalized to various aspects of the holistic view in social work, where understandings and practices always link the individual problems to their social and societal context. Competence, we link to the three-divided education model in Norwegian social work where three professions are included, general social work, child welfare and social educators. The study is limited to three service areas; child protection, work and welfare and substance abuse/mental illness.

Data has been generated through document analysis of governmental documents, interviews with employed social workers and leaders within the services, statistical register data on the number and proportion of employed social workers within the services, and a survey (N= 2169) among social workers who are members of the national trade union. The analysis is inspired by critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992), where we are concerned with which words and expressions are used, and which problem understandings and practices are linked to this. And we are also concerned with which realities we can trace in the way social workers are positioned within the services.

Of the key findings in the study, we would like to highlight the following in particular. Firstly, it is the services' defined tasks that govern the competence requirement. It is thus a task-oriented discourse that governs perspectives and competencies, more than a professional discourse. Secondly, reforms within the service system have led to all services being interdisciplinary, and from a power perspective, this creates a challenge for social work. For social workers, it seems that the services where they are employed influence the professional perspectives more than the educations do. And thirdly, it is a challenge for social workers to articulate their professional perspectives clearly. It appears as a form of tacit knowledge that is common to social workers, but which becomes indistinct within the services and towards other professions.

These challenges imply a need for a closer collaboration between research, education and practice in social work.

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Keywords

Social work, Status, Perspectives, Competence, Health- and welfare services

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Disciplinary knowledge curation and reproduction in Social Work journals

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose: In recent years, social work knowledge has been critiqued for reflecting mainly Western knowledge, promoting standardized universal approaches, and thus excluding multiple lived realities and worldviews. These critiques highlight ways in which social work journals (particularly Anglophone, Northern journals) dominate the curation of scholarly work; replicate Western, Eurocentric perspectives in the way that social work knowledge is gathered, legitimated, and presented; and marginalize the voices of the global South and of equity deserving groups. In response to critiques, social work is increasingly making room for diverse worldviews and striving to recognize collective knowledges, experiences of oppression, discrimination, and inequity.

The presented exploratory qualitative study examined how social work journals create, replicate, generate and curate disciplinary knowledge. More specifically, it highlighted the types of knowledges that are typically collected in social work journals and identified the mechanisms by which journals include and reflect non-dominant/alternative social work knowledges.

Methods: To have as broad a response as possible, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the editors of 190 social work journals globally. A comprehensive global journal list was created for the purposes of this study (and will be shared with the conference participants). The invitation and questionnaire were in English, due to funding constraints, even as we were aware that this perpetuated an English-language bias.

Findings: We received responses from 29 journals, representing for the most part Europe and North America. Most responses identified dominant perspectives as being individualized, informed primarily by psychological theory, and being driven by objective experts. Alternative knowledges were described as collective and communitarian, and reliant on participatory research. Participants conveyed that social work generally was founded on principles of social justice, human rights, service, and dignity. No clear explication of dominant versus alternative knowledges emerged. Rather, the answers communicated that such a binary did not represent dominant social work thinking. Also, only a small minority highlighted the steps taken to resist hegemonic thinking and affirm alternative knowledges.

Even so, all participants suggested that their journals created space for alternative knowledges. The strategies used included representative editorial boards, having informed reviewers, relying on broad mandates, and providing free access to publication. It was also suggested that it would be useful to accommodate several languages and have diverse forms of presenting knowledges in publication. These also formed the recommendations offered to other journals for the inclusion of alternative knowledges.

Conclusions and implications: We conclude that a mainstream view of social work knowledge remains entrenched. While alternative knowledges might be included in current publications, few journals approach such inclusion intentionally. We hope through this presentation to encourage a demand for journals to meaningfully include alternative strategies, and hope editors will draw inspiration from what we share. This research stimulates critical debates about social work knowledge and creates space for transformation, social justice, truth-telling, and reconciliation regarding knowledges from marginalized and silenced groups who practice or teach social work or who use social work services.

Keywords

social work knowledge, dominant knowledge, alternative knowledge, social work journals, knowledge curation

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Where the Wild Things Are: The Construction of “Prostitution” among Out-of-Home LGBTQ+ Youth in Israel

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose – Within the past two decades, five out-of-home services for LGBTQ+ youth were established in Israel. The proposed presentation explores constructions of “prostitution” among LGBTQ+ youth “graduates” of one of these services. LGBTQ+ youth occasionally experience rejection based on their sexuality and gender identity and are at greater risk of being maltreated by their family, often prompting them to leave or run away from their parents’ home. Such youth may find themselves living independently and, once they leave home, tend to be vulnerable to all kinds of abuse and sexual victimization, sometimes leading to different types of “prostitution”. Among LGBTQ+ youth, prostitution is a specific and complex type of unequal human relationship. This presentation explores the constructions of “prostitution” among out-of-home LGBTQ+ youth in Israel from their own subjective perspective.

Methods – The study employed a critical constructivist grounded theory approach. Thirty-one in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with LGBTQ+ youth aged 16 to 32 (average 21.6), and all interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed.

Findings – The findings reveal four main constructions of “prostitution”: (1) Survival sex – The provision of sexual services to ensure survival and the obtaining of basic necessities, such as food, apartment rental fees, and money for gender-reassignment medical procedures, debt payments, etc. (2) Free will – The desire to enter into a sexual relationship in order to enjoy financial comfort, the emotional benefits of being desired, and a sense of recognition as the preferred gender; (3) Grey “prostitution” – Sexual situations, located somewhere between intentional and victimization, in which the benefits, such as having a place to sleep at night, are primarily metaphysical; (4) Belonging – A sense of inclusion, of being part of the community, and of being accepted by their peers; and, on the other hand, the influence of peers to enter the world of prostitution.

Conclusions and implications – Our findings indicate that “prostitution”, in its different constructions and manifestations, occurs large scale and is highly prevalent among out-of-home LGBTQ+ youth in Israel. We discuss the implications of the different constructions and the emotions associated with social work practice with LGBTQ+ youth experiencing “prostitution”. On the macro level, we discuss challenges for social work policy, with the aim of including the different voices of service users pertaining to prostitution.

Keywords

LGBTQ+, prostitution, sexual abuse, out-of-home placement, youth

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‘Why don’t we say what’s on our minds?’ Using participatory action research to improve the cooperation between clients, informal care givers and professionals in long term care

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: In long term mental health care, cooperation between care professional, client and informal care giver is of great importance. However, despite an abundance of methods, models and tools to improve this cooperation, this proves to be a challenge. Reason found through research are a lack of trust and unclarity concerning roles and responsibilities (Zegwaard, 2017). In this project we aim to improve this cooperation by combining the knowledge and experiences of the three stakeholder groups, trying to discover the underlying difficulties and developing solutions through co-creation.

Methods: The study has a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design, in which the important stakeholder groups are involved in every aspect of the study (Abma et al., 2019). We distinguish the following phases: 1) interviews with 'triangles' of clients, informal care givers and professionals to gain insight into their cooperation from all three perspectives; 2) learning groups of clients, informal care givers and professionals who create collective experiential knowledge and co-create solutions; 3) creative sessions within the participating organizations, attended by clients, informal care givers and professionals, to disseminate the created solutions.

Findings: The most important finding from the interviews was that perspectives within the 'triangles' on their cooperation often greatly differed, and that underlying emotions and needs failed to get enough attention. More importantly, the discussions in the learning groups pointed out that many emotions, fears, anxieties and frustrations remain unsaid. This is the case for both clients, informal care givers and professionals. Not expressing these feelings appears to make it impossible to build a true relationship and effectively make use of all the models and tools available. In the third phase of this project, we will organize sessions within the participating care organizations in which we use arts-based methods (van Heijst et al, 2019), such as theater and visual arts to make the discomfort the three parties feel palpable and to encourage those present to start to say the unsaid.

Conclusions and implications: Why don't we say what's on our minds? Because it makes us feel vulnerable. The sessions we will develop within this project can help clients, informal care givers and professionals overcome their fears and hesitations and start to be real with each other; it makes them experience what they have to gain when they do this. At the time of the conference, the first creative sessions will have taken place and we will be able to report on the process and profits of these sessions.

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Keywords

Participatory Action Research, informal care givers, co-creation, cooperation, arts-based research

Asylum Seekers and Social Workers in the context of the Covid-19: A comparative perspective.

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

The comparative empirical research on the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Asylum Seekers and Social Workers in North Greece and South Italy to be presented at the symposium focuses on the groups' perspectives concerning two traumatic issues, namely the process of becoming an asylum seeker, and the impact of the pandemic on both the asylum seekers and their social workers who share the same risk reality. Both issues impact on the relationships between these two groups in more than one way, and on the self-perception of asylum seekers and of the social workers' perception of their professional identity. The need for social workers to consider their personal health risk, and that of their close family members (children and partners) while continuing working became more problematic than it was before, and might have impacted on their relationships with their clients.

The comparative perspective of this empirical study highlights the commonalities and the differences of being an asylum seeker and of being a social worker in the two countries, and the emerging relationships between the two groups in a high risk period for both. National policies concerning asylum seekers in particular and migration more generally were looked at as part of the background of the study and as a factor dictating to both groups the options and limitations they had to face in finding individual solutions for each client, as well as the boundaries of their relationships. The social boundaries came into play in a more limited way in terms of the relationships between asylum seekers and the local people they came into contact with.

Looking at the pandemic as a relational issue, this study aimed at exploring the perspective of each group of their respective experience of the pandemic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 social workers and 30 asylum seekers, selected purposefully, interviewed by researchers who were not part of either group. The advisory groups constructed in each country which consisted of both social workers and representatives of migrants associations, were consulted prior to interviewing and then asked for their interpretation of the finding. Reflexive thematic analysis was applied to the data analysis, selected because of its flexibility.

Key findings highlight the centrality of the social workers in the lives of the asylum seekers in the context of their isolation within the societies in which they live, the threat of the pandemic, and the resilience developed by many of them. Social workers had to handle a high level of personal risk, the frustration of having to cancel the more social activities they have created for the asylum seekers, the ambiguity of their position vis a vis the asylum seekers on the one hand, and the political-administrative authorities on the other hand, and an increased level of tension among the asylum seekers due to the delay in administrative decision making as well as the cancellation of social activities. The diffusion of the high tension became one of the tasks social workers had to handle too.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

The Context of the Study on Social workers and Asylum Seekers during the Covid 19 in North Greece and South Italy

This paper will look at similarities and differences between social workers and asylum seekers in the two countries concerning:

1. Migration policies for asylum seekers who were already allowed temporary stay
2. Key background features of the asylum seekers and of the social workers
3. Key issues in the shared work between the social workers and the asylum seekers
4. Evolving relationships between members of the two groups during the covid-19 pandemic.

The data was collected in 40 audio recorded interviews with social workers and 30 interviews with the asylum seekers. Interviews were analysed through the application of Reflexive Thematic Analysis, with added comments from members of the two national advisory groups.

North Greece and South Italy were selected for this study as areas with a high number of asylum seekers accumulated between 2015 to 2019. While asylum seekers in North Greece came mainly from countries experiencing armed political conflict, those in South Italy came from African countries, due to curtailed economic opportunities and a high level of local corruption.

By the time of our study, both governments were aiming at stopping asylum seekers from arriving and from staying in their country, but treated more positively migrants who wished to stay in the country.

The restrictions imposed by the pandemic created unexpected problems for both social workers and asylum seekers.. However, they also fostered closer relationships than before between the two groups.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Drawing from the voice of 30 asylum seekers in Greece and Italy.

Drawing from the voice of 30 asylum seekers in Greece and Italy, this presentation focuses on the effects of the pandemic on the continuation of their migratory paths, on personal, relational and political vulnerability. Pandemic experiences have been described as very negative due to the fear of infection and death, the lack of social activities and the non-functioning of services handling their legal status or planned move to another European country, curtailed work options, isolation, insufficient and insecure internet connections.

A few interviewees experienced difficulties in accessing health services when in need and worried about the risk of the pandemic to their relatives. No difference was noted in the pandemic experiences among those who migrate from war torn contexts vs. those who came due to poverty and corruption in their country of origin.

Most asylum seekers reported that the majority of social workers continued to come to the workplace, while the risk to health they undertook was not acknowledged.

Likewise, most thought the workers were helpful and acted as a life- saving line.

Perhaps some asylum seekers did not reflect on negative experiences with their social workers out of fear of this view being disclosed to the social workers.

The findings reflect the respondents' resilience, related to hope due to being supported by God in their survival and their future, having good neighbours, and informal support networks.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

From the mist of pandemic emergency, to new paths of Social Work in the migration field.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted social work assumptions, methods and routines and frozen many 'normal' social work and asylum processes. Social workers are variously engaged in both targeted and holistic interventions and they seek to guide and provide an equitable bridge to a wide variety of agencies for refugees and asylum seekers.

Based on 40 interviews of social workers, our study offers analysis of the experience of social work with asylum seekers in Northern Greece and Southern Italy, during a crucial phase of the pandemic up to March 2021. The observation of new and old practice patterns within this period show how much the pandemic has been given new cause to reflect on social work nature and on the nature of the helping relationships in times of constraints, stimulating the emersion of new skill, new strength, new connection, and new value which were previously unnoticed.

Most social workers in both samples were ready to continue their face-to-face contact with the asylum seekers, regardless of the risk this entailed for them and their families, experiencing frustrated at the closure of the social activities they set up for their clients, the unending delay of decisions pertaining to the future of the asylum seekers.

Hopefully professional adaptations and innovation, provoked by pandemic, will inform social work practice in the post COVID-19-related reality, particularly about skills in training concerning moral and ethical practice during public emergencies.

Keywords

Relationship, , Asylum Seekers, Social Workers, Pandemic, Comparative

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The Value of Sourcing Social Work Journals Archives for Critical Discourse Analysis

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Scholarly journals constitute repositories of disciplinary knowledges over time; offer an indication of what might be disciplinary priorities at specific points in time; and reflect the discipline's identity. Therefore, journals may provide a potentially rich source of information about diverse social work practices, and knowledges. However, in social work, the analysis of journals as data sets seems to be relatively rare and an articulation of how to approach such research as a method is absent. Using journals as a data source for critical social work exploration thus appears to be neglected but should be considered as a further research approach.

We have recently come to appreciate the value of (exa)mining journal archives through critical discourse analysis. We centre the Foucauldian approach of 'the history of the present' as a methodology that facilitates critical

exploration of historical and contemporary discourses revealing what has allowed these to be sustained, interrupted, or disrupted. It illuminates the ways in which social work processes and practices reflect dominant belief systems and state-sanctioned ideologies and policies over time. Thus, it facilitates an understanding of social work practice with marginalized persons and communities and the mechanisms by which domination is exercised.

In this presentation, we present as research method critical discourse analysis using social work journals as the data source. We identify how journals can be a source for critical discourse analysis and specifically for developing histories of the present. We first offer a review of extant examples where journal archives have been explored and note the absence of the critical discourse analysis in this endeavour. We then offer a rationale for using journals as a data source. Next, we discuss what constitutes critical discourse analysis and its benefits to social work. We follow with an example from our work of a critical history of the present of settler social work practice with Indigenous persons based on exploring Canadian Social Work journal content from 1933 to 2019. Finally, we offer a guide for applying critical discourse analysis when using journal archives and a discussion of advantages and limitations of this method.

We conclude that social work research perusing the contents of professional journals as data sets is critical for the excavation of the history of professional scholarship in social work. It provides wider lens of understanding and contextualizing a subject in its time and place and expands the profession's knowledge base, enhancing social work capacity to establishing strong socially just human relationships with members of marginalized and historically disadvantaged groups.

Keywords

social work journals as data source, critical discourse analysis, social work history, social work identity, professional capacity building

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Creating the conditions for collective curiosity and containment: Insights from developing and delivering reflective groups with social work supervisors

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Over the last decade, there is growing recognition of the importance of reflective practice and how social workers can be supported to reflect through using group models. There has been less practice and research focus on how such models may support supervisors, managers and leaders in their roles. This experientially and conceptually-informed paper shares reflections and insights from designing and delivering small group reflective practice spaces, as part of a government funded professional development programme for statutory children and families social work supervisors and their managers in England. Based on formal programme feedback and communication

with facilitators and participants, there is clear evidence that participants have valued the space to reflect with peers on the diverse and challenging dilemmas they face in their role.

The paper will outline the context for including small group spaces in the programme, alongside the theoretical and research frameworks underpinning our approach, in line with contemporary practice and education. Drawing from the sources of evidence outlined above, three key thematic reflections are explored: the conditions for successful reflective groups; the roles and functions within the groups and the nature and significance of group processes. The paper concludes by highlighting the co-created learning from both in-person and virtual modes of delivery which emerged over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic and has now become a contemporary context and culture for hybrid ways of working in England.

Within the theoretical explorations of the paper, certain concepts recur in relation to different aspects of the life of reflective groups and the diverse experiences of group participants and facilitators. The central importance of containment in the face of the anxiety-ridden professional contexts the participants are working in is particularly apparent, as is the need for participants to be permitted to be professionally vulnerable, in order to maintain a position of professional curiosity. It is argued that these professionally nourishing group experiences enable the social work supervisors who participate, to model and provide this to their supervisees. And through the dynamics of 'parallel processes', these group experiences of nourishment and containment can be transferred to shape and inform effective relationship-based practice with children and families. This relational and reflective 'golden thread' effectively impacts practice through supporting supervisors to support practitioners, to support parents, so they can manage the anxiety they experience in order to enable them to provide care for their children.

Keywords

reflective groups, group supervision, facilitating groups, children and families social work, containment

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Translating academic findings into a call-to-action: an animation video about creating space for ownership for youth faced with homelessness

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Bridging the knowledge gap between researchers and those 'on the ground' is key to create opportunities towards positive change yet often remains a challenge in social work research (subtheme 1). As engaged researchers in the field of social work practices, we should continuously raise the question how to effectively contribute to knowledge sharing beyond an academic audience. Therefore it seems important to share and discuss attempts of doing so, including how to collaborate with professionals and local communities in the creation process of such knowledge sharing tools (subtheme 6).

This presentation is an attempt to stir such a discussion. It aims to share on knowledge sharing practices developed as part of participatory research with a community of undocumented youth in Amsterdam. In this research, through ethnographic methods we mapped good practices in projects designed for youth categorized as vulnerable during lockdown periods in Amsterdam. Ensuring a fruitful physical space that creates the social space for youth themselves to shape their daily life, proved crucial. The combination of a fruitful material infrastructure and non-disciplinary social relations – opposed to predetermined activities - enables ownership on the side of youth.

Such ownership for marginalized youth is however insufficiently safeguarded in local policy or social work practices. How to make sure that these insights are shared in those very settings? Findings were shared in an academic publication but one can hardly expect that a non-academic audience has the resources to read those. Thus, to make findings more accessible to a wider audience, core points were translated into a 4 minute whiteboard animation video. This video will be shared in this presentation with the aim to collectively reflect on effective knowledge sharing and how to improve this crucial aspect of our research in the field of social work.

Keywords

youth, homemaking, knowledge sharing, audio visual media, ownership

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The complexity of constructing empowerment measuring instruments. A delphi study.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Empowerment has different values and effects when viewed from different perspectives. It is both an important process and an important goal for the professional practice of social work. Empowerment also relates to socio-political perspectives, which is reflected in elaborations on the word 'power' and its various interpretations, on theories on blaming the victim versus blaming the system and on the concept of empowerment as a way to analyse and handle social problems. Furthermore, empowerment can be valued from the perspective of service-users, by those who require social support and how they load the concept with meanings that align with their perception of empowerment. As such, it is important to understand to what extent measuring instruments consider these various perspectives and values. In regard to the complexity of measuring empowerment, this research aims to gain insight in experts' views on the theoretical requirements to measuring empowerment in social work.

To this end, a Delphi study was conducted. This Delphi study consists of 3 rounds in which consensus into the appropriate method of instrument development for measuring empowerment is the goal. By retrieving, organizing, exchanging and combining the opinions and arguments of 18 different international experts, this study attempts to provide insight into experts' views on requirements when developing measuring instruments for empowerment.

The results show elaborations on substantive requirements and considerations that should be taken into account when developing empowerment measures in social work. The results give rise to guidelines for developing empowerment measures, being: (1) determine who is the benefit group of this exercise and what is the purpose of measuring empowerment in relation to this, (2) determine the theoretical foundation and definition of empowerment for the instrument, (3) determine if this instrument aims to measure empowerment as catalyst (process) or empowerment as end to itself (outcome) (4), determine the substantive scope of the instrument (5), determine the relation between the construct and its dimensions for this instrument (6), define and describe the context as explicitly as possible (7) and determine the extent to which the target population will be involved in the development of the measuring instrument and why and (8) determine the extent to which existing scales will be used in the development of the instrument and how data from these scales will be translated into new contexts. These guidelines provide social work and its researchers the opportunity to construct instruments that align with methodological standards, theoretical requirements and ethical principles.

Keywords

empowerment, measures, Delphi, guidelines, social work

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Contribution of Online Youth Work to Personal Development of (Vulnerable) Adolescents

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Our earlier study (under review) shows that adolescents, when addressing their developmental needs in the online lifeworld, need instrumental, socioemotional, informational and cognitive support from youth workers. By responding to the developmental needs of adolescents, youth workers employ methodical approaches and youth work methods in the online lifeworld in order to contribute to strengthening the development of adolescents. However, the literature is lacking the knowledge on what the contribution of such support is to personal development of (vulnerable) adolescents. This paper seeks to present, from youth work and adolescents' perspective, the benefits of youth work support in the online lifeworld to adolescents' personal development.

A qualitative research design was used: youth workers (N = 17) kept weekly diaries reporting on their support of adolescents and contribution to their development; interviews with youth workers (N = 21) and with adolescents (N = 36). The collected data were analyzed with thematic analysis.

The findings revealed six developmental areas where adolescents benefit from the youth work support in the online lifeworld: Interactions, friendships and (intimate) relationships; Online safety and privacy; Self-presentation and identity formation; Talent development; Online information; and Health and wellbeing.

This paper concludes that youth work with its role in addressing developmental needs of adolescents in the online lifeworld and creating new developmental opportunities, contributes to reinforcement of adolescents' positive personal development and to decreasing of online risk and harmful behaviors.

Keywords

Youth work, Online youth work, Online lifeworld, Developmental needs, Adolescents

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PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN DESIGNING ECOLOGICAL MAPS OF THEIR DAILY EXPERIENCES

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background. In Lithuania, the process of deinstitutionalization of social care is in progress since 2014. Persons with disabilities (further - PWD) who have been living in care institutions for almost all their lives are relocated to smaller houses in communities and start independent living with the support of social workers. However, local communities often object to the relocation of persons with disabilities into their neighbourhoods. In this case, there is a danger that services for people with disabilities will be only community-placed and not community-based, and the problem of their exclusion will remain unresolved. The case of Lithuania represents the pathways of the social integration of persons with disabilities in post-socialist countries.

Methodology. Aim of the study: by drawing socioecological maps to reveal the extent and nature of PWD participation in community life and to compare it with the participation of persons without disabilities. Method (qualitative): socioecological maps of lives of different community members. The theoretical basis: methodological principles of ecological systems theory and P. Bourdieu theory. The ecological maps were drawn by research participants and focused on places they visit, services they receive, and contacts or relationships they create. Each eco map was supplemented with an interview of the person.

Major findings: (a) the ecological map allowed identifying the places visited by PWD and the nature of the contacts made there, (b) the places where group home residents and other members of the community receive services are similar, but c) in the socioecological maps drawn by community members the work environment and working relations are particularly prominent, which has not been observed in the eco-maps of PWD, (d) despite that community services received by PWD and other community members are similar in their type they do differ in their content. It may be determined by the different abilities and thus the needs of people with disabilities and people without disabilities, e) in contrast to the lives of other members of the community, sometimes services still "come" to the group homes of PWD: f.i., it is not the person who comes to the hairdresser, but the hairdresser comes to a group home. Such dynamics indicate institutional traditions, sometimes transferred to the group living facilities during the process of deinstitutionalization.

Concluding statement. The mediation of a social worker is very important for developing social networks among residents of group homes and other community members, but sometimes, instead of encouraging their supported independent living, social workers assume the role of decision-makers and sometimes tend to transfer the practices of the institution (in preparation of the meal, distribution of daily medications, etc.) into a group home.

Keywords

community, deinstitutionalization, ecological map, community services

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Collaboration between regular education teachers and special educators: how to reinforce each other in achieving an inclusive learning environment: a relational view.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

There is a growing need and awareness for collaboration between regular education teachers and special educators to realise inclusive learning environments. This study explored the shared experiences that connect special educators and regular education teachers by focusing on their working relationships at the classroom level. We conducted semi-structured interviews with five regular education teachers and five special educators ranging from preschool to secondary school. Mutually connected relational aspects that describe the collaboration process came up: a relationship characterised by insecurities; an open and respectful relationship; an informal, appreciative relationship; a learning relationship; a relationship directed to reciprocal exchange. This study emphasises the importance of the support and professionalisation of regular education teachers. We suggest that the only way to handle growing diversity is by establishing collaborative and supporting practices between regular education teachers and special educators in a moveable manner where both professionals complement each other and share responsibilities with adaptability towards the class context. The central question in supporting a student with special educational needs is: what is it to collaborate around THIS student in THIS class with THIS teacher and THIS special educator?

Keywords

inclusive education, interprofessional relations, teachers, special educational needs, collaboration

Precolonial Practices in Caring and Acts of Knowing: A Narrative Exercise in the Reclaiming of Social Work from its Colonial Past

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Proposal type

Workshop

Abstract

This workshop is led by a team of facilitators that will engage in dialogue among themselves and participants about the diversity of caring knowledge and traditions that exist in different cultures the world over. We seek to challenge the epistemicide implicit in much of the international social work curriculum, which uplifts colonized models of care while erasing Indigenous and local ways of knowing and caring. This workshop employs a narrative research approach to uncover the legacies of care, compassion, responsibility, mutual aid, and collective participation happening amongst us and in our communities even today despite the depredations of colonialism and the corrupting imprints of a capitalist and neoliberal order.

If the social work profession is complicit in professional imperialism, following James Midgely (1981), then it is an imperative to turn to the lessons of our living history to reclaim the legacies of care and compassion that have sustained communities long before Christianity and colonialism set foot on ancestral soil. Social work need not reflect the legacy of religious zealots or mercenaries seeking to convert heathens with the promise of western salvation. In challenging the colonial legacy of social work knowing and acting, we can overturn the reliance on Occidentalism and Global North epistemologies and neoliberal evidence-based methodologies by extending centering critical and Indigenous epistemologies and ways of acting. Social work today is enriched by practitioners who knowingly or unknowingly continue to carry their own people's legacy of caring for themselves, their communities, and their ecosystem from which all forms of life are entwined.

This workshop is a consciously reflective effort to capture the many forms of knowing and acting on the principles of compassion, care, accountability, stewardship, and equality. Together we will explore the many acts that constitute the "project of collective knowing" and reflect on what these stories reveal about care and compassion. Workshop facilitators will narrate lived experiences that are rooted in local and Indigenous peoples' legacy of compassion and community caring practices. The workshop will employ diverse practices to arrive at consensus such as the "tong-tong" method of the Indigenous peoples in Northern Philippines, whereby we will engage in dialogical interaction. Towards the end, participants will share their discussions thereby articulating and weaving a living narrative, that is indeed an act of caring and community survival in the spirit of conviviality.

Keywords

caring knowledge , precolonial traditions, decolonization, narrative research, indigenous epistemology

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Conceptualising the Social Worker-Organisational Relationship through Self-Determination Theory: A Realist Synthesis of Signs of Safety

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: How organisations should support programme implementation is a key question for child protection social work, yet implementation remains an under-researched topic in this field. This study contributes to better understanding how organisational context can influence child protection practice and outcomes by examining a popular practice framework, Signs of Safety.

Methods: The study aimed to deepen and inform the theory of what key strategies are expected to achieve in the social worker-organisational relationship, why and in what circumstances. A Realist Synthesis was used, involving a Realist review of literature and focus groups with 22 international SofS experts.

Findings: Using Self Determination Theory, we detail how SofS can be conceptualized as aiming to support workers to experience 'autonomous' rather than 'controlled' motivation by supporting basic human needs for 'autonomy' (feeling a sense of volition), 'competence' (feeling effective) and 'relatedness' (feeling cared for). Further, we present emerging programme theories on how the interacting effects of reasoning and resources in varying conditions affect outcomes.

Conclusions: The findings offer practical guidance to organisations implementing Signs of Safety. Further, we suggest that Self Determination Theory may contribute a mechanistic, research-informed explanation of effective organisational support in social work organisations generally and that this hypothesis should be empirically investigated. Finally, this study demonstrates how Realist research methodologies, which are popular in health service research but underutilised in social work, can provide insightful contributions to theorise and empirically investigate the complex interactional effects of reasoning and resources in social work contexts.

Keywords

Signs of Safety, Practice Implementation , Complex Organizations , Child Protection , Realist Synthesis

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Labor force attachment among care leavers in Israel: A longitudinal cross-sequential between-groups design

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and objectives

Substantial empirical literature documented the adverse labor market experience of children with out-of-home care experience in different countries. Yet, longitudinal studies on care leavers' labor force attachment (LFA) through their mid-30' are scant, and most studies have not compared care leavers with comparable vulnerable youth who were not in public care, limiting their ability to indicate the effects of being in public care (i.e., the intervention) on labor market participation while controlling for other confounders.

Building on the life course perspective (Johnson et al., 2011) in which we interwoven human and social capital theories this study aims to: (1) examine age-related LFA, from age 21 to 34, among care leavers and a matched same-age peers; (2) explain variability in age-related LFA based on information measured from early adolescence to young adulthood that reflects the participants' human and social capital.

Methods

The study is based on a longitudinal cross-sequential between-groups design. Drawing on longitudinal administrative records two groups were studied: all alumni of 14 consecutive birth cohorts (1982–1995) of care leavers of youth villages in Israel (22,670) and a double-sized matched comparison group drawn from the corresponding cohorts in the general population (45,340). Bivariate analyses examined differences in age-related LFA between care leavers and their matched peers. A multilevel multinomial model was employed to predict LFA levels throughout the age span.

Results

The rate of care leavers strongly connected to the labor market gradually increased with age. Stronger LFA was observed among care leavers than among their matched peers during their entire 20's. Trends between the groups converged from the age of 30 onward. Yet, despite the clear improvement in employment over the years, there was a significant group of care leavers whose LFA remained very low -disconnected youth or youth characterized with fragment employment- over the years. The multilevel multinomial model confirmed these findings. Also, based on a wide set of factors measured throughout participants' developmental course (e.g., family background, educational attainment at the end of placement, integration into post-secondary education, post-care usage of welfare services) the study identified three sub-groups of care leavers with varying levels of LFA: strongly connected to the labor market, youth who are surprisingly characterized by both lower family-based social capital and lower human capital; fragmented and unstable connected youth with favorable family-based social capital and human capital; and disconnected from the labor market, youth with multifaceted difficulties.

Conclusions and implications

In line with the life course perspective, our findings demonstrate the importance of early experiences and achievements in shaping future development and experiences, here LFA. The interweaving of human capital and social capital theories here - embodied by the different types of resources gained by individuals over time- has proven suitable for studying the long-term labor market experience of care leavers and can be used in other

employment, developmental and child welfare studies. Differential policy measures, while in-care and afterward, are needed to address care leavers' variability in labor market experience.

Keywords

care leavers, employment, administrative records, propensity score matching, life course perspective

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The experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ young people in out-of-home social care

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) young people are overrepresented in the social care system. But their experiences and needs have received little attention in the areas of research, practice and policy, with much of the existing evidence coming from the United States. There is a significant global gap in our understanding about this population. This study addresses this gap by systematically reviewing the literature and collecting original data from LGBTQ+ young people about their residential social care experiences.

Methods

This project began with an international systematic scoping review and critical appraisal of the literature about the health and well-being experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-home care (Schaub et al., in press). Interviews were conducted with twenty LGBTQ+ young people about their residential or group home experiences in the United Kingdom. The project includes substantive collaboration and co-production with a young advisors' group of LGBTQ+ young people with lived experiences of social care and relevant sector stakeholders connected to LGBTQ+ young people in out-of-home care.

Findings

Findings indicate that LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to come into care, have more care placements, and spend longer in care than their peers. They also experience specific and significant health, mental health and well-being inequalities compared to non-LGBTQ+ peers in care. Some groups of LGBTQ+ young people youth face particular challenges, including ethnic minority LGBTQ+ youth, lesbian and bisexual girls, and transgender and gender diverse (TGD) youth. Social care systems are especially ill-prepared to meet the needs of TGD youth due to widespread institutional and interpersonal stigma or discrimination. The results reveal a gap in the current knowledge about social care professionals' attitudes, knowledge and experiences in supporting LGBTQ+ youth and demonstrate the importance of individual, holistic and affirming care relationships with LGBTQ+ youth.

Conclusions and implications

LGBTQ+ young people in out-of-home face unique and heightened challenges. The study findings suggest a need for changes to policy and mandatory and comprehensive competency-based education and training. Professional development should include discussion-based techniques addressing anti-LGBTQ+ and hetero- or cis-normative bias within this system. Future research should include longitudinal and life course studies in a range of contexts to address substantial gaps in our knowledge base.

Keywords

LGBT people, young people, residential child care, foster care, inequalities

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The effectiveness of an e-learning training module on social workers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs supporting LGBTQ+ youth: A randomized controlled trial

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Social workers report feeling ill-prepared to meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) young people who are largely overrepresented in care system (Kaasbøll et al., 2021; Schaub et al., 2022). Within this context, there are few robust studies about the effectiveness of training for social workers supporting LGBTQ+ youth (Hunt et al., 2019). This gap is especially notable for e-learning training programmes which can be composed and maintained with limited resources and provide highly accessible and cost-effective LGBTQ+ cultural competency training. This trial is the first of its kind and evaluates the effectiveness of an e-learning training module for improving social workers' perceived knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs towards supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Methods

Using a two-armed, pragmatic randomised controlled trial, this study tested an e-learning training module between May and December 2022. Participants are registered social workers employed by local authorities and working in children's social care in England, and individually randomised. Methods include a pre-test post-test model, and participants were individually randomised to an intervention group, undertaking the e-learning training module, or the control group with business-as-usual equality and diversity training conditions provided by their employer. Primary outcome measures are heteronormative attitudes and beliefs, measured using the Heteronormativity Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (HABS) (Habarth, 2015), and a perceived knowledge measure. Secondary objectives will describe efficacy variation about participants' characteristics (previous LGBTQ+ equality

and diversity training) along with exploratory moderator analyses of the effect of the intervention dependent on age, gender, religiosity, and connection to the LGBTQ+ community.

Findings, Conclusions & Implications

The presentation reports the findings from the randomised controlled trial which concludes at the end of November 2022. The study represents an ambitious programme generating robust evidence-based knowledge to help social workers address the needs of an underserved, marginalised and vulnerable population. We expect findings to identify whether this training package is effective and for which groups. The knowledge generated from this study will be essential to design robust social care services for children and young people.

Keywords

training, e-learning, social work education, LGBT people, young people

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The challenge of evaluation in social work with and for people with disabilities: A systematic review

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose. Social work theory and research not only emphasises the relevance of diagnosis and intervention but also calls for a comprehensive and person-centred assessment for better intervention. Often this last phase encounters difficulties or challenges, sustained by the lack of resources or lack of time of social workers. In the case of social work with and for persons with disabilities (PWDs), these issues are more challenging than in other areas and represent important deficits (Llewellyn, 2014; 2017). Some of the specific challenges in working with PWDs are communication or cognitive problems, which make it difficult for them to participate in traditional assessment processes (Gavidia-Payne and Jackson, 2019). In order to address these challenges, this study aims to analyse the existing scientific production in the field of social intervention with and for PWDs, with special emphasis on its evaluation, being a starting point for the improvement of evaluation. *Methods.* In this exploratory study we carried out a systematic review of the existing literature, according to PRISMA Protocol, from which a sample of 19 articles was extracted. The period chosen was between 2017 and 2021, taking into account the context of the Convention on the Rights of PWDs, the European Union's Strategy on the Rights of PWDs 2021-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. *Findings.* We found eight main domains: 1.- A scarcity of publications related to intervention with and for PWDs that included a systematic evaluation process. 2.- The territories with the highest number of articles were Europe, Australia and India. 3.- The bulk of the interventions are focused on the profiles of people with intellectual disabilities or developmental disorders, at school age or in the ageing processes. 4.- The community level of intervention is the focus of the research collected. 5.- The areas on which the interventions are focused are rehabilitation, education and health. 6.- There is a lack of homogeneity was observed in the evaluation indicators used. 7.- The tools used in the evaluation are focused on quality of life and not on satisfaction with the intervention. 8.- There is a deficit in the co-creation of research with PWDs.

Conclusions and implications. Although both social work theory and institutional texts refer to the importance of evaluation, it continues to have deficits. In the case of PWDs, they have specific needs to be addressed, and we found the need to open the door to different questions on indicators and evaluation tools, the implementation of the social model or social inclusion, among others.

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Keywords

evaluation, multiple disabilities, general practice social work, rights based approach, social model

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The Team: an examination of the fundamental relationships at the core of social work identity

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

I have undertaken research (initially in Europe but more latterly in England) for more than a decade on social workers' ability to remain in the demanding area of child and family work. This presentation will consider the findings from projects on retention and well-being undertaken between 2018 and 2022, in which relationships at work, particularly within teams, were cited as the most important factor in supporting many aspects of thriving, delivering services, and of support in social work.

Background and research methods

After undertaking pilot research in 2016 (see Frost et al., 2018, Why do they stay? A study of resilient child protection workers in three European countries) Community Care Inform commissioned me to work with them on surveys of social workers' work satisfaction in various English local authorities.

Initially I undertook an informal literature review (revised in 2019) to establish what we already know from research on why/how social workers stay. From this we identified 5 areas that were most regularly raised by social workers in relation to remaining and thriving: we summarised these as: safety; support; organisational issues, professional development and the work place. From this work we developed the Risk Retention Tool (RRT): a method of evaluating how best local authorities can support their workers to stay.

Since 2018 we have undertaken these surveys in both urban and rural social services departments. A mixed methods approach has been used to collect data, and we have surveyed over 1000 and interviewed app 150 self-selecting qualified social workers and other volunteering social work staff, in child and family work. Because the questionnaires include extensive space for comments and suggestions, we have been able to access the voices of this large group of workers from these two sources: the quantitative data and comments, and the qualitative interviews. The survey was completed online, anonymously, answering a 60 point questionnaire, and the semi-structured interviews, lasting between 30mins and 1hr, were undertaken by video call (latterly Microsoft Teams') either by myself or a research assistant. University ethics permission was granted in 2017.

Findings

Although specific questions were asked in relation to what it was like to be a worker in their specific workplace, the importance of their teams and colleagues was raised again and again in relation to e.g. questions on support, supervision, confidence, and safety etc. The paper being proposed here will consider what aspects of social work practice and identity thrive by being part of a team, and what managers and organisations can do to build and support such thriving work groups.

Conference Themes

The paper would reflect the main conference theme, by focusing on human relationships, but also contributes to our understanding of social work identity, and the improvement of service delivery: sub themes 4 and 3.

(Reference: Frost, L., Hojer, S., Campanini, A-M., Sicora, A. and Kullburg, K. (2018) Why do they stay? A study of resilient child protection workers in three European countries. *European Journal of Social Work*: Vol 21 Issue 4 pps 485-497

Keywords

social care staff, teams, support, safety, supervision

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Decolonising Social Work through Culturally Relevant Curricula

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work is engaged in the global discourse to decolonise and diversify the knowledge that is valued and centred within academia, education, and practice. This paper seeks to challenge the prevailing narrative that there is little published African indigenous literature that can be used in social work education to shift the balance of knowledge from the Global North to the Global South. While there is a burgeoning literature on African and Nigerian social work, there are not enough concrete practice examples for use in teaching. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this current study is to compile material for a culturally relevant curriculum for Nigerian social work education. Findings from the ongoing study will be presented based on a thorough review of literature published by academics in eleven institutions offering social work education in Nigeria, and an online survey sent to academics across the Nigerian universities offering social work programmes.

Historically, formal social work in Nigeria came with a post-war push from the United Nations to introduce the profession to non-Western regions. British colonialism introduced social work to Nigeria in its thrust to train employees in its fledgling social administration. The British legacy left social work services underpinned by knowledge and practice models imported from Britain. Social work educators across Nigeria's universities are working to create curricula with indigenous content that is relevant to Nigerian society. The National Universities Commission that accredits and supports curriculum development requires a programme review every five years. Part of this review requires reporting on progress in indigenising, that is, in including local content in university curricula.

The context for the paper is Nigeria, however, the focus is on the challenges and opportunities for social work education in contemporary contexts, meaning the findings are applicable within the Global North. The study will be important to universities engaged in exploring ways to decolonise and create more culturally relevant curricula that respond to developing globally minded social workers, that is practitioners who can connect and work within varied cultural contexts and are socio-spatially mobile.

Keywords

Decolonising, Culturally relevant , Social work education, Indigenous knowledge, Nigeria, Africa

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Imagining resistance: Exploring resistance and recognition through a participatory creative arts project with young survivors of sexual violence

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This paper will present findings from a 3-year participatory photography project exploring how girls and young women in England (age 13-25) who have experienced sexual violence and exploitation alongside other forms of harm (e.g. criminal exploitation, gang involvement and serious youth violence) engage in acts of resistance.

The word 'resistance' is polysemous; it has been adopted by activists and consumers and used by researchers in fields such as anthropology and sociology to describe how people 'fight back' against oppression and subjugation. However, when safeguarding concerns arise for young people, 'resistance' is typically used to indicate negative or disruptive behaviours rather than evidence of young people's resilience and strength, or their efforts to self-preserve in oppressive social contexts and relationships. Through the 'Imagining Resistance' project, we sought to answer the following questions:

1. What does resistance look like and mean to young people affected by sexual abuse and exploitation?
2. How do young people cope with, respond to, and develop strategies for safety in such situations?
3. How might visual and participatory methods help young people represent, understand their own experience of resistance and how might they help change professional practice and shape the discourse surrounding sexual exploitation and violence?

The project methodology aligned with O'Neil's (2012) conceptualisation of 'ethno-mimesis', involving ethnographic participatory research alongside visual and poetic representations created by participants (n=15) during a series of creative workshops held in partnership with three charities. The project considered everyone, including researchers, artists, youth workers and young people, members with potential to influence creative outputs and a collective understanding of what resistance is, how it manifests in contexts of oppression and subjugation, and its role in facilitating young survivors' own beliefs regarding their capacity for resilience, self-efficacy, agency, and power.

Honneth's theory of recognition (1995) provided an analytic lens through which to identify how resistance manifested throughout the data. In particular, findings reveal how resistance surfaces in response to misrecognition among girls and young women who have been harmed by sexual and interpersonal violence within a wider socio-political context in which they are victimised by structural harms whilst managing the expectations of professionals who are intervening in their lives. Using recognition theory as one guiding framework for the project facilitated our understanding of resistance in two ways. First, we were able to recognise, alongside participants, how both subtle (or covert) as well as disruptive and overt acts of resistance enable girls and young women to feel powerful, weightless, and agentic. Second, we identified how approaches to reframing resistance through creative methods enable both professionals and young people to reconceptualise acts of resistance across myriad contexts as evidence of resilience and health. Implications for working collaboratively with artists, practitioners, and young people to facilitate (and to theorise) new multi-method participatory practices that lead to mutual recognition will be discussed.

Keywords

child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual abuse, participation, arts

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The voice of the child - Do children really get 'heard' in decisions affecting their welfare? An interprofessional study exploring the voice of young children in contact arrangements

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This timely research was undertaken during a period when the Irish Family Law system was in the spotlight with a view to reform. Recommendations made by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (July 2021) included: to determine the best interests of a child in line with human rights standards; to ensure that the right of a child to be heard is adequately protected; to strengthen the protection for marginalised groups who are disproportionately represented within child and family law proceedings (PILA bulletin, 2021).

Post-separation, it is not always clear as to how, and in what ways, children are given the opportunity to contribute to the process in any meaningful way. There is a paucity of studies exploring the perspectives of parents and professionals who manage contact arrangements in relation to a child/[ren] in common and the way their children's views have been ascertained and represented. This study was concerned with establishing international best practice in relation to contact for infants/very young children in separated families. Research questions included:

-How can international research inform a model of best practice of contact for infants/young children in separated families along with parents who are co-parenting who may or may not have previously been in a relationship together.

-What is the lived experience of parents who share the parenting of infants and young children (0-6 years) but are not in a relationship with one another?

-What are the experiences of professionals working with children and parents (in a variety of roles and contexts) regarding contact arrangements for infants/young children (0-6 years)?

Research design:

-An extensive international literature review was conducted to establish best practice regarding contact time for very young children (0-6 years).

-A survey was distributed amongst parents of very young children in Ireland (aged 0-6 years) who have had to negotiate contact/ access arrangements.

-Two focus groups were undertaken: one with legal professionals another with social professionals

-Six interviews were undertaken with members of the Irish judiciary from the District and Circuit Courts.

Key findings:

-Absence of the voice of infants/very young children (0-6 years) in the decision-making process on contact was highlighted across all phases of the research.

-The culture, practice and operation of the current Irish family law system falls short of Ireland's international legal obligations

-Resources and interventions are needed to scaffold the assessment, decision-making and contact support systems required to ensure quality, safe and meaningful contact time for infants/very young children.

This research was commissioned by a frontline organisation who support people parenting alone. One of the outcomes was to develop a set of practical guidelines for practitioners in informing decisions regarding contact for infants/young children. Future research in the area of family law, would benefit from an ethnographic study involving some observation of family law processes. Research that seeks the views of children directly affected by decisions made in relation to contact would contribute to advancing practitioners' knowledge and understanding of this complex area of family law.

Keywords

contact, voice of child, parenting, children's rights, interdisciplinary

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Narrowing the gap between social work research and practice: How do social workers make use of research and what impact does this have on practice?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

There is evidence to suggest that research evidence is under-utilised in social work practice with gaps existing between lessons and recommendations from research and what is occurring in practice (Mullen, Blesdoe, & Bellamy, 2008, McNeece & Thyer, 2004). This is a key challenge for social work practice, education, and research; as Epstein wrote, '...no other part of the social work curriculum has been so consistently met with as much groaning, moaning, eye rolling, hyperventilating and waiver-strategizing as the research course' (Epstein, 1987, p. 71 cited in Epstein, 2016, p. 4). This disconnection between research and practice remains and a number of reasons may account for this. These include, for example, lack of access to research (which often sits behind a paywall) and competing demands on time (within what is a pressured and busy role). It is important to understand when, how, and why social workers access and draw upon research to support their practice and the aim of this project was to generate better understanding of this area with a view to developing ways to connect social work research and practice.

This paper will present emerging findings from the first part of a study which is exploring this topic. A qualitative survey method has been used to ask qualified social workers (n=30) about their engagement with research and the impact engaging with research has on their practice. Impact within this research is defined as 'the real world benefits derived from academic research and research expertise more generally' (Bayley & Phipps, 2019, p. 3). This encompasses changes that occur as a result of engaging with research. For the purposes of this research these changes were not explicitly defined as participants have been offered the opportunity to articulate any changes that have occurred in their own way, however, changes may be behavioural (e.g. a change in practice) or cognitive (changes in the way they think about certain topics). Findings from this qualitative survey will be shared within this presentation, which include how and when social workers access what they define to be 'research', the barriers they experience in drawing on research in their practice, and the impact that they express this activity has on their practice. Concluding thoughts will be shared, including next steps for further research and development in this area.

Keywords

Social work research, impact , research evidence, epistemic (in)justice, research-minded practitioners

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Identifying and responding to domestic abuse in the older population: Key challenges and complexities

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Domestic abuse is a key concern for many older people and yet is an issue that has historically been 'hidden' and consequently neglected in terms of policy, practice, and research. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (WHO, 2017), refers to 'intimate partner violence' as 'behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours', but older people have been excluded from much of the discussion around domestic abuse, leading to a false assumption that this is not an issue that they experience. However, there is evidence that the prevalence of domestic abuse in the older population is high (Age UK, 2019; Bonomi et al., 2007; Fang et al., 2019; Stockl et al., 2012; Zinc et al., 2005).

The aim of this research was to develop knowledge and understanding of how key agencies (including social work) identify and respond to domestic abuse in the older population. A qualitative study, utilising semi structured interviews with eight staff members from statutory and voluntary sector agencies, as well as two older women who had experienced domestic abuse, was undertaken. Findings show that the recognition of domestic abuse in later life is limited, although participants suggested that it was more readily identified now than previously. The complexities of abuse in older age can impact on whether abuse is identified and categorised as domestic abuse and it was suggested that age discrimination also impacts on this recognition. Where domestic abuse is identified, there are issues with how it is responded to, including a lack of services to refer on to for older people and a lack of age appropriate tools and resources to draw upon. Issues around the cross over between elder abuse and domestic abuse for older people mean that the boundaries for this area of work are blurred, particularly where care and support needs are present. This cross-over complicates this multi-agency area of practice. This presentation will report on the key findings from this research, with a particular focus on the implications for social workers. Core recommendations for practice, policy and future research will be discussed, and consideration will also be given as to the contribution that the research makes in constructing a more coherent picture of domestic abuse in the older population.

Keywords

Domestic abuse, Elder abuse, adult safeguarding, older people, thresholds

The 'zero family' view of care-experienced on their parenting practices

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: The concept of intergenerational transmission of maltreatment has long been highly discussed across disciplines. Some recent literature reviews point out that, while most maltreated children break the cycle, there is likely to be a significant association between child maltreatment and intergenerational transmission (Greene et al. 2020). For instance, parents with a maltreatment history are «more than twice as likely to have children who also experience maltreatment» (Madigan et al. 2019:42). The literature review highlights a widespread knowledge of factors that support intergenerational transmission, but less research have explored successful stories of breaking the cycle, and the daily experiences of these parents, especially of fathers and parents with school-age children. With my study I intend to focus on these less explored aspects of parenting.

Methods: Constructivist Grounded Theory approach was used in this qualitative study. I conducted online in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 care experienced parents in Italy from December 2020 to September 2022. Starting from their positive parenting experiences I tried to understand what factors are perceived supportive for the interruption of cycle of maltreatment. Furthermore, I decided to use an approach oriented to 'family practices', namely, to explore how people describe and make sense of their daily activities as parents (Morgan, 2020). The interviews were analysed using open, focused and theoretical coding with the support of NVivo12 and the analysis itself was discussed with a board of care experienced parents.

Findings: The core category emerging from the interviews is the perception of being the 'zero family'. This is described as the desire and plan to start afresh by distancing oneself from previous negative experiences: parents describe their own parenting role as in opposition to that of their parents. Being the 'zero family' means not being influenced by negative roots, but also the effort of having to rebuild new roots for their children and being more exposed to life storms. In addition, parents describe how the strong investment in their children, which for some is nearly all-encompassing, makes them feel alone and exposed to a great fear of failing in their parental task. The zero-family building process stems from the possibility of protecting oneself, even rebelling against a destiny that seemed already written, having at least one meaningful relationship. However, the interviewees recount the frequent, and often disturbing, dialogue that takes place with their own painful history as children.

Conclusions and implications: This study furthers a better understanding of the care-experienced parenting experience. For many parents, this is characterised by a precarious balance and high tensions, as well as strategies and mechanisms that help them cope. These represent useful insights to support them in emancipating from a painful past, and highlight the protective factors that, from the parents' perspective, intervene in their parenting experience. The main practical implications of this work concern both the improvement of the child protection system by implementing the aspects found to be protective, and the acquisition of knowledge that can inform practices and policies in supporting new parents, in a preventive direction.

Keywords

parenting, child protection, care experienced, family relations, intergenerational transmission

Being and planning together: the involvement of young people with intellectual disabilities in helping processes. Reflections from a participatory research.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The contribution aims to illustrate the results of a PhD research conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and ended in September 2021.

The research explored the issue of the involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in planning social interventions for themselves. In particular, the research focused on the participation experience of young people with intellectual disabilities (from 18 to 35 years) and on the social workers' role in the Lombardy Region. Forty-two young people with ID and fifteen social workers took part in the research. Data collection has been conducted through thirteen focus groups with young people and two focus groups with social workers. Most of the focus groups were held remotely. Due to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, only young people attending day services were invited to participate. As a result, social workers working in the same areas were involved. Focus groups were transcribed and analysed by qualitative content analysis.

The research was carried out by adopting the participatory approach (Cocks & Cockram, 1995; Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Bourke, 2009; Aldridge, 2016). From the definition of the research questions to the return of results to participants, the academic researcher shared the research process with three people with intellectual disabilities, who have taken on the role of co-researchers. This methodological choice allowed not only to build accessible research actions for the young participants, but also to investigate profoundly the notion of participation, combining the subjective perspective of the co-researchers with the experience of the interviewees.

Research results offer a contribution to the reflection on the methodological challenges proposed by the application of the right to participate to social workers working in this field. The co-researchers and young participants represented helping relationships with social workers both as a "tool" of support and as a potential obstacle to self-determination. Furthermore, it has emerged that relationships can be a space for self-determination themselves, if they allow people to express their authentic intentionality, regardless of what actually they can do. The research therefore revealed a more in-depth and specific knowledge on the link between participation and self-determination in this field of social work. Results also highlighted the difficulties faced by young people with disabilities and social workers in the design and implementation of helping processes.

The discussion of the results in the light of the literature on the subject allows to outline directions of a change of approach to social work with people with intellectual disabilities. A change that is necessary, since the right to inclusion is not subordinated to the achievement of certain results by people with intellectual disabilities in terms of autonomy or independence: the subjectivity of people and the enhancement of opportunities to implement their capabilities on a daily basis are core elements for an effective helping process.

Keywords

intellectual disabilities, social work practice, participatory research, participation, self-determination

Intimate partner violence and child maltreatment –Insights from nationally representative longitudinal survey data

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Social workers often engage with children who experiences various forms of family violence. However, research on child maltreatment in the context of intimate partner violence (IPV) rarely draws on nationally representative samples, and rarely accounts for maternal, paternal and child reports of parental aggression towards children separately.

Objective: We explore if living with IPV makes children more likely to be smacked or slapped by their parents.

Participants and setting: A prospective longitudinal and nationally representative child cohort study for Scotland (starting sample N:5217).

Methods: Questions for children at ages 2–7 include: maternal and paternal reports of aggression towards children; children's reports of being 'smacked' by parents; maternal reports of IPV. Multivariate logit models explore how maternal IPV is associated with child maltreatment, controlling for socio-economic confounders.

Results: In homes with a long-term abusive partner, children are more likely to have been smacked/slapped by the father (OR1.91, $p \leq 0.05$), mother (OR1.84 $p \leq 0.05$), and both parents (OR2.31, $p \leq 0.05$). Maternal IPV frequency and intensity was incrementally associated with children's odds of being smacked/slapped (OR range 1.47–1.70, $p \leq 0.05$). Ethnic minority boys were more likely (predicted probability of 42 % $p \leq 0.05$) to have been smacked/slapped by their mother frequently compared to other children (predicted probability range: 19–27 %).

Conclusions: When mothers report IPV, the extent and severity of the abuse is incrementally associated with children's experiences of parental aggression, and ethnic minority boys are far more at risk. Parental aggression should be understood within the context of the stresses associated with living with an abusive partner, especially as the severity and frequency of IPV increases. We discuss the fragmented picture which surveys of children provide when interviewing mainly the mother.

Implications for practice: The findings support the need for social workers and other professionals to assess the risks to both adults and children in cases of maltreatment or IPV. Early intervention with IPV can reduce children's exposure to various forms of family violence, and the immediate and longer term harm.

Keywords

Child maltreatment, Intimate partner violence, Longitudinal research, Smacking, Child welfare

Transnational Family Relationships Across International Borders - Challenges and Opportunities for Social Work Research and Practice

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University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany
Franziska Anna Seidel

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Behind the background of ongoing conflicts and the displacement of people or the recruitment of skilled workers from abroad, transnational family relationships (TFR) are widely common around the globe. TFRs include but are not limited to migrating parents leaving children in countries of origin, circular migrants meeting their families regularly, or unaccompanied minors (UMs) being separated from their families over a long time. Based on legal, theoretical, and ethical guidelines and a holistic view of service users, social workers should consider families' diverse (transnational) living arrangements in practice and research. Transnational social work with separated family members is, however, not standard yet. This presentation aims to provide an overview of the state of the art of transnational family life in general and the transnational family life of UMs in specific. Based on a thorough literature synthesis, various forms of transnational family relationships will be presented before selected findings of an empirical research project on transnational family relationships with UMs will be highlighted.

Method: The synthesis of the previous research discusses the findings of a systematic literature review that will be embedded in the context of the social work mandate. The empirical part is based on a qualitative study following a grounded theory approach involving 12 (former) UMs as well as professional staff (n=20) and experts (n=3). The relevance of transnational family relationships and the challenges and opportunities that social workers face will be exemplified.

Results: Both the literature review and findings of the empirical study point toward research and knowledge gaps on the topic, but also the necessity to consider transnational family relationships in social work research and practice. The findings show that concern for family members abroad can be linked to social problems in host countries. In the case of UMs, this can include the concern for missing family members, obligations to send remittances, or being involved in overwhelming administrative tasks concerning family reunification. Considering the family, despite physical distance as a potential resource and, in some cases, a stressor for service users, seems necessary in social work practice. Thereby, different forms of transnational family relationships also might require different forms of social work with transnational families (e.g., work "without parents," transnational casework, and social work supporting family reunification). However, social work concepts with transnational families are not widely implemented yet.

Conclusion: Social workers should be aware of the diversity of families and address challenges and opportunities being connected to family relationships across borders. Therefore, future research and practice-based concepts are needed for social work to fulfill this task.

Keywords

transnational family relationships, unaccompanied minors, social work across borders, qualitative research

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Can school social work effectively contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals? Insights from a tri-country study.

Prospera Tadam

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

School social work is an important and growing specialist area of practice in many parts of the world as it involves practitioners working to ensure that children and adolescents navigate and overcome obstacles that might impede their academic and social success. Social workers in schools undertake a wide range of tasks to ensure that children, adolescents, their families and communities are empowered and supported to achieve to the best of their abilities. These roles include classroom support, behaviour support and guidance, working with children with additional needs, children at risk of exclusion, supporting families facing financial difficulties and engaging with the other services in the community.

This presentation will share the findings from a 2- year funded research examining the role and purpose of school social work in the United Arab Emirates, England and Ghana. The choice of three very different countries is significant and contributes to the uniqueness of the data generated. Despite the cultural, historical and socio-economic differences between these countries, there are similarities in terms of the findings with the key result being the contribution of school social work to enhancing social development and meeting many of the United Nations sustainable development goals.

Keywords

SDG's, School social work, Education, Poverty, Wellbeing

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Digitalization and Data-science in Social Work: An International Perspective

Talia Meital Schwartz Tayri¹, Daphna Yeshua-Katz¹, Amit Haim², Stav Shapira¹, Orly Sarid¹, Avital Avigezer¹, Nir Grinberg¹, Noia Kogman¹, Guy Navon¹, Rebecca Krieger³, Rhema Vaithianathan⁴, Julie Cwikel¹, Dan Vilenchik¹, Alison Stern Perez¹, Ruslan Sergienko¹, Rachel Abramovitz¹

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

In the last two decades, social work practice and research have begun to adopt digital intervention tools and data science methods to improve social workers' quality of care. This symposium explores the utility of digital social work interventions and scientific efforts to enhance our knowledge of effective social work practice. In the first presentation, Yeshua-Katz and colleagues will present findings and practical recommendations drawn from an 18-month follow-up study on community-dwelling seniors who participated in a digital group intervention to alleviate mental health symptoms associated with COVID-19. In the second presentation, Schwartz-Tayri et al. will present a first attempt to identify resilience factors in service-users' trajectories using linked social welfare service data to enhance social workers' ability to address adversities in real-time. In the third presentation, Haim and Vaithianathan will present lessons learned from an international examination of the effects of adopting a predictive risk model on screening decisions in child protection services and how social workers react to algorithmic screening tools. Finally, the COVANA research group will present an algorithm-based system's capacity to conduct non-intrusive and effective identification of depression and anxiety detection using voice. The COVANA algorithm achieved a sensitivity of 86% and used high-quality recording by trained mental health social work interviewers to validate instruments accepted in psychiatric epidemiology.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Evaluation of a short- digital group intervention to relieve mental distress and promote well-being among community-dwelling seniors: An 18-month follow-up study

The COVID-19 outbreak has pushed social-work to develop digital interventions to alleviate mental health impacts. During the pandemic's first wave, we developed a digital group intervention to provide CBT and mindfulness tools to reduce loneliness and depression and increase social support among homebound seniors. Participants (N=68) learned to use these techniques through seven group sessions on Zoom and WhatsApp. At the end of the intervention (T1), loneliness and depression levels significantly decreased in the intervention group compared to the control group (Baseline=T0). Moreover, this reduction was maintained in a follow-up study conducted two months (T2) after the end of the intervention.

In this ongoing research, we examined the participants 18 months after the end of the intervention (T3), to determine effects on physical and mental health (n=60). Based on Taylor's (1995) framework of stress and adaptation, we examined (1) the relationship between participants' internal coping resources /impediments (depression, stress, and loneliness) and the use of intervention techniques, vaccination adherence, mask-wearing, and social distancing practices; (2) the relationship between participants' external coping resources/impediments (attitudes toward Zoom and WhatsApp technologies, level of satisfaction with the digital intervention, and perceived social support) and the use of intervention's techniques, vaccination adherence, mask-wearing, and social distancing practices. Examining the long-term impact of the intervention on the elderly will help build digital interventions that have the potential for long-term health impact.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Identifying Protective Factors in the Trajectories of Over a Million Services Users Using Data-Science

While most research utilizing linked-administrative welfare services data has focused on predicting risks such as child maltreatment and injury, our study investigates resilience outcomes of social services users and identifies protective mechanisms in the trajectories of children and families subjected to adversity. Furthermore, this study is the first Israeli predictive analytics project using a 30-year dataset linking welfare, registration, education, tax, criminal, civil service, and birth records.

Childhood adversity was assessed in social services users between the ages of 0 and 18, and positive adaptation was assessed for individuals between the ages of 19 and 25 who had prior indications of adversity (at ages 0-18), by the absence of adverse outcomes (e.g., criminal record) and if they met at least one indicator of functioning criteria (e.g., tertiary education, stable employment). Using predictive analytics design, we generated prediction models, evaluated classifiers' performance, and generated explanatory models to expose the list of features that contributed to positive adaptation outcomes stratified by the probability of prediction. We also examine the differences in features effects, accounting for the type and number of adversities detected.

Among 1074185 individuals in the dataset, 714960 were identified with at least one type of adversity and 131389 with multiple adversities. Among those with any adversity, 425651 received services. Further findings reveal the protective features involved in the absence of criminal records and positive education outcomes and suggest implications for social work practice and social policy.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Implementing Predictive Risk Modeling in Child Protection Screening: International Evidence from the Field

This presentation studies present the effects of adopting a predictive risk model (PRM) on screening decisions in child protection services (CPS). CPS social workers make numerous screening decisions in any given county on any given day, including whether to investigate a referral and whether to treat it as a high-risk case. These decisions carry significant ramifications for families and children both directly and indirectly.

We study the effect of adopting a decision support tool that relies on PRM and conveys to social workers a risk score using administrative, survey, and qualitative data from a semi-urban county in the western United States. We find that screening rates themselves are not affected, but that screening tracks are better aligned with risk when using the tool. Moreover, we find that the tool makes decisions across screeners more consistent. We also find heterogeneous treatment effects: some screeners exhibit larger effects than others, with some having negative reactions to high-risk scores. This suggests that social workers, as other decision-makers, may have differing reactions to algorithmic tools, phenomena previously described as algorithm aversion and automation bias. We also find that screeners do not acknowledge the tool affects their decision-making, and regard it merely as an additional source of information.

We discuss implications for agencies that seek to adopt PRM tools and similar algorithmic systems, and broader implications for the discussion on algorithms in social welfare work.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

Rapid diagnostic aid in mental health (RDAMH) using machine learning of voice and narrative samples

The WHO estimates that 7.4% of global Disability-Adjusted-Life-Years are lost due to mental/ behavioral disorders, with unipolar depression the third leading cause of disability worldwide. Diagnosis of mental disorders requires a clinical interview and/or filling out questionnaires, which can be burdensome. Thus, there is an urgent need for an innovative, non-intrusive, and effective "Rapid Diagnostic Aid in Mental Health (RDAMH)" for the detection of symptoms of mental illness. Our research team, COVANA (COmbined Vocal And Narrative Analysis) has collected high-quality correctly labeled voice and narrative recordings and is testing for multiple mental health diagnoses. Using our RDMH method that incorporates both prosody (speech analysis using ML (machine learning) techniques) and narrative analysis using NLP (natural language processing) tools, our research group has set up an

ML pipeline and validated depression and anxiety detection using data from four different samples, with a stronger signal than other groups with attention to earlier technical problems. Our algorithm performs ML on speech, and we have achieved a sensitivity of 86% while the specificity is still low, so our accuracy remains in the 65% range. While many are working on vocal biomarkers, the quality of the samples is not clear, limiting generalizability. We use high-quality recording by trained mental health social work interviewers, and validating instruments accepted in psychiatric epidemiology. The findings have broad implications for social work practice in mental health and are discussed in this presentation.

Keywords

social work practice, data science , artificial intelligence, social service research , international perspective

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'May the fear not be with you': Social work strategies of counterworking discourses of fear and exclusion for migrant and refugees

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Proposal type

Workshop

Abstract

Social workers who work with migrants throughout Europe are accustomed to deal everyday with complex situations that affect the opportunities, the helping processes and the integration of migrants and refugees. Some obstacles may be 'visible' due to bureaucratic processes, restrictive legislations, and other issues. Some others may be more 'invisible', related to stereotypes and prejudices that stigmatize and exclude migrants (particularly if coming from different contexts of origin) and which are fueled by the media and sometimes by politicians. In the European context, xenophobia and racist rhetoric is on the rise along with the far-right, making borders more exclusionary and narratives of fear more present.

The organisers of the workshop have recently edited a book on social work research on migration and asylum in which some of the abovementioned elements are present. The aim of this workshop is to identify and reflect on the (in)visible elements that make integration difficult (or possible) and discuss with the audience strategies of resistance and change. Considering the Social work mission and aims shared by the Global definition, the definition of integration we will use as a framework is the one coined by the European Commission: 'a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of EU Member States' (https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/pages/glossary/integration_en, accessed on 06/10/2022)

Using interactive pedagogical strategies such as photographs, videos and (real case) scenarios, the workshop will offer the space for reflection, critical discussion, and debate on these issues. Interested attendants are encouraged to bring experiences, ideas and material (photos, etc.) from their own context to contribute to the discussion.

Keywords

migration, integration, social work practice, exclusion, fear

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Advocacy and Legal aid for homeless people. Challenges and reflections from a study on a voluntary organization in Italy.

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Extreme poverty and social exclusion are perceived as clear violations of human rights and are increasingly being placed in the wider debate about citizenship rights, democracy, social inclusion. Poverty and social exclusion involve a growing number of people in Europe, contributing to inequality and social injustice.

This PhD research focuses on a non-profit organisation which engages in protecting homeless people, victims of trafficking, people in extreme poverty and immigrants, through legal aid and advocacy in Italy. In this organisation lawyers serve as volunteers to provide information and help with legal issues.

This research explores social exclusion and difficulties of people affected by extreme poverty and homelessness, and aims to bring out their daily resistance outside welfare services. Most of them, due to their social exclusion, do not have the resources to demand their rights or do not have knowledge regarding the law, services and welfare system.

This research sheds light also on the example of active citizenship, wherein volunteers support people when their rights are threatened, thereby promoting increased awareness about their rights and an inclusive community.

Data are collected using participatory observations and semi-structured interviews, that are conducted with a sample of volunteers (25) involved in 5 different Italian cities. Observational data are gathered through periods of observation in 2 different locations in the city of Milan.

This research aimed to provide in-depth insight of this significant arena, thus showing how the mission of organisation is translated in practice and the complexities related to these practices.

Keywords

homeless, advocacy, social work research, voluntary work, poverty

Geoinformation Systems in Social Work. Potentials and Challenges for Social Work Research

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Even though the use of maps and their linking with data has been known since the beginning of social work, the use of digital geoinformation systems (GIS) in the profession and discipline of social work is still rather a marginal phenomenon (Teixeira 2018; Disney et al. 2019). GIS is mostly used in social space analysis to present quantitative data and map trends such as poverty or health (Dunlop 2022). This information can also be enriched with further data from questionnaires, for example. This also makes qualitative social research possible, in which spatial relations and spatial perceptions can be investigated (Teixeira 2018). In Germany for example, GIS applications in choropleth maps are mostly found in social welfare and administration reporting (Anton 2019; Bartling and Reher 2019; Wunderlich 2020). More complex methods, such as an analysis of movement patterns of a larger number of people, are as yet unused. But even in international social work research, there are hardly any studies in which Global Positioning System (GPS) data are used to examine the movement patterns of social workers or addressees. Disney et al. 2019, for example, emphasise that they have produced the first study in the context of social work in which GPS data from social workers have been analysed.

The lecture will present the possibilities and limitations of GPS data for researching movement data of social workers and addressees of social work. The first question to be asked is what gain in knowledge the use of these methods promises and which social phenomena can be investigated through the use of this technology. Based on this, it is necessary to consider which research methodological implications result from this. Finally, the use of GPS must also be critically reflected upon in terms of research ethics, as it represents a not inconsiderable intervention in the living environment of the subjects. These three aspects will be outlined and discussed on the basis of a planned research project. For example, patterns of movement of people with disabilities outside of institutions such as workshops for people with disabilities or care facilities are to be investigated in order to find out about the mobility of these people as well as the inclusion or exclusion quality of certain places and city districts. The movement patterns could be recorded with the help of GPS tracking and an app in such a way that they could be displayed and evaluated with geoinformation software.

Keywords

Geoinformation Systems (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS), methodological implications, Inclusion, Digital Methods

The application of Social quality for multilevel interventions in social work.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Social workers focus on improving people's social functioning and the social quality of society. To this end, they intervene at different levels: at the level of individuals and households (micro), at the level of groups, neighborhoods and communities (meso) and at the level of organizations and policy (macro). This possibility for multilevel interventions seems insufficiently used by social workers in the Netherlands. They tend to focus on the micro level and experience difficulties with discovering possibilities to intervene at the other levels. Together with social workers we explored whether and how the theory of Social Quality (<https://socialquality.org/>) offers a framework in the consideration at which level to intervene.

Method

We conducted a design-oriented research together with social workers. The research consisted of four phases: a diagnostic, a design, a test and an implementation phase. In the diagnostic phase we observed case discussions (N=18) of three teams of social workers. The conditions of social quality: socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion and social empowerment, were used by social workers to look closely at their cases and to determine how to intervene on which level(s). The data were coded (abductive) and analysed using Atlas.ti. The results were discussed with the teams and included as requirements for the design phase. These requirements, such as the suitability for existing consultations and work processes, were incorporated into a prototype of a tool: a conversation manual in the form of a set of cards for discussing practical situations. In the third phase four teams tested the tool in case discussions (N=16) during a period of three months. These discussions were observed by the researchers. The results were discussed in the teams (member checking) and the tool was then adjusted. In the implementation phase, we investigated with the teams what is needed to stimulate the use of the tool.

Results

The conditions of social quality help to analyze a practical situation and to find starting points for interventions at different levels. However, social workers also indicated that they need more concrete examples of the four conditions and of the levels of intervention. In the design phase we developed this together with them. During the test phase, it became clear that the tool provides guidance for considering at which level(s) to intervene. By using the conditions of social quality in the case discussions, more ideas arose for interventions at different levels.

Discussion

In the diagnostic phase, it was already apparent that a case cannot usually be linked to one intervention level. It often is a continuum: discussing a case shows possibilities at all levels. Social workers should keep that whole continuum in mind at all times; the entire range of intervention options. The tool helps social workers to look more broadly at a case, to see more options for intervening at different levels, to make a reasoned choice and to justify

this choice. However it also became clear that there is work to be done with regard to interventions at the macro level.

Keywords

Social Quality, social worker teams, Multilevel interventions, design-oriented research , participatory research

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Towards a theory of rights based social work practice: reflections on unexpected research findings and their implications for practice, research and policy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This paper presents reflections on findings from research studies that have recorded and coded over 500 meetings between child and family social workers and families in England. The underlying assumption in these studies was that social work is focused on helping people. This is an assumption found in much of the social work literature and in most policy descriptions of the profession. Yet the practice in the studies rarely seemed to have a focus on helping. It was characterised by assessment, attempts to persuade or advise parents, and often a lack of clarity about the purpose of the meeting. A common feature was explicit or implicit tension or conflict between parents and workers.

Some of these characteristics can perhaps be explained by systemic pressures or deficits in support for workers, however at a deeper level social workers generally did not seem to be trying to help families. This paper tries to understand what social workers were trying to do and why. Using examples from interviews it argues that in statutory social work – often characterised as “child protection” – social workers are not primarily intending to help families. Instead, it is argued, social workers are protecting individual rights, some of which may be in tension.

While the international definition of social work notes that principles of “human rights... are central to social work” there has to date been little attention to what human rights based practice might involve (Ife, 2012). This analysis starts with Sheppard’s (1995) insight that the “harm principle” which undergirds a liberal society, namely that each of us should be free to do what we wish provided we do not harm others, is a foundation for individual rights in a liberal democracy but that amongst its limitations is a recognition that not all have the capacity to exercise such freedom. In particular, groups that statutory social workers tend to work with, such as children or those experiencing mental illness, can have reduced capacity to exercise individual freedom. As a result we have laws to protect the rights of people in such groups. Statutory social work is centrally concerned with the complexities that this involves. This includes, for instance, ensuring involvement is proportionate to levels of risk, balancing the right to family life with the need to protect children, and considering whether the views of children can be acted upon.

One of the issues encountered in the research was a mismatch between what social workers are doing – namely, protecting individual rights – and what they are trained and supported to do – namely, helping individuals and families. It is suggested that seeing practice through a rights based lens allows us to develop a more useful understanding of the challenges encountered in practice, what good practice might look like and how we can support and evaluate it. Some suggestions for good practice, with empirical support from observations of practice, are proposed, and implications for research, social work education and public policy are considered.

Keywords

Rights, Practice, Authority, Outcomes, Child protection

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A Participatory Action Research to improve the new Family Centres in Italy: an application of the Family Impact Lens

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Participatory research methods are geared towards planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study. Consequently, this means that the aim of the research questions develops out of the convergence of two perspective, that of science and of practice. According to this perspective, the Family Impact Lens (FIL) is a model of analysis, design and implementation of policies and practices that allows to trigger a virtuous and circular dialogue between policymakers, professionals and researchers, with the aim of devising interventions that are able to positively "impact" on the living conditions and well-being of families, in their different structural forms and socio-economic conditions. This approach is based on five evidence-based principles (Bogenschneider et al., 2012; Belletti, Bramanti, & Carrà, 2018) studied firstly in the USA by the Family Impact Institute of Purdue University, which has been promoting it in a significant number of US states for over 20 years. In the light of this background, the FIL has been used in a Participatory Action Research led by the Catholic University of Milan to improve the Family Centres (FC) in Lombardy Region (Italy). Lombardy Region in 2019 has approved (DGR 2315), a biennial experience (June 2020-May 2022) of Family Centres (FC) in four zones of the Region (characterized by different geographical and socio-demographic aspects). FC have the aim to create an integrated network of services for families in local communities and need to be based on social partnerships and collaboration between social actors. The Action Research project was aimed to study FC in the four zones of the Lombardy Region in the light of FIL and online focus groups were held for each Family Centre with the different actors included in the partnerships (family counseling centres, family associations, public institutions) to reflect on and evaluate their own experience (using a SWOT analysis), re-reading it in the light of FIL principles. Results show how these different projects contributed to create newly integrated networks, based on trust, mutual collaboration, and open dialogue between different services and social actors in the communities, and how this result represented the strong point of the experimentation, on which further investment are needed. In particular is important to clearly distinguish, in a complementary way, the competencies of the Family Centres from those of the family counseling centres (both public and private) in order to avoid overlapping. Furthermore, they allow personalized responses to the different needs of families, overcoming a standardized logic. Further

efforts are needed to involve more families in a logic of empowerment and co-production of wellbeing. Based on these results, the research group in collaboration with Lombardy Region has prepared guidelines for the next experimentation of the FC, together with targeted training courses for professionals to define some indicators to evaluate the impact on well-being of families, one year after the activation of the new services.

Keywords

participatory research, family impact lens, families, professionals, integration

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Co-creation of child participation in interventions provided by child and family welfare services

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Co-creation of child participation in interventions provided by child and family welfare services

Background and purpose

Children's right to express their views on matters concerning them is defined in Article 12, a core principle of Convention of the Rights of the Child in Sweden. Yet research shows that interventions provided by child and family welfare services in Sweden are planned and based on parents' perspectives, even though research suggest child participation results in better matched welfare services. In addition, models for child participation risk focusing on linear ideas of participation and the social workers' perspective.

This presentation aims to address these issues by exploring how child participation is created and co-created between the child and the family social worker within clinical social work practice.

The main research question is: how can we understand the process in which child participation is co-created within social work practice?

Methods

The study design was qualitative with a purposive sample of informants from a medium-large city in the south of Sweden. The empirical data consists of semi structured interviews with eleven children aged 7-16 and three focus group interviews with, in total 14 family social workers. The data was analyzed using Thematic analysis.

Findings

The results show that children view a trusting relationship between the child and the family social worker as fundamental for their active participation in the intervention. Family social workers value and strive for child participation, but name obstacles concerning frames and obligations within the organization. The presentation will show how child participation is a co-created circular process that takes place between the child and the social worker where they both have an active role to play.

Conclusions and implications

The field of clinical social work has been involved in the project from start to finish, hence the project has bearing on conference sub-theme regarding connecting social work research and practice. The project arose from discussions on the field regarding child participation. The material has been presented to family social workers throughout the process and the feedback given has affected how the work has progressed. The findings can be useful for clinical social work and increase knowledge on how child participation is co-created and how, in cases where it is appropriate to do so, work towards inclusion.

Keywords

Child and family social work, Children's rights, Child participation, Family social worker, Co-creating participation

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We are Family! Children and Youth with Disabilities and Medical Fragility in Foster Care in Germany Revisited

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The German child and youth welfare system in general can still be described as excluding, even with recent legal improvements. Thus children and youth affected by disability or medical fragility in foster care is a somewhat rare situation in Germany. Mostly these children, who are in need of Out-of-Home-Care, are cared for in residential homes. In the area of foster care for children and youth with disabilities, there is still sparse research and knowledge.

The purpose of the study was to understand how care givers manage their lives with a child or youth with special needs and meet the challenges of assisting them adequately. It aimed at insights how a child is integrated into the foster family and how foster parents emotionally bond with them. Results further revealed how the development of strategies and the mobilization of resources in confrontation with stigmatization and marginalization, are evolving.

The follow-up study explores how successful the chosen coping strategies are perceived over this period of time by care givers. It examines whether strategies even changed in life's course and whether there is change in the

perception of selfcare, feelings of empowerment or resilience. The study furthermore wants to find out how these questions are answered in the light of the corresponding coping strategy pattern.

The qualitative research design used the instrument of narrative inquiry through 19 in-depth interviews with care givers. Within the framework of Grounded Theory, a theoretical structure of the strategies used for coping was developed. For the follow-up study almost half of the sample of care givers could be located up to this point and were revisited and interviewed after 9-13 years. Due to the pandemic situation, locating and interviewing families is still in progress.

Results show that care givers deal with this new and often unpredictable situation by applying an Action-, Resource- or Reflection Strategy based on their own personal biographic experiences and their worldview.

All three patterns of coping strategies show a strong bond with the children and youth with special needs in foster care. An atmosphere of unconditional belonging is created which is defended against all prejudices and hostilities from the outside and is aimed at overcoming all the difficulties and challenges in daily life. As a result, the families and dedicated persons in their private environment build strong relationships with the children and youth in their care and among partners in the support net. Living their "new normal", the relationships built in and through foster families for children and youth with special needs often last for a lifetime, as first findings from this longitudinal approach display. An thorough analysis pertaining to the research questions is in progress.

Strong familial bonds and relationships reveal to have a great potential to support, protect, care and advocate for children affected by disability and medical fragility. Living human, inclusive values is time-consuming and requires a more of personal commitment, which foster families and the supporting environment provide on a daily basis.

Keywords

Foster Care, Care Givers, Children and Youth, Disability, Medical Fragility

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Abused Women's Survival Work Before, During and After Their Stay in Domestic Violence Shelters

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: In Sweden, domestic violence shelters have served as a safe haven for abused women since the late 1970s when non-profit women's shelters were established for women escaping domestic violence. In those days, such sheltered accommodations received abused women without administrative decision. However, this changed when the protection and support of abused women became a municipal responsibility and domestic violence shelters were regulated by Swedish regulations and guidelines. Presently, a shelter stay is granted by the social services subsequent to investigation and risk assessment. The actual implementation of the intervention is then

referred to a women's shelter, or to a private or municipal shelter, which nowadays is regulated by the Social Services Act and its quality and safety requirements. Studies show that the status of women's shelters as social service providers has led to professionalisation of their activities. In addition, the number of private shelters has increased. Domestic violence shelters, in other words, are undergoing a process of institutionalisation and marketisation. Our knowledge of what this entails for abused women is, to date, limited. *The aim of the study* is to explore how abused women's experiences of and access to protection and support are taking shape within the institutional shelter system.

Methods: This is a qualitative interview study involving ten women from various parts of Sweden who had been placed in shelters because of domestic violence. The analysis is based on Dorothy E. Smith's concept of work in her institutional ethnography approach, which encompasses women's physical, mental, emotional and linguistic activities.

Findings: The women's activities to get access to protection and support before, during and after their stay in domestic violence shelters are referred to as *survival work*. Results show that the women navigated between different actors and officials before being placed in a shelter. For some women the survival work involved finding a guide to social services. For others, it involved navigating in the specialised and fragmented organisation of the social services, which was experienced as contradictory because different units made different assessments of their needs of protection. Once in a shelter, the women worked on making sense of the safety rules of the shelter, but also on autonomy and freedom, for the purpose of bridging the restrictions of safety rules without jeopardising the protection provided by the shelter. During the shelter stay, they also worked on getting access to psychosocial support, the organisation of which made it unattainable. The pursuit of support continued after leaving the shelter, but now involving access to counselling to cope with the effects of violence. In addition, survival work included protecting themselves from further violence and finding permanent housing without the help of the social services.

Conclusions and implications: The result of the study demonstrates that the institutional shelter system fails to meet the needs of abused women. This insight can serve as a basis for making protection and support more accessible to women in domestic violence shelters.

Keywords

Domestic violence , Women, Survivors, Shelters, Qualitative research

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The meaning of contact between children and their parents after custody is taken, related to children's best interests and the right to family life, after ECHM's judgments against Norway

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled several times during the last decades against the state of Norway. Several cases were brought to the court by parents who felt their right to maintaining contact to their children had been violated after custody has been taken over by child welfare services. These cases were based on the right to family life, as stated in the human rights convention, article 8. Forced adoption has also been a central theme in the decisions. The judgments implied a necessary change of course for Norwegian child welfare services, regarding contact assessments between children and their parents. This is, among others, the case in the ruling Strand-Lobben case (ECHR, 2019). The ruling further implied that the norm of a certain number of meetings between children and parents must be set aside in favor of concrete and individual assessments in each case.

This project aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how social welfare workers deal with these contact issues, and to identify some tendencies of how far practice in child welfare has come in enacting change, in line with the judgments from ECHR.

Research questions:

Which arguments are repeated in the ECHR's rulings against Norway?

How is contact between children and their parents, measured and justified when custody is taken over by child welfare services?

Which implications do the ECHR-rulings have for child welfare workers when assessing contact between children and parents?

Document analysis is the base for my first research question and to understand the essence in the judgments I will review them to find key terms that will be coded and analyzed using summative content analysis. Schönfelder and Holmgaard (2019) performed a qualitative content analysis that inspired me, focusing on specific interventions of child welfare services in Norway, Denmark and Germany. Data for research question two and three are collected in qualitative interviews with 15 to 20 child welfare workers in different places in Norway, and in large and small services. The transcribed data from the interview will be analyzed based on thematic analysis.

In my poster I will present preliminary results of the content analysis of the rulings of the ECHR against Norway in cases involving child welfare services. I will further compare the number of rulings against Norway with other European countries.

I regard this presentation as a contribution to sub-theme nr. 3 as it explores the impact of the judgments in child welfare practice. Furthermore, the project focuses on a new way of making assessments about contact after custody is taken and this is connected to opportunities in social work practice in this contemporary context.

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Keywords

child protection, European Convention on Human Rights, parent-child relations, family reunification, child custody

Young people and the criminal justice system: the importance of human relationships in combatting racial disparity

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Young black males are up to eight times more likely to be stopped and searched by police for drug related offences, compared to white young people, despite reporting lower levels of drug use and making up a lower proportion of the population (Shiner, et al, 2018). In the past few years, there have been attempts in England by youth offending teams (YOTs), social workers and campaigners to tackle disparities and ensure equitable outcomes for young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS; Lammy, 2016). This research in one London borough with high levels of local poverty assessed if and how they are addressing this issue through building meaningful relationships with young people and advocating for their rights.

The research was conducted in two phases. Phase one was a quantitative analysis of data held by the YOT (demographics, court data, interventions, and outcomes) over the previous five years. Phase two was a qualitative study including interviews with young people with experience of the YOT, case workers and a range of professionals involved in making decisions around the young person's life.

Phase one analyses showed that in this borough black and mixed heritage young people were more likely to be arrested and referred to services compared to white youth, but were just as likely to complete interventions successfully and to engage with case workers once they reached the YOT. Most had been referred for cannabis or knife related offences. In summary, racial disparities were no longer present within the YOT data, but can be clearly seen in the arrest/police and court data.

Initial analyses of phase two data suggests the main feature that young people believe has supported them is their relationship with a case worker. They describe case workers as being non-judgmental, supportive and encouraging. Despite some only having contact online due to COVID-19 restrictions, these relationships were built and maintained and led to young people feeling that they had greater control over their own actions and future. We are now starting to explore the intersecting relationships with other services and individuals that promote more positive outcomes including parents and social workers.

Interaction with the CJS is disrupting and can have wide ranging impacts on a young person's life in terms of future prospects and 'labelling'. Offering non-judgmental support and focusing on building relationships to help secure a positive future can be one source of diversion from further offending. The approach used by case workers in this YOT can inform social work practice to improve relationships with and engagement from young people so that they feel supported by all professionals involved in their care.

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Keywords

youth justice, adolescence, youth offending teams, diversion, black and minority ethnic people

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Synergies and conflicts in user-professional figurations in help services for mentally ill mothers and their children

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Author of Symposium Oral Presentation n.

Author of Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In many welfare states, there are efforts to further develop multiprofessional help for children with mentally ill parents. Therefore, this is a relevant topic for an international conference which, among other things, aims to reflect on the "disciplinary and professional boundaries" of social work and its "challenges and opportunities".

With regard to Germany, statistical data show that every third adult has mental health problems – at least occasionally – and that the proportion of psychiatric patients who are parents is equally high. As a consequence, every fourth child grows up with a mentally ill parent (Lenz 2017, 7f.). Despite country-specific variance, the situation is similar in other countries (e.g. Goodyear et al. 2015, 169).

Families with mentally ill parents are often confronted with multidimensional challenges that include both the psychological stresses and social, economic and pedagogical problems. Their support needs are usually too complex to be met by a single help system alone. As a reaction, there are increasing demands and efforts in the professional, scientific and political discourses to expand collaboration across the boundaries of help systems, particularly between health care and social work.

Against this background, since 2019, we conduct the research project "ProChild: mothers and children between the help systems". We are located at 'Freie Universität' in Berlin, funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research. Our objective is to contribute to the development of more needs-oriented multiprofessional help for mentally ill mothers and their children.

We focus on mothers with a borderline-personality-disorder who are undergoing psychotherapy and at the same time receive help from the child and youth welfare system for raising their children. We assume that the help processes – and thus also the (potential) collaboration between the professionals as well as with the mothers and

their children – depend not only on structural and organisational conditions but also on the subjective perceptions of those involved. Therefore, we explore the question of how mothers and professionals experience the help processes, in which different professions from child and youth welfare and health care are involved. To answer the question, we use a qualitative design with ‘problem-centred’ interviews.

We understand each case of a mother-child-dyad including the mother’s psychotherapist, the social worker providing the upbringing support and/or the child and youth welfare officer as ‘figuration’ (Elias). From this perspective, all individuals involved in the case are to some extent connected through interdependent, constantly evolving, power-determined, explicit and/or implicit human relationships. Their assumptions of the case, themselves and the ‘others’ materialise in these figurations and are simultaneously (co-)shaped by them. To work out synergies and conflicts in the help processes, it is promising to compare the different perspectives within single cases. Such a comparison is the subject of my conference presentation.

Goodyear, Hill, Allchin, McCormick, Hine, Cuff, O’Hanlon (2015). Standards of practice for the adult mental health workforce. *Int J Ment Health Nurs*, 24 (2), 169–180.

Lenz (2017). Eltern mit psychischen Erkrankungen in den Frühen Hilfen. <https://t1p.de/q0s29>

Keywords

parental mental health , case studies, interprofessional relations, social worker-service user relationships, child protection

326

What role for social work in confronting the climate crisis?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

As the environmental crisis deepens and the effects begin to emerge in the form of disruptive and destructive climate events, more nation-states have ostensibly committed to carbon net zero by 2050. Achieving this target will require a major reconstitution of economies, societies and, thus, the lived realities of peoples. This reconstitution or shift will need to occur most forcibly and rapidly in the developed economies of the global north whom, since about 1850, have been responsible for approximately 92% of surplus global emissions. Social policies, therefore, will need to be reworked and reimagined so that, in practice, they are aligned with “planetary boundaries”. Recent geopolitical summits, such as COP 26, have, arguably, resulted in lackluster and vague commitments rather than any serious attempts at creating agreement on how to reconstitute the economies of the global north. Moreover, a model of economy predicated on continuous, and exponential growth and thus the continued metabolization of the natural environment, still appears immovable despite the threat it poses.

It is against the backdrop of the global context described above that the two central questions of this presentation are posed. The first is concerned with creating a focus for social work and asks: "What sustainable social policies should social work align with?". The answer to this is presented as a means of progressing the task of social work in the context of climate justice. The second question builds on the answer to the first and asks, "Does arriving at an adequate response require dissent?" By centering one of the most pressing existential questions of our times, this oral presentation will build on work published in a recent special themed issue of Aotearoa: New Zealand Social Work which examined the potential for dissent in social work. In doing so, the initial ambition is to foster and stimulate debate about climate justice within the social work community. However, further to this, by focusing on social policy, it is hoped that real and tangible ideas for social work to coalesce around in the context of the climate emergency are brought to the fore.

Keywords

Climate, Climate Justice, Sustainable social programmes, Social Justice, Dissent

330

An insight into immigrant women's social activities and social networks in daily life - A photovoice study

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Background: The introduction program is the biggest integrational measurement Norwegian government utilizes. The introduction program aims to provide language training, knowledge of society, and labor- and educational support (Introduksjonsloven, 2003). Political goals express that 70% of the participants are employed or studying one year after completion. Research shows that men reach this goal, with 7 out of 10, while women do not (Walstad Enes, 2016). Besides work and education, everyday life integration is getting increasing attention as an integrational area. Everyday life integration implies the help of the majority population in integrational processes by inviting immigrants into daily activities (Språkrådet, 2016). This research was therefore based on the following question: "How do immigrant women participate in social activities in daily life and how does this impact their social networks?". Additionally, it was of interest to explore the usability of the photo voice method.

Method: The study operates with a phenomenological perspective and applies the photovoice method. The photovoice method has four phases. Phase one concerns the method introduction and the agreement with the participants on the topic. In phase two the participants take pictures of the chosen research topic. The third phase entails a focus group interview where the pictures are analyzed. Lastly, a final event is planned where participants and researchers promote suggestions for social change. I believe this method is especially relevant for social work research as it is innovative, gives a strong foundation for the co-creation of knowledge, and can be applied in research and practice. The participants in this study consisted of 5 women from 22 – 25 years old, with backgrounds from Europe, the Middle East, Asia, South America, and Africa. Migration reasons were either study, work or family related as well as refuge. The findings of this study were analysed with the help of Putnam's social capital theory.

Findings: The study showed that the women expressed a great deal of agency in participating in social activities and establishing social networks. However, this agency led to different results in the three identified social networks. The Norwegian network was heavily connected to activities in voluntary organisations and relationships were often based on a student-teacher dynamic. This network provided the women with a form of bridging network. The international network included different nationalities, who met in voluntary organisations and leisure activities. This network showed bonding and bridging capital. The national network (compatriots) was mostly met in leisure activities. This network provided them mostly with bonding social capital. Considering the photovoice method, it showed to encourage a rich set of data and provided more influence for participants during the research process.

Conclusion: This study showed that the women were active in creating social networks outside of work and school. However, not all social networks provide the same advantages. It is especially important for social workers to note that participating in voluntary organisations not necessarily lead to strong connections with members of the majority population. The photovoice showed to be very promising within social work research.

Keywords

social networks, immigrants, social capital, voluntary organisations, research implementation

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Social work with schools: Understanding the role, responsibilities and pressures faced by Designated Safeguarding Leads in English schools

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This paper highlights the importance of relationships between social work agencies and schools for the protection and safeguarding of children. Previous research in this area has tended to focus on the reporting of suspected cases of child maltreatment or abuse to social work agencies by teachers, with limited investigation of decision-making in schools and the importance of inter-agency working outside of formal reporting processes. In contrast, we offer a much broader perspective drawing on data collected during a large study funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. The early phase of this study involved scoping interviews with 68 social work and education professionals working in 20 separate English local authorities, 26 interviews with national and regional policy experts and national surveys of local authority children's social care services, education services and multi-agency safeguarding partnerships. This was followed by case studies involving 58 schools spread across five geographically and socio-economically diverse local authority areas and one Multi-Academy Trust which oversaw schools spread across England. These case studies involved 197 in-depth interviews involving 213 teachers and other school-based staff including each schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Our findings suggest that child protection and safeguarding work in English schools has become much more challenging and complex over recent years in the context of greater awareness of the range of dangers faced by children, increased government regulation, rising levels of child and family poverty, and the hollowing-out of welfare services after a decade of public sector austerity. On the one hand, this has drawn schools into closer working relationships with a range of

external agencies, including children's social care services where English child and family social workers are based. Key practice developments have included the establishment of Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs providing schools, and other agencies, with a single point of access to information and guidance from a range of professionals representing children's social care services, the National Health Service, the Police and others. Training provision for DSLs and other school staff has also been expanded and most local authority areas provided dedicated education safeguarding advisors to advise schools on policies and procedures and to ensure compliance with government regulation and inspection. However, DSLs also reported finding it more difficult to access support in relation to specific children and families they had concerns for in the context of increased demand pressure on children's social care services. Thus, although DSLs valued the training and advice they could access in relation to child protection and safeguarding, many felt that schools were increasingly being expected to take on additional responsibilities, to alleviate pressure on other agencies, that they did not always feel adequately experienced or resourced to deal with.

Keywords

social work, schools, child protection, safeguarding , local authorities

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Contributions to the practice of Family Social Work. Parenting reconfiguration in separated and/or divorced families in Chile.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Separation and/or divorce is an ecological and systemic process that generates affective, socioeconomic, legal and personal changes that affect family members (Núñez Mederos, Pérez Cernuda & Castro Peraza, 2017), demanding the reorganization of feelings, emotions, behaviors and decisions about daily life after divorce (Roizblatt, Leiva & Maida, 2018). Parenting experiences significant changes regarding the exercise of authority, communication patterns and relationships with the resident and non-resident parent (Lee-Maturana, Matthewson, & Dwan, 2020; Poustie, Matthewson, & Balmer, 2018), with the presence of conflict between both adults, a risk factor in the appearance of behavior problems in children (Thuen, Breivik, Wold, & Ulveseter, 2015; Escapa, 2017). So, the negotiation of parenthood is a coping strategy that becomes a protective factor against negative parental relationships, since children need their parents to have a cordial relationship, to feel the presence of both as active and protective. (Sadowski & McIntosh, 2015). The foregoing requires that divorced parents recognize common objectives for their children and be able to plan strategies to achieve those goals.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the processes associated with the breakdown of couple relationships, linked to parenting practices, social support networks and socioeconomic dynamics in Chilean families. To analyze the reconfiguration of couple ties and parenthood in separated or divorced couples in Chile.

Method: Qualitative, descriptive study of phenomenological design, in which separated and/or divorced people from northern, central and southern Chile are selected according to inclusion criteria, to participate in focus groups and in-depth interviews. Content analysis of the information collected is performed.

Findings: The preliminary results reveal mostly conflictive divorce processes, associated with an exercise of co-parenting conditioned by financial and legal tensions that make it less cooperative, with maternal predominance in the care of the common children and the extended family as the main support network.

Conclusions: For family social work it is essential to understand the transformations that the divorce process entails, to identify the reconfiguration of family ties, especially parenting practices, conditioned by the emergence of new social and economic support networks; qualitative evidence that provides relevant information for a more specific family intervention, preventive actions and targeted support to improve the quality of life and general well-being of these families, poorly served by public policy in our country.

Keywords: Family, divorce, parenting, family social work

Acknowledgements: Project funded by National Agency for Research and Development of Chile (ANID), Regular Fondecyt Project N°121129.

Keywords

Family, Divorce, Parenting, Family Social Work

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Social work in the Terezin ghetto in 1941-1945: a symbol of hope and humanity under inhumane conditions

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: This poster offers new insight into social work practice in the Terezín ghetto that served as a transit camp and model ghetto for not only Czech but also thousands of German, Austrian, Slovak, Polish, Danish and Dutch Jews in 1941–1945. Historical sources well documented the specific role and operation of the Terezin ghetto. These factors distinguished Terezín from all other Jewish European ghettos and allowed also a unique social care system. **METHODS:** To bring this little-known, yet exceptional, chapter of the Czech and European social work history closer to others was our primary motivation. We conducted historical research using content analysis to provide a historical overview of the topic to raise awareness about this lasting legacy of Terezin's Jews. **FINDINGS:** The poster provides a comprehensive view of the subject not yet described in the context of social work. Social work in Terezin represents a unique chapter in the history of the profession and is an extraordinary example of social work practice amid unimaginable adversities. **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:** The experience of prisoners involved in social work in the Terezín Ghetto, many of whom did not survive the war,

may bring encouragement and inspiration for contemporary social work. Their example and the story of the power of creativity in the fight against helplessness, hopelessness, and traumatization may be a source of inspiration for us today, well applicable in education and practice.

Keywords

social work history, resilience, values, memory, strengths-based approach

349

How do Finnish social workers reflect the importance of the municipal income support in relation to the need for child protection?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In this presentation I review the *preliminary findings* of the ongoing qualitative sub-study (Juvonen-Rantanen-Eklund) of a research project: *Municipal Income Support as A Tool of Preventive Child Protection*. We assume that the choices made by the municipalities regarding income support are related to the demand for child protection. International studies have shown that the negative effects of social risks can be buffered with the help of social care. For example, material support for families has been found to reduce the impact of poverty on the demand for child protection. (Pelton 2015.) Still, the use of income support varies substantially between the Finnish municipalities.

To collect the data, we used the *qualitative attitude approach* (Vesala & Rantanen 2007) addressed to municipal social workers. There were 10 attitude statements on which the interviewees were asked to take a stance (comment) and give justifications. The statements were formulated, for example, claiming that *The municipal income support can be used as a tool for preventive child protection*, or *In our municipality, there are good practices on how to improve the situation of child protection families through municipal income support*. The interviewees were recruited from Finnish municipalities after dividing them into four clusters based on the amount of the supplementary income support used (high/low) and the amount of submitted child welfare notifications (high/low). The data consists of 23 interviews, and it was analysed in two phases: 1) classification of the comments and their justifications, 2) interpretative analysis.

The preliminary results implicate that social workers used the municipal income support as a tool for preventive child protection in various ways: securing family housing, supporting necessary expenses for the family (food, cleanliness) or helping with the children's hobby expenses. Income support contributed to increase families' financial security and to reduce economical stress. The use of the income support was also seen alleviating poverty among families with children and supporting social inclusion and life management. The reservations in using the income support were related to the problematic nature of the family's overall situation, of which the challenging financial situation was one factor: "Money cannot solve everything".

Social workers pointed out just few good practices on how to improve the situation of child protection families through municipal income support, but the cooperation between the adult social services and the child protection was one of them. Although the cooperation was not considered sufficient. It can be concluded that there is a real need for good practices and structured cooperation inside social services and in relation to its collaborators. We are aiming to enhance that later in bringing together the outcomes of our research and the social work practice in a Policy Lab process.

Pelton, L. H. (2015). The continuing role of material factors in child maltreatment and placement. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 41, 30–39.

Vesala, K. M., & Rantanen, T. (2007). Laadullinen asennetutkimus: Lähtökohtia, periaatteita, mahdollisuuksia [Qualitative attitude approach: Departure points, principles, possibilities]. In K. M. Vesala & T. Rantanen (Eds.), *Argumentaatio ja tulkinta. Laadullisen asennetutkimuksen lähestymistapa* (pp. 11–61).

Keywords

Social work, Child protection, Municipal income support , Families' financial security , Qualitative attitude approach

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Social work and dementia screening: Developing a culturally oriented screening test for dementia.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Given the projected increase in the number of people with dementia globally, working with these patients is emerging as a prominent area of practice for social workers. However, while social work practice with people with dementia and their families has long history social workers are much less involved in actions aiming in the prevention of dementia and especially in developing and using screening tests that aim to estimate the susceptibility of a person or a community. This paper presents the aims, the methodology and the preliminary findings of a research in the context of a PhD thesis aiming in developing a culturally oriented screening test (Hagia Sophia Test) for dementia spectrum disorders, which is based on folk tradition and it is suitable for use by social workers in Greece. The paper discusses the challenges as well as the advantages of the development of the electronic version of the Hagia Sophia Test (eHAST) as a screening test with high metric capacity that is adapted to the particular cultural characteristics of the population. It is argued that the Hagia Sophia Test constitutes a promising alternative to the “one size fits all” approach of the majority of screening tests for dementia and potentially a valuable tool for social workers in the prevention and early treatment of people with dementia.

Keywords

social work, mild cognitive impairment, dementia, screening population, cultural context

359

Uncovering work knowledges of dementia in nursing homes

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Alzheimer's disease, that progressively affects the memory and the capacity to speech, is a challenge for society. To the extent that damages undermined the capacity to interact and communicate, it is also a challenge for social workers (and more generally for all caregivers) who work with people with dementia. Indeed, social work, particularly when social and educational guidance is involved, is based on relational work and relies heavily on language to establish and maintain a helping relationship with clients (Rogers, 1987; Ravon & Ion, 2012).

The problematic nature of relational work with elderly people with dementia has a strong impact on the way in which social work, and more broadly care work, is continuously done in nursing homes. Because the meaning of residents' behaviours cannot be taken for granted, the relational work is necessarily supported by interpretative activities (Kitwood, 1983; Michel, 2017): professionals must carry out investigative work in order to bring to light the residents' needs or desires.

This investigative work, which is rooted in ordinary enquiries and whose purpose is to determine the appropriate care gesture, is based on a range of different elements: on clues gathered during interactions with residents, on oral exchanges between professionals, on past experiences with residents considered as emblematic cases, but also on different theories that are key resources in this area of social intervention (For example: Donna Algase's "compromised needs", Naomi Feil's "validation"). When these elements are deeply integrated in caring practices, they create "work knowledges" (Smith, 2005) that can be shared by professionals and thus revised or developed.

The production of these work knowledges is at the heart of the ethnographic research funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation that we are conducting through long-term observations in two nursing homes in French-speaking Switzerland. In our presentation, we will focus on the first insights of our three years research project. More specifically, we will seek to identify the main characteristics of the exploratory dimension, proper to a work of inquiry (Dewey, 1938), that accompanies care work "with" residents with dementia. In so doing, we will seek to answer the following questions : what observations do professionals make? How or when do they gather them and how do they determine the relevance, or otherwise, of what is observed? What are the argumentative modes professionals mobilize in order to explain or categorize what happens when they interact with residents or others professionals? And how do they experience the veracity of their conclusions?

In the end, our presentation should shed light on the interactional dynamics of exchanges between people with and without dementia, and highlight (beyond the biomedical discourse on dementia), the knowledges (co)constructed by professionals doing social and care work in nursing homes.

Keywords

care worker , nursing homes, dementia, ethnographic study, work knowledge

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How Do Women from Multi-Problem Families Experience their Strengths?

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Ariel University, Ariel, Israel

Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Background and Purpose: Multi-problem families are defined as those suffering from poverty and poverty-related problems including poor levels of education, unemployment, housing, health, and family problems. Extreme poverty together with these challenges places the multi-problem family in a continuous state of crisis which is perpetuated and passed on from generation to generation. In Israel, social workers in welfare departments are responsible for the direct management of these multi-problem family units. The current research aimed to expand and deepen the understanding of how women from multi-problem families experience their strengths.

Methods: Since the focus of the study was to learn about the experience of these women from their unique perspectives, the qualitative methodology was chosen. Ten women took part in the study referred by social workers, and the data were collected through a narrative open interview. The age range of the participants was 33 – 62, all were born in Israel. All the women were mothers, and nine of them were divorced. Fifty percent of the women were unemployed and received a monthly National Insurance payment.

Findings: The findings of this study provide an in-depth, chronological account of the participants' difficult lives. Despite the fact most of the women were born into multi-problem families and in adulthood faced enormous personal challenges, the interviews demonstrated a common narrative in which the women described enormous internal personal strengths which contributed to their coping abilities. Regarding the source of these strengths, two central themes were demonstrated. Firstly, external sources of strength. These included relationships with the social services and their social workers as well as family ties. Secondly, internal sources of strength as expressed by personal traits and characteristics, religious belief, survival skills, a sense of responsibility, belief in one's self, and the ability to recruit external help.

Conclusion and Implications: The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that it gives insight into the experiences of women from multi-problem families and highlights their internal strengths by making their distinctive voices heard. Furthermore, this study facilitates the understanding of the emotional status of women from multi-problem families and their coping strategies when faced with life crises. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that to break the vicious cycle in which social workers find themselves when treating these families, the poverty-aware social work paradigm with people in poverty must be combined with listening to women living in poverty, and with a clear acknowledgment that women from multi-problem families have significant internal strengths and resources.

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Krumer-Nevo, M. (2016). Poverty-Aware Social Work: A Paradigm for Social Work Practice with People in Poverty, *The British Journal of Social Work*, 46(6) 1793–1808, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcv118>

Keywords

multi-problem families, women, poverty, strengths, social welfare

369

How do Social Work Educational Programs introduce the Social Work Profession in Ukraine?

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Author of Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

For more than 25 years, social work has been studied in Ukrainian universities. Today almost 50 different universities offer degree programs in social work. However, the images of social work and, respectively, the curriculums of some Ukrainian universities are still not in line with the notion of social work, its contents and role as defined by the international professional community. A distinctive feature of this developing education system is the involvement of lecturers who hold PhDs in psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, and pedagogy (the biggest part) in the educational process. Only a few lecturers have had an experience of working with clients.

The aim of this research is to understand how Ukrainian universities present social work to prospective students.

Document analysis was used to examine this issue. The analysis involved the available web sites of Ukrainian universities which offer Bachelor's and Master's degrees in social work and focused on how these universities present social work and work opportunities in this field for prospective students.

Most universities describe social work as:

related to management: "social workers participate in problem solving at a government level, offering recommendations on key principles of legislation and its implementation and, if necessary, influencing public opinion and authority structures"

similar to sociologists, psychologists, and social pedagogues: "social worker is a sociologist, social psychologist, and manager who organizes work processes with people; a social pedagogue and a consultant on social issues; an

intermediary between the government, business, and society ... [who] assists in resolving conflicts; an expert in social issues of individuals and various groups”

related to “trendy” types of activities, such as “social administration; social policy, social and political analytics; social consulting; social marketing; social advertisement; civilian and charity activities; personnel management, recruiting companies; public relations, media agencies.”

Thus, the images of social work presented by most Ukrainian universities lack such important aspects as promoting human rights, social justice, social change, social coherence, empowerment, and independence of people.

Keywords

social work education, school social work, the images of social work, Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in social work, social work profession

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Manualization of social work. A comparison between Wales and Norway

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: More than 30 years has gone since the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in most European countries (Hood & Dixon, 2015). In the same period, evidence-based practice (EBP), first introduced in medicine (Ekeland, Bergem & Myklebust, 2019) and later adopted in most professional practices, has by manualisation become integrated with NPM and part of Social Work’s present practice paradigm (Okpych & Yu, 2014; Greene & Greene, 2022). These forms of knowledge are under NPM highly linked to steering ambitions from government and challenge the foundations of Social Work’s tradition as street level bureaucrats (Lipsky 2010), with high degree of autonomy and discretion. However, the literature on practice and attitudes to manualisation seems ambiguous, and also differs between countries (Sørensen, 2016). This has motivated this study. Since differences in welfare regimes have influence, we have chosen to investigate the use of manuals in Social Work, by comparing Wales and Norway. Norway belongs to a social democratic welfare regime and Wales is unavoidably linked fiscally to a UK austerity-based and targeted provision for the most vulnerable, despite progressive social policy values and legislation (see Gwilym and Williams 2021).

Methods: We used a survey method, asking how Social Workers in Wales and Norway relate to the use of manuals in their practice. The survey instrument deployed in both countries was first applied in Norway in 2014 and contained some 40 multiple choice questions addressing a range of demographic characteristics and work-related activities and experiences. Our focus is on a subset of questions on manuals. The instrument was sent by email and targeted at all practitioners (n=4916) in four counties in western Norway. The response rate was 2060. In Wales a version of the Norwegian survey instrument was employed. In 2017 some 5,965 Social Workers were sent anonymous links to the survey (997 responded). We cannot claim external validity for the respondents as

representative of all Norwegian and Welsh practitioners. In brief, both samples comprise a largely female and aging workforce which appears to be durable and front-line experienced.

Findings: 77% of all Social Workers use manuals, and Norwegian Social Workers more often than the Welsh. 42% use manuals only on their own initiative, 27% say they also are encouraged to use manuals, and 30% stated they are required to use manuals. Norwegian Social Workers more often than Welsh say they are encouraged or required to use manuals. As many as 93% of the Social Workers believe manuals are useful, and the Norwegian Social Workers to a greater extent than Welsh Social Workers. Those who believe that manuals are useful for improving the quality of work often use manuals and are required to do so. They also more often use supervision, courses/internal training programs, documents and guidelines within the department, as well as reports following inspections, projects, evaluations as important sources of knowledge. These Social Workers are also less critical of evidence-based practice.

Conclusion: There is a need to raise the Social Workers awareness about challenges implied by manualisation of social work

Keywords

Manualisation, Evidence based practice, Social work, Neoliberal governing, Comparison

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Boundary Work - Collaborative ethnography at the interfaces between researchers, social workers, volunteers and refugees

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The so-called 'paradigm shift' in Danish immigration and integration legislation, particularly the shift towards temporary protection and return of refugees which also includes the lowering of social benefits, has strained the relationship between refugees, municipal social workers, and volunteers engaged in social work with refugees. This paper engages with the following practice-based research questions: *How can locally rooted and socially innovative initiatives strengthen refugees' opportunities for action and enhance cooperation with volunteers and social workers in the light of legislation on self-reliance and return policies?*

While practice research may take many shapes, collaboration between researchers, practitioners and other actors is a shared feature across disciplines (Pink & Fors 2017, Højholt & Kousholt 2014). Within the field of international migration research, we have witnessed a call for developing new research-practice collaborations and approaches with the aim of including multiple voices and perspectives in the production of knowledge (Lindberg & Khosravi 2022).

Drawing on preliminary insights from a thematic analysis of data obtained through fieldwork and semi-structured interviews carried out in the ongoing Boundary Work research project, this paper reflects on how our “collaborative ethnography” (Pink & Fors 2017), as a specific mode of practice research, may help us ‘reclaim migration’ by placing the voices of people on the move and people receiving them (local municipalities, social workers and volunteers), at the center of its narrative (Squire et al 2021).

Through a continuous dialogue between the project-partnership spanning two research institutions and two large NGOs, and by analyzing the ongoing discussions of the project’s three local ‘cooperation groups’ comprised of social workers, volunteers, and refugees, we explore the multiple interfaces of local administration, civil society, and forced migrants as well as the ‘staged’ interfaces of the cooperation groups. Such endeavors are however also imbued by power and traditional knowledge hierarchies (Phillips et al 2021), creating new boundaries while reproducing or challenging old ones. Thus, reflecting on the co-production of knowledge and power in collaborative ethnography and the implications for social work practitioners, is a central concern of this presentation.

The presentation is part of a collaboration project between the Danish Red Cross, the DRC - Danish Refugee Council, Center for Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS) at the University of Copenhagen and the University College Absalon's Center for Social Work, funded by the VELUX Foundations 2021-2024.

Keywords

Migration, Refugees, Social work, Collaborative ethnography, Boundary work

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No place like home? Addressing the outsider status of older people from minoritized groups in housing with care schemes in England and Wales.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: In the United Kingdom (UK), housing with care schemes are designed to prevent social isolation, promote interaction among residents, and help older people with care and support needs to live independent, healthy lives as they experience older age. However, not much is known about how these living environments support older residents from minoritized groups, or how they work to ensure that all residents are equally valued and included. Through a critical gerontological lens, this paper examines the micro-practices through which residents (60+ years) from social minority groups are ‘othered’ and excluded from communal scheme life across housing with care schemes (also referred to as ‘extra care’ and ‘independent living’ schemes in the UK).

Study design: Thematic findings are presented from the ‘Diversity in Care Environments’ (DICE) study – a three-year mixed-methods study of social inclusion practices in housing with care schemes for older people in England and Wales. Between 2019-20 72 residents from 26 schemes took part in semi-structured interviews about their

experiences of inclusion and social interaction within their home schemes. Residents were recruited through researchers visiting schemes and being introduced to residents by scheme staff (pre-COVID) and subsequently through flyers distributed to all apartments (during COVID restrictions). Interview data was analysed thematically through a framework approach that was generated inductively.

Findings: While survey results from the DICE study (n=741 resident respondents) indicate that on the whole, residents in schemes are less lonely in comparison to older people living in the wider community, interviews with residents belonging to minoritized groups (on the basis of disability, LGBT identities, and ethnic minority status) experienced amplified isolation due to environmental (physical environment and design) and interpersonal (through everyday interactions with other residents) factors. Social isolation and disconnection were prevalent features of scheme life for residents from minoritized groups. This included witnessing exclusionary exchanges (for example homophobic and/or racist comments) between other residents, which compounded a sense of marginalisation. This subgroup of residents tended to look more to external social ties and groups that reflected aspects of their identity and life experience.

Implications and relevance to social work: In this presentation, I elaborate on the above findings and discuss how these marginalising practices represent forms of symbolic violence that sustain the outsider status of minoritized residents, impact residents' wellbeing, and interrupt policy agendas to support older people to 'age-in-place' through supportive living environments. In the UK context social workers are key professionals in supporting older adults with care and support needs to relocate to housing with care schemes that aim to provide a better quality of life. Hence the findings are directly relevant to social workers as advocates for older people with care and support needs. This presentation also contributes more broadly to European scholarship on gerontological social work that seeks to redress social barriers to equal participation for older people. The role of social workers in supporting housing and care environments to provide inclusive spaces to grow old will be discussed.

Keywords

older people, housing, social inclusion, intersectionality, old age

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The phenomenon of hospitality. Social work and emergency readiness policy in the light of the migrant Ukrainian crisis (Polish case).

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

The main problem of the study is the exploration of the social phenomenon of hospitality in Poland for people fleeing Ukraine after the 24th of February 2022. The study focuses both on host families as well as on the small social initiatives that responded to the needs of people fleeing Ukraine. These individuals and small movements were among the first ones to react to the crisis with unprecedented enthusiasm and solidarity and continue to be one of the most effective ones. The question that arises is what factors are /were responsible for this unseen

before hospitality and the fact that people from Ukraine were described as guests rather than refugees. Moreover, how this solidarity of people, which oftentimes involves spending countless hours and days helping others, affects the social workers and institutions.

Methods:

For the purposes of our research, the adopted methods were social survey, 30 semi-structured interviews and review of individual reports related to the topic. The competencies and cooperation of institutions assisting refugees and migrants, methods, and forms of social work with refugees and migrants in the local environment were analyzed. For the needs of the social survey, a form in the KoBo tool was designed. A questionnaire intended to be completed by a respondent without intervention from the researchers (e.g., an interviewer) collecting the data. The survey helped us reach a broad target group and get answers to questions that require an anonymous format. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and teachers of social work, host families, and employees and volunteers of social institutions.

Findings:

The research process initiated in April 2022 attempts to show factors responsible for "hospitable help" on different levels of social work, such as macro, mezzo, and micro levels. In the macro social work context, we see a high level of media consistency and emotional saturation of message as critical elements in social problem constructing and solving. On the mezzo level of social work, we discuss the importance of the activation of collective memory for a social policy, with can be defined as a manipulation of memory of border experience. At the micro level, the variable explaining the phenomenon of hospitality is the manipulation of fear and destabilization of the sense of security.

Conclusions and implications:

The study shows the origins of the social phenomenon that led to the fact that Polish individuals massively helped people fleeing Ukraine. We pose a question about the need for more structured and coordinated actions that rely on the enthusiasm of individuals, groups, and communities and on evidence-based, well-proven management systems. International social work should rethink the meaning of 1) mass media, 2) collective memory, and 3) human basic needs as unique tools in solving the macro-social crisis and proper strategy elaborating the guidelines for the emergency readiness policy.

Keywords

social phenomenon, people fleeing Ukraine , social work , collective memory, hospitable help

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Does Education Reduce Punitive Attitudes Among Social Work Students? A Longitudinal Study at Seven German Universities

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: There is increasing evidence of rising punitive attitudes (attitudes towards punishment; Adriaenssen & Aersten, 2015, p. 93) in society. This is also true for social workers in Western liberal democracies, who were found to tend to responsabilization and skepticism towards welfarism (Cornel, 2021; Fenton, 2021; Zimmermann, 2017). This development is criticized as it tends to move away from social work ethics that put the subject and its needs at the core of practice. In this study, we investigated punitive attitudes among social work students and the hypothesis that social work education goes along with a reduction of this punitive attitude and an increase of rehabilitative perspectives.

Methods: In a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project, a survey was developed to measure punitive attitudes by means of both standardized closed questions and questions on case vignettes. Between 2016 and 2019, 2.100 social work students from seven German universities in their first semester participated in the survey and between 2018 and 2021 868 students in their last semester (187 students participated in both data collections). Univariate analyses were conducted to depict the punitive attitudes among the students and bivariate analyses to identify corresponding changes during their student life.

Findings: The analyses reveal that students in their first semester do not show a significant lower level of punitive attitudes compared to the broader society (Singelstein & Habermann, 2019) and law students (Streng, 2014). For instance, they argue for judicial punishment based on ideas of deterrence (84,9 %) or arousing a sense of guilt (89,7 %). However, it could be shown that most attitudes towards punishment are significantly lower in the last semester. Also when we solely look at students who participated in both data collections, we see that they significantly reduce their belief in the deterrence hypothesis ($t(181) = 3.56, p < .00, r = .26$) which is significantly associated with attending study courses related to criminal justice social work ($t(189.99) = 2.77, p < .01, dCohen = .26$).

In the presentation we are going to present these and other findings in more detail like the identified tendency to a strong therapeutization even in cases of minor juvenile delinquency indicated by the responses to the case vignettes.

Conclusions and implications: The results stress the need of reflecting own punitive attitudes and to challenge predominant social work narratives of being the 'good ones' and protecting the wellbeing of clients. The study indicates that social work education might have the potential to decrease punitivity among social workers.

Keywords

survey, punitivity, punishment, education, criminology

Trust in relationship-based social work with older adults

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Ilkka Pietilä

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

In previous research, trust and trustworthiness, as well as empathy, genuineness and transparency, have been seen as central factors in the social worker-client relationship in order to achieve change in the client's life. Furthermore, in a dysfunctional relationship, the problems typically revolve around the lack of trust. While an extensive body of research shows that trust is an essential factor for social work, there is limited understanding on which premises trust is built in client-professional relationships. This study aims to provide new insights into the dimensions of trust and how social workers can build trust in the context of gerontological social work.

Methods:

The data of this study consist of seven focus groups of gerontological social workers from different geographical areas of Finland. We conducted a theory-driven content analysis, using Russel Hardin's (2002) theory of trust as an analytical tool. Hardin understands trust as a relation that ties together a trustor and a trustee with their "encapsulated interests." This kind of perspective about trust is useful when research focuses on social workers' and clients' joint actions. The framework for social work in this study is relationship-based practice.

Findings:

The analysis showed that in social work, a foundation for trust between clients and social workers is developed through shared goals. Clients have to trust that social workers aim to help them and have their best interests in mind. Therefore, in order to build trust, the key is to reassure the clients that they are at the centre of the working process and that the goal is to improve their wellbeing. On the other hand, trust is risky, especially for clients. Therefore, to eliminate or minimise the risk element, clients gather information about social workers' trustworthiness. It is important to note that it takes time to build trust in social work. This is challenged by the fact that there is not always enough time to build trust in social work practice and that trust's essential nature is not often recognised in the service system. Another aspect of trust is clients' trust the social workers' competence and the given possibilities to promote their wellbeing. Clients must trust that social workers have the knowledge, skills and resources to help them. Additionally, trust in social work includes the clients trust in the institutions which social workers represent: clients must trust that each client is treated fairly and equally. Trust is not an inevitable feature in social work. Clients can decide to collaborate even if they do not trust social workers, or social workers can act without clients' trust, but consequently, actions are not so effective.

Conclusions:

The study sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of trust, which helps to further understand the role of trust in relationship-based social work. Furthermore, this understanding enables the development of social work

practices and the service system to better take into account elements of trust and hence increase the overall effectiveness of social work.

Reference: Hardin Russell (2002) Trust and trustworthiness. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Keywords

Trust, Social worker-service user relationship, Relationship-based practice, Gerontological social work, Qualitative research

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Exploring the front line work of child protection services in Sweden

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

The focus of the paper is to explore how social workers at the frontline of child protection use their discretionary reasoning in their everyday task of assessing new referrals regarding children and families. As professionals they are entrusted with the discretion to make judgements and decisions that might have important consequences for those involved in a referral. In Sweden, number of children being referred to child protection services continues to rise for each year. In the year 2018, eight percent of the children population in the country was concerned by referral to child protection services (NBHW 2019). Yet, as many as 62% of the referrals were not found serious enough to become 'the case' for child protection. One of the central tasks for the social workers in child protection services is to assess referrals and decide whether to accept it for further investigation or sort it out. Such decisions can be of significant importance for children and families. Therefore, social workers are expected to explain their decisions, ground their actions in certified knowledge and generally accepted principles of the practice as well as support their judgements by 'good reasons' (Molander 2016, p. 4). Yet, research shows that decision making in the field of child complex due to many uncertainties such as fragmented and contradictory information (Broadhurst et.al 2010; Van de Luitgaarden 2011).

Methods

The study adapts an institutional ethnographic style of research since the aim was to explore everyday practice and reasoning in professional work. The field work took place in two reception units in two municipalities in Sweden where the total of 16 social workers were followed. Combination of non-participant observations of 'real time' practices as well as individual and focus groups interviews were conducted through the course of six months period in 2021. Empirical data collected through the course of the study was analyzed using a six-stage model of thematic analysis inspired by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Findings

The study demonstrates that social workers' reasons for actions are primarily derived from their direct experience of interacting with parents and children and are stained with morality. Three intertwining ways of discretionary reasoning show that social workers build their discretionary reasoning on the verification of 'problems', on assessments of trustworthiness of parties involved as well as assessments of responsibility.

The study concludes that:

- a) Understanding social workers' concepts of trust is important especially for the relationship-based practice such as social work.
- b) It is important to consider what implications (mis)trusting different parties might have for the further course of children's and parents' contact with child protection services.

Keywords

Discretionary reasoning, professional judgement, front line practice, child protection

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Dual study - an answer to get skilled workers in social work? Opportunities and challenges of qualification at two places of learning

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The dual study programs (DSP) in social work are becoming increasingly popular in Germany (Hofmann et al. 2020, 11; Nickel et al. 2022, 134.) In a DSP, students usually alternate between two places of learning (Krone 2015, 16): their university and a cooperating social institution (CSI). For the CSI, engagement in the training of future social workers can be a good strategy to recruit staff in the long-term. Empirical findings indicate that about two thirds of graduates work for their CSI after graduation (Krone et al. 2019, 183). However, it is precisely this proximity to practice that is the cause of criticism: the German Council of Science and Humanities (2013, 29) points out that "the education of dual students not only has to serve the short-term needs of the labour market", but also must ensure the academic quality of studies at a university and the practical place of training. From the point of view of the various stakeholders, the DSP is therefore associated with high organizational challenges; they have to combine the academic demands and the quality of practical training in the DSP and ensure that the transition of graduates into their studied professional field will be successful.

Our contribution addresses these topics from the perspective of students at the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University and is interested in different aspects of quality of training. The focus of our research contribution is to answer the following questions: 1. How do students evaluate the quality of their dual studies, and in particular, their practical training? 2. What potential for improvement do students see for training at the practical learning side? 3. What career path do graduates of a DSP in social work take?

Our empirical findings come from various quantitative surveys of students. The main findings are based on a survey from May/June 2022. All undergraduates in our four departments (business, engineering, social work, health services) had an opportunity to participate. A total of 3.730 students answered our call, 352 were students in a social work degree. This data was supplemented by findings from a graduate panel with 376 participants, 38 were students in a social work degree. In addition to descriptive and bivariate findings, detailed inferential statistical analyses, e.g., a structural equation model on the relationship between the quality of the practical periods of training and student satisfaction, will also be presented.

Overall, dual social work students rate the quality of their practical training sections rather positively. Only the link between theory and practice is rated as mediocre. Students are more satisfied with their practical training when their tasks are of a higher quality and if there is a good link between practical and theoretical places of learning and contents. 85 % of graduates were employed, and around two-thirds were taken on by their CSI directly after graduation. The DSP can contribute to the recruitment of skilled workers in the long-term but quality should be secured and further developed in close cooperation between the university and the social institutions.

Keywords

Dual study programm, Quality of practical training, Interlinking theory and practice, Career transition, Engagement in apprenticeship

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Strengths-based leadership in practice: insights from social care staff

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Strengths-based practice in adults and restorative approaches in children drive service provision in English local authorities. The strengths-based leadership programme developed jointly by University of Birmingham and Social Care Institute for Excellence is designed to support practice leaders in health and social care. This programme aims to enable professionals and managers to reflect and understand their leadership behaviours that are underpinned in principles of strengths-based practice. Initially developed for social workers in children and adults, the programme is currently on its seventh cohort and expanded to those within social care such as occupational therapists, nurses and other professional groups in the public sector. The programme was developed with a stakeholder group comprising of people with lived experience, practice partners and wider insights from professionals and insight leads in the UK and internationally.

Methods

The programme has been independently evaluated drawing on different data sources. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the first and second cohort, 3 interviews with

managers of participants and 2 focus group discussions with facilitators of the programme. Additionally, data from work-based tasks of participants (self-reflection assessments) and end of programme survey have been analysed and triangulated with the interview data.

Findings

There was recognition that programmes such as this is essential to support leaders in social care and equip them with skills and behaviours to lead their teams and improve services. Whilst strengths-based approaches have been implemented in local authorities, managers did not always fully understand what and how to embed them in practice. This programme enhanced their understanding around these key concepts. Having access to evidence-based data equipped participants reflect on their own practice and become articulate and confident in their plans and ideas. Participants had an improved understanding of the values and skills required to operationalise strengths-based leadership in their practice. Values such as trust and autonomy and skills such as focusing on individual's strengths, dealing with difficult situations and developing collaborative relationships were gained and noted as essential to be a strengths-based leader. Professional and geographical diversity on the programme facilitated effective inter-professional interactions and learnings and understand what was happening in other localities. At the strategic level, participants have initiated new pieces of work around coproduction that are more strengths-based in principle.

Conclusion and implications

Reflective development opportunities can enable practice leaders to develop skills and confidence to embed strengths-based approaches within their teams and systems. Programmes are often specific to either children or adult services, but this programme is unique in this aspect as it has participants from both services. Professional diversity provides an invaluable opportunity to develop a common and shared understanding around strengths-based practice and coproduction especially where there is a lack of inter-professional clarity on these concepts. Skills to work collaboratively within and between professional groups increase opportunities to work towards common goals. Initiatives around coproduction with individuals and families increase the likelihood of developing services that are a better fit and more accessible to people.

Keywords

Leadership, Capacity building, Multi-disciplinary training, Strengths-based approaches, Co-production

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Climate exodus: natural disasters and migration flows from an Environmental Social Work's view A literary review

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

One of the main issues of the XXI century is the fight against the climate crisis, which repercussions are increasing and becoming more visible each day. The raise of disasters linked to environmental damage is provoking the deterioration of multiple economic systems, forcing entire communities to migrate in the search of a better future as their environment is being destroyed.

These socioeconomical changes evidence the necessity of evolution in the social intervention area, according to the measures exposed in the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the 2030 Agenda. The need of an Environmental Social Work focused more than ever on the community and capable of adapting to circumstances of uncertainty is becoming more and more evident. For that matter, the main objective of the present paper is to analyze the literature that covers issues like the climate crisis, natural disasters, and migratory flows originated because of them, as well as their linkage to a possible Environmental Social Work.

Through a literary review of a narrative kind under a socio-critic paradigm, this work examines the state of development where this model stands, as it fathoms the needs involving the increasing of natural disasters and climate migrations in the literature published in the last five years period in the international context. Among the main results, it's necessary to highlight the lack of true ecological conscience in the professional exercise, leaving behind an ambivalent theoretical model incapable of intervene in the social issues derived from the climate crisis.

Keywords

Environmental social work, Climate crisis, Natural disasters, Climate migrations, International social work

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Drug Addiction and Social inclusion in Life-Course Perspective: A study of Drug Users' Participation in social rehabilitation programs

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Transitioning out of drug use can be risky for people recovering from drug abuse. By withdrawing from drugs environments, drug users can experience abstinence, loneliness, anxiety, and other types of problems. In Norway, recreational recovery-initiatives, like Street-soccer football and care-programs aimed at work measures are becoming increasingly popular. The activities are viewed as a means of helping recovering drug users become interested in non-drug activities by situating them in social milieus which does not include or involve drugs.

This project is framed as a biographical and grounded case study exploring the social lives and everyday struggles of drug users as they participate in three rehabilitation programs and activities: a Street-Soccer Football team and two types of care-related work measures, carried out by a faith-based non-governmental organization. The overarching research questions are: How do drug users experience that participation in social activities through rehabilitation programs can help change their lives? 1) In what way do any changes occur? 2) What life arenas and processes are affected by the changes?

Methods and research design:

The study is based on an ethnographic approach, consisting of biographical interviews with 11 drug users and interviews with 5 key NGO staff members. Participatory observations were used to follow the daily interactions between the drug users, and between the drug users and the programs. Participating observations and biographical interviews were used to produce thick descriptions on the recovering drug users in an everyday-life setting. In addition, the study makes use of a life-course perspective, focusing on the drug user's own experiences and narratives with drug abuse. Exploring how activities like Street-Soccer Football over time might promote social inclusion, enabling them to become interested in activities that does not involve drugs.

The theoretical framework consists of a contextual life course perspective and symbolic interactionism. By making use of a comparative cohort-design, the project emphasize how historical period and age can be important factors when dealing with drug abuse. Emphasis on process and major turning points has demonstrated how the participants could be influenced to seek help with their drug addiction. The analyses show that contexts like mending family relations, motherhood, or major events could trigger turning points.

Findings:

How the participants approached the different rehabilitation programs, and how they gained experiences and developed social skills by investing their time in the social activities, has been a key focus. Interacting and connecting with like-minded individuals in a safe environment, developing friendships, and acquiring new social networks were viewed as particularly important. In addition, being able to engage in activities that promoted physical health and exercise was also an aspect that was highlighted when it came to improving the participants' own quality of life.

Conclusions:

The conclusion is participating in rehabilitation programs that emphasize social work, through meaningful social experiences, is one way to bridge the gap between drug users and society, by giving drug users access to social resources and networks, allowing them to gain confidence in themselves, establishing trust and gaining approval from society.

Keywords

Rehabilitation, Drug addiction, Community work, work measures, life course

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“Everything is money”. Lessons from an income security experiment for clients in forensic psychiatry

Jonathan Berg¹, Lieke Oldenhof¹, Jeroen van Wijngaarden¹, Kim Putters²

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

It is well known that people who live in very vulnerable circumstances, such as forensic psychiatric clients, often have very limited livelihood security (CBS 2018; College voor de Rechten van de Mens 2017). The scarcity theory posits that when the human brain is burdened by (financial) scarcity, people are less able to reason logically, pay less attention, plan less well and have less impulse control (Mittal & Griskevicius 2014; Mullainathan & Shafir 2013). When seen through the lens of this theory, people who have too little financial means, do not (only) display 'unwise' behaviour because they are incompetent or immoral, but because the context of scarcity forces them to do so (de Bruijn & Antonides 2022). It can therefore be expected that providing income security to forensic psychiatric clients in an experimental setting, will reduce recidivism.

In this article, we report on our empirically study of a policy experiment in which 14 clients in forensic psychiatric ambulant care in a city in the Netherlands received a heightened monthly income for a period of 3 years. In our qualitative longitudinal study (Bryman 2008), we used the case history method (Skinner 1956; Zainal 2007), to study how and why changes happened over time within the context of the experiment and how the participants were involved in creating those changes (Thomson 2007; Thomson & Holland 2003). We collected and analysed 111 semi structured interviews with participants, 108 participant questionnaires, 92 surveys with ambulant social workers, and 116 surveys with the municipal safety counsel, to describe the lives and stories of participants during the experiment. Our main research question was: What developments can be observed among participants after they have been granted an increased income?

Results show that participants generally wanted a 'normal' live and used the extra money mostly to buy groceries, housekeeping, transport, and self-care. This helped them to experience a higher quality of life. We found three ways in which the experiment reduced delinquent behaviours. Firstly, it removed the necessity to generate income through crime or undeclared work. Secondly, because participant experienced less stress and had the means to afford some relaxation, they could better control their impulses and could cope better with setbacks. Thirdly, the experiment came with a social contract. Participants would only receive the income if they were not in jail. Since they did not want to lose it, they were more hesitant and calculative to undertake any behaviour that might result in incarceration.

These findings underline the importance of income and livelihood security as preconditions for care and social work practices. Furthermore, the findings indicate livelihood security as an important condition for successful implementation of other social interventions for populations living in vulnerable and precarious situations. More attention for basic livelihood security will likely improve the often limited effects of such interventions.

Keywords

Forensic Psychiatry, Income experiment, Behaviour change, crime prevention, care reform

The support for the relationship between elderly, caregivers and care workers. The case study of the Sportello Assistenti Familiari of the Reggio Emilia's Solidarity Center CEIS

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

In Italy, families are the main providers of primary care to disabled people. To fulfil this duty, they often resort to hiring care workers, especially foreign women (NNA, 2021; Pasquinelli e Pozzoli, 2021). For this reason some Regions have invested in expanding an offer that includes support for both families and care workers themselves. A prominent role within the system is played by the Sportelli services for care work that are financed and implemented locally in a very diversified way (NNA, 2021). There are not many researches in this field, even if the services for care work are consolidated and widespread throughout Italy (Pasquinelli e Rusmini, 2013). Using the Relational Paradigm as a theoretical framework, this study aims to analyse these services, with a focus on the practices adopted by professionals to improve and support the relationship with and between caregivers, non self-sufficient people and care workers.

Method

The research was implemented through a qualitative case study of the Sportello Assistenti Familiari managed by the Reggio Emilia's Solidarity Center CEIS. An activity of participatory observation was carried out, as well as 25 interviews with both professionals and a sample of caregivers and care workers. A thematic analysis of the content from the field notes and of the interviews was also conducted.

Findings

The study allowed to identify the main strengths of the service, such as: the importance of the continuity of the service over time; the competence of the professionals, in particular their ability to understand and enhance the different points of view; the support given to caregivers and care workers over time; the emphasis put on the training of care workers; the promotion of legality. Among the weak points: the need to monitor the activities more intensely; the lack of moments of discussion for caregivers, even in groups, to share the burden of responsibility; the fatigue that caregivers feel when the service asks them to comply with contractual requests. The study also highlighted that professionals already apply some methodological elements consistent with the Relational Paradigm, yet these could be enhanced or strengthened.

Conclusion

Reflecting upon the role of the Sportello Assistenti Familiari helped to identify some recommendations that could improve the Sportello itself and other similar services for care work, such as promoting self-help groups for caregivers; supporting caregivers in contractual management; investing in specific training for both care workers

and professionals. All these suggestions highlight the need for further mapping and studying of these services. Taking such direction is essential, considering the demographic trend in Italy and the challenges that the welfare system will soon have to face.

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Keywords

social services, care workers, caregivers, older people, Relational Paradigm

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Whose 'social work' is it anyway?: A critical analysis of the retreat of community social work in the UK, and what lessons can be learned from social pedagogy and social prescribing to re-imagine our future.

Darren Hill

Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, United Kingdom

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Within the UK it may be observed that social work has become a technical activity focused on resource allocation and risk management, often within tightly managed disciplinary boundaries. This process can be considered as neither neutral nor benign, and forms part of an ideological approach to shrink state welfare services under free market reforms (Lavallette, 2019).

Within this paper we will examine how community health services have reformed a type of community social work practice to develop a newly emerging concept of social prescribing interventions. This paper will make the case that we need to reclaim and re imagine a social work practice beyond the silos we are currently constrained within.

Exploring the historical role of community social work in the UK, and using contemporary ethnographic research, we will evaluate how social work can re-imagine itself beyond its contemporary role in the UK, and how it can as a profession and institution move towards a more community-based form of European social pedagogic practices (Hill & Laredo, 2020). Within the discussion we make the case that it is essential that we as social workers through our collective history re-remember where and how we should be supporting marginalised populations.

This paper is based upon qualitative research obtained using an ethnographic model, and draws upon a contemporary evaluation of children's and young people's social prescribing service in the UK. Participant observation, focus groups and semi structured interviews have been used to collect data. This data will be supplemented by semi structured interviews with former community social workers and desk based archival research. The data has been collected over a twelve-month period and was undertaken using a Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

The research highlights that through free market reforms community social work in the UK has disappeared within a statutory context, our practice has become technical, focused and limited to local government services. The emergence of social prescribing while problematic in that it places social work, social pedagogy, and community social work within a health/medical paradigm, does offer hope, as it provides recognition of the importance of community support and social work beyond our contemporary statutory role. We surmise that to become relevant and helpful to those we serve, we as social workers must move from our traditional silos to a model that places social work in the heart of the community.

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Keywords

Community Social Work, Social Pedagogy, Social Prescribing, Social Work History, Ethnography

435

Elder abuse: a hidden world. An exploratory study as basis for an integral approach to elder abuse.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Since 2015, Dutch municipalities are responsible for ensuring and creating a local safety situation for families and households under their responsibility. Municipalities are still looking for tools to make this happen. Recent

international studies and measurements show that 1 in 6 people (15.7%) over the age of 60 is a victim of some form of violence and/or neglect at home or in their own environment on an annual basis (WHO, 2021).

Method

This research took place in two phases. First, a literature study was conducted on (inter)national literature about elder abuse. This analysis was input for an empirical deepening through two focus groups (n=30) (phase 2). The focus groups were designed from a multi-perspective point of view, in order to create the broadest possible empirical input. Respondents had different backgrounds: social workers, health care professionals, family doctors, policy makers and experts by experience. During these focus groups respondents spoke about the concrete implementation and application of the findings from phase 1 on their local working environment. Output of these focus groups are used for developing an approach regarding elder abuse, aimed at prevention and identification of the subject.

Findings

Four themes are important to include in an approach for elder abuse, regarding to the respondents: 1) fear to speak out by elder people during or after being abused, 2) integrated collaboration of professionals, finding each other on the subject, making the problem a regular topic of conversations, increasing knowledge about elder abuse and collaboration on identification and prevention of elder abuse, 3) a clear division of roles and tasks by professionals is required and finally 4) support from the municipality must be present and practical tools must be provided in order to reduce elder abuse.

Conclusion

Even though working integral on a topic, like elder abuse, can be a struggle sometimes, it appeared necessary for articulation of the essential focus points of an approach. Also the participation of experts by experience is indispensable in terms of usability of the essential focus points. In this paper presentation we discuss implications for social workers, policy makers and for social work education.

Keywords

Elder abuse, Crossing professional boundaries, Integral policy development, Social Work, Expert by experience

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Moral distress for social workers: an empirical analysis from Tuscany Region

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Moral distress is "a form of occupational and ethical stress to which the professional is subjected during their daily choice to attend an action according to principles and rules that do not align with their personal, ethical and professional values, but with organizational ones, institutional, political and economic efficiency, thus creating situations of emotional discrepancy, psychological suffering and moral stress that negatively affect the well-being, satisfaction and quality of the work performed" (Bensi, 2018), which emerged for the first time in 1984 about the nursing profession. At an international level, there are rare research experiences dedicated exclusively to social workers and in our knowledge, this is the first in Italy. Moreover, dimensions of moral distress and burnout are a core of the Italian Recovery Plan. The aim of the research is to develop and test a moral distress survey for Italian Local Health Authorities' Social Workers.

Methods

The Department of Social Work of the AUSL Toscana Centro and Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna of Pisa, has implemented and tested an online questionnaire made up of 40 items, considering four dimensions: professional ethics and deontology, the individual sphere, the work organization and the COVID-19 emergency; the intensity and frequency were measured for each item using a Likert scale (from 1 to 5). 452 completed questionnaires were received in front of 626 Social Workers invited to participate, with a response rate of 72.2%.

Findings

Elements inherent to the individual sphere are those most attributable to moral distress, both in terms of intensity and frequency, followed by those inherent to the organization, mainly regarding turnover and insufficient resources among personnel. High frequency and intensity have been traced for those elements that describe stressful situations, linked to both emotional aspects and frustration, such as to interfere with life and private relationships and with professional performance and quality. As regards the Ethics and deontology dimension, situations of conflict are identified between the efficiency mandates of organizations and those relating to the needs of people accessing social services. A dimension relating to the COVID-19 Emergency was envisaged, which created worrying in the sample regarding work well-being and one's level of stress, which could compromise the regular performance of tasks. There are complex situations, linked to important considerations of a legal and deontological nature, but also of responsibility, which are characterized by low frequency but high intensity.

Conclusions and implications

This research has a political impact: It represents an innovative and challenging area for social work. This research concerns professional advocacy and occupational well-being. The research has further repercussions on the practice through improvement actions for professionals and the people and communities with whom they relate, also strengthening the professional identity and the ethical dimension, as a lever of the political role of Social Workers. The causes of moral distress are multifaceted and this study shows that professionals' theory and practice are connected.

Keywords

Moral Distress, Ethics, Occupational well-being, Organization, Innovation

The counselling practice of school social workers in Swedish elementary schools. A focus group study.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and aim: This paper presentation describes the counselling practice of Swedish school social workers (SSWs) with individual children in elementary school. SSWs work in the school system's pupil health team, whose primary task is health promotion and prevention. The work of SSWs is about helping children and adolescents who for various reasons suffer from mental ill-health, school absenteeism or stress that make them unable to achieve their intended goals. SSWs preferably meet these children in individual counselling sessions.

The aim of this paper presentation is to describe and analyse SSWs' experience of counselling with children and to examine the characteristics of counselling practice.

Methods and study design: The data collection was conducted through four semi-structured focus group interviews with a total of 22 SSWs in four different regions in Sweden. The analysis was inspired by content analysis and started with an inductive approach with the following steps: 1. All sections were coded regarding their essential meaning, 2. The codes were sorted into categories i.e. clusters of sections with a common meaning. In the final step the three authors jointly discussed the categories.

Findings and Conclusions: SSWs provide counselling to children in order to bring about improved feelings or behavioural changes. It can be noted that SSWs put emphasis on both the counselling process and the alliance with the child. The interviews showed a common practice among SSWs regarding the structure of the counselling sessions, with certain steps and approaches being employed. However, the specific interventions differed and were characterised by an eclectic standpoint in which SSWs utilise a broad repertoire of therapeutic schools and techniques. Furthermore, a relational perspective emerged as a most prominent focus for the SSWs by re-emerging throughout the material. We (the three authors) believe that SSWs could benefit from theoretical perspectives on 'contextual model' and 'attachment theory' as 'models of the mind'. Being emotionally close to the child and being able to follow their development requires a lot from SSWs, as both professional caregivers and as "safe havens".

Keywords

school social counselling, school social workers, focus group interview, contextual model, attachment theory

Doing Relationship while Doing Social Work

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

What constitutes Social Work is a central question in theory building. If Social Work wants to be more than an ideal idea, this question cannot be answered without looking at Social Work practice. The article presents "Doing Social Work" as an approach to theorizing Social Work through ethnographic research. The basis is formed by the systematic comparison of situations from a wide variety of ethnographic studies that have been carried out in various fields of Social Work. At the same time, such a comparison opens up the perspective of negotiation achievements of the actors themselves and thus also takes a look at the service users as creators of Social Work.

The aim of the approach is to work out modes of producing Social Work across all fields of practices. Here Social Work is understood as a productive negotiation process of the participants - in particular social workers and service users. In addition to the basic theoretical and methodological characteristics of the approach, four modes of Doing Social Work will be presented, which have already been developed on the basis of a comparison of different ethnographic studies in different fields: making decisions in uncertainty, playing with vagueness, doing differences and disciplining everyday. In the following, the mode playing with vagueness will be singled out and presented in detail, as it plays a special role in relationships in Social Work.

Playing with vagueness as a mode of producing Social Work indicates that Social Work is characterized by a relative indeterminacy. In the context of a variety of tasks in diverse live-worlds and flexible spatial and temporal arrangements Social Workers are moving in role structures that are close to everyday life. The knowledge and skills of Social Workers are not (always) visible as explicit expert knowledge in a professional role framework; it constantly mediates itself with and in existing life-worlds. The actors involved – Social Workers as well as service users – have to position themselves in concrete situations by working on the vagueness of the role frameworks of the respective field of Social Work. While exploring the limits of legitimate orders, they are constantly negotiating relationships. In this sense, one can speak of Doing Relationship while Doing Social Work.

In the presentation we will use ethnographic data examples to show how actors actively deal with different roles without making this explicit, or how personal, diffuse relationships are introduced in order to deal with power imbalances.

The project to develop an empirically founded theory of Doing Social Work is in process. We aim to present the current status and its relevance for the consideration of relationships in Social Work.

Keywords

social work theories, qualitative research, ethnography, social worker-service user relationships, professional role

Confrontation of two normative orientations within museum space: social work vs inclusion

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Museums as spaces of cultural production, according to contemporary works are dynamically developing agents of social work and inclusion. The problem in this topic is that modern museums still inherit a dual normative orientation: defending, from one side, the frontiers of democracy, and from the other, elitist exclusive values. The question arises, how is it even possible to produce social work and inclusion programs in a museum?

To answer the question three mini-research were conducted in the museums actively developing social work and inclusion in Moscow (Russia).

Firstly, we studied the organizational structure of the seven largest museums and galleries, relying on formal information about the structure of institutions and on 16 semi-structured interviews with heads of museums and inclusive departments. Moreover, we tried to analyze the legal aspect of creating social work and inclusion programs in the museum, since this element turned out to be often mentioned by informants.

In the second mini-research, based on the conflict points identified during the first study, by 10 interviews and quasi-experimentations we studied the normative orientations of art-curators of exhibition, on the one hand, and the positions of social and inclusion workers, on the other hand.

In the third study, by comparative case-study, we investigate successful and not successful cases of integration of social work and inclusion in the museum space.

According to the results of the first study, it turned out that inclusive departments and groups of social work in museums are partially excluded from exhibition production. In addition, a legal aspect was found that limits the activities of inclusion and social work, and lets curators and artists defend their position more productive.

The results of the second study were extremely valuable, as they showed not just the different normative orientation of curators/artists with their l'art pour l'art and social workers/agents of inclusion with their Sozialstaat values; but different normative orientation between social workers/ agents of inclusion. Employees of the inclusive departments in a relativistic way defended the interests of the institution, while those who were more related to social work were guided by the "idealistic" values of the universal good.

The results of the third study partly suggest that "successful" integration of inclusive activities was carried out only in the case of having common dispositions with curators by social workers, what correlates to having relativistic orientations. At the same time, social workers who did not agree with norms of l'art pour l'art were not that successful.

This study reveals the problems that cultural institutions face in the development of social work and inclusion programs. Besides the value of the discovered boundary-making processes, the study also has a practical implication in the form of empirically identified "weak" aspects of the inclusive activities of museums.

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Keywords

museums, social work, social inclusion, art-curators, anti-discriminatory practice

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Finding common ground: Solidarity in religious initiatives

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In this paper, we analyse the extent to which religious-based solidarity initiatives (RSIs) provide care, services or support and fulfil a bridging role to formal welfare and care organizations. Research shows that these initiatives fulfil this role in particular for target groups that experience distance or barriers to the formal care and welfare offer for various reasons (Schrooten et al., 2019). There is much debate, however, about the role and meaning of the services provided by such organisations. Are such organisations still a form of charity? How can the gap between them and formal welfare and care organizations be bridged? We adopt the term of bricolage coined by (Phillimore et al., 2016) to study how religion-based solidarity initiatives make sense and provide an answer to the vulnerable conditions of community members in Brussels in relation to formal organizations.

As a first step, we examine how these RSIs conceive and apply solidarity. In the current phase of the research, we conduct qualitative case study research among eight Brussels RSIs. We find that solidarity in RSIs is religiously based – although the focus, degree and form differ greatly – and the implementation of solidarity in activities and services may differ from most formal social work. Still, the normative foundations of solidarity are often not that different at all. RSIs do play an important role in supporting vulnerable groups such as migrants with a precarious residence status. They do so in a very creative manner by adopting several strategies of bricolage to cope with scarce resources and few institutional support. These strategies refer to the efforts of RSIs to form liaisons or building bridges with formal welfare and care organizations. We also examine the conditions that make these collaborations successful.

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Keywords

faith groups, informal social work, people with precarious residence status, Religion-based solidarity initiatives

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Can novels, films, and television be used to reduce bias and promote anti-racist practice? Perceptions of social workers from a pilot intervention

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Despite increasing calls to promote anti-racism within social work, little is known about effective practitioner focused interventions. Research suggests that fictional narratives can be useful in promoting knowledge and increasing empathy (Davis, 2008). Reader or viewer identification with minoritised characters in literature, film, or television has been found to reduce prejudice over time (Bond, 2021). Here we present evidence from a pilot intervention study that used novels, films, and television created by minority ethnic artists as the basis for monthly discussion groups. Specifically, we examine participants' perceptions about: 1) their engagement with the intervention, and 2) how the intervention impacted their beliefs and practice.

Methods: Social workers (n=43) were recruited from six English local authorities and were divided into six online discussion groups. Most participants were female (n=36) and White British (n=32). Other participants identified as Black African/Caribbean/British (n=1), Asian/ Asian British (n=3), Dual/Multi Heritage (n=3), or Other (n=4). Each group read/watched a book, film, or television show that explored the experiences of minority ethnic communities in the UK every month. Data analysed here are from 1) online reflective logs completed by the participants after each discussion group and 2) qualitative interviews at the end of the intervention. A thematic approach to analysis was employed.

Findings: Two major themes emerged concerning social workers' engagement with the intervention: 1) participants valued discussion groups for the opportunity to understand different perspectives; 2) the intervention provided a forum in which to be open and honest about a difficult topic. A participant explained in an interview: "It works because you've got the safe space to be able to have those conversations and find out that information. And that's what brings together different people. You've got different experiences and that's been really helpful."

Three further themes were identified about the way in which the intervention impacted participants: 1) they responded emotionally to the materials they watched/read; 2) they acquired new knowledge about diverse cultures; 3) they were challenged to consider their own positions of bias/privilege. An example from a monthly log reads: "It has increased my awareness around different cultures and understanding of my privilege as a white middle class woman ... remembering that the service should adapt to someone's needs, not have to adapt to the service.."

Conclusion: Narrative discussion groups are a potentially engaging and effective method of increasing knowledge of diverse cultures and reducing bias. Future quantitative and experimental work should be undertaken to more accurately measure attitudinal and behavioural change.

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Keywords

anti-racist practice, intervention, arts, social workers, qualitative research

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Equal access to care? A quantitative study of Swedish social workers assessments of risk and need in cases of child physical abuse.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Since 1979, Sweden has prohibited physical discipline and other forms of humiliating treatment of children. With mandatory reporting, over 300 000 children are reported to child welfare services (CWS) and over 180 000 cases are open to investigation every year. Of these, approximately 20 % concern abuse of a child perpetrated by a parent. One of the challenges that child protection services in Sweden face is offering equal social services to all children in need of protection and support. Ideally, children exposed to the same level of risk and having similarly identified needs should have the same access to services. International research has suggested that there exists unequal access to CWS (Dettlaff et al., 2011; Bywaters, 2020) but in Sweden research the evidence supporting the existence of unequal access to services is weaker.

Aim: This study examines the extent to which there exist differences in social workers' documented assessment of risk and need for intervention, for children suspected of exposure to physical violence by a parent, which cannot be explained by the individual child's documented risk exposure.

Method: The study is a retrospective cross-sectional study of CWS investigations initiated in response to a report to social services containing a child's account of exposure to parental physical violence. A random sample of referrals during the period 2018 - 2020 was drawn from the case files of seven Swedish CWS offices. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Frequencies for background characteristics were obtained and comparisons between groups were performed using Chi² and t-test.

Results: Descriptive analyses show that the average age of the children disclosing physical abuse is 8.6 years, with slightly more boys than girls. Most of the reported children have two foreign-born parents and live in neighborhoods with low socio-economic status. We report on the type of exposure reported by children, the relationship of the perpetrator to the child, and relationship between assessed level of risk and background variables such as socio-economic and family factors. Results indicate a relationship between certain risk factors and the assessment of risk, as well as differences in the assessment of risk in relation to the assessment of need for certain groups of children.

Conclusions: Further research is necessary on the relationship between social workers' assessments of risk and need when parents are suspected of physical violence against children. We urge closer attention to and awareness of how the context impact these assessments at the individual case level as an important part of the goal of ensuring equitable child welfare services.

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Keywords

Physical abuse, inequality, risk assessment, determination of need, ICS/BBIC

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Challenges of critical social work practice with members of the Roma minority

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work has changed its mission (IFSW/IASSW, 2014), and principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities have strengthened people's positions. Critical social work practice (Fook,

2012) has acquired more importance in line with such development. Furthermore, in those settings, social workers should be aware of the oppressive systems they are part of (Payne, 2021).

In the context of the Czech Republic, oppression and misuse of power are often experienced in the coexistence of the Roma minority with the Czech majority. Using case study methodology (Gilgun, 1994), I selected a case of such problematic coexistence. I asked, "What social work practice is constructed by involved experts, stakeholders, and members of the Roma minority?"

A qualitative, mixed-method approach was used for data gathering (n=64). In-depth interviewing was combined with focus groups with members of the Roma minority, stakeholders, and experts. Moreover, observation of events held by the city council was conducted. By using discursive analysis (Gill, 2000) and methodology of subjective positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990), I have described two discourses (victims and free-riders) and six subjective positions (Roma minority: bosses, sufferers, and sleepers; experts from Czech majority: leaders, capitulants, and dreamers) whose mutual interactions create a practice that is charged with latent violence and oppression.

Although the social work practice is officially treated as highly professional, my study uncovers problems with blaming and victimizing Roma, on the one hand, and the burnout and denigration of experts, on the other. In such a discursive context, social work practice's main challenge is finding ways to limit the power of bosses, empower sufferers, revive sleepers, motivate leaders, support capitulants, and cherish dreamers.

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Keywords

Critical social work practice, Roma minority, Social exclusion, Qualitative research, Case study

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The Quest for Licensure – Professionalization Strategies of a Finnish Social Workers Organization

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This abstract is based on my dissertation in which I analysed professional strategies to strengthen social welfare professions in Finland carried out by the Finnish social workers union Talentia. Focus lied on the social worker's occupation and quest for licensure. The period investigated spans from 1949 until 2019. Licensure granted by the state is considered a significant attribute for a successful professionalization process and desirable for occupational groups. Research shows that licensure can also be experienced as a reduction of professional autonomy and therefore be opposed collectively. In Finland, licensure for social welfare workers came into effect in 2016. Many members of occupational groups regulated by the licensure are members of Talentia, whose position concerning professionalization and licensure has not been longitudinally investigated previously.

The study methodology was based on a qualitative single-case study design. The data consisted of archived documents of Talentia, organizational journals, governmental reports, laws, directives, and secondary sources of knowledge such as Talentia's written history. Interviews were undertaken with four key persons that had been working in leading positions of the organization. The analytical approach is abductive, including theoretical concepts and perspectives from sociology of professions, organizational theory, and policy research. The development of collective strategies for professionalization developed by the organization can be roughly divided into the periods of Establishment (1949–1962), Consolidation (1963–1980), Professionalization (1981–1999) and Licensure (2000–2019).

The organization has clearly strived for professionalization and supported licensure for social workers and for other social welfare professionals. The way these strategies become concrete brings knowledge about how professionalization can be carried out by organizations. The main strategy identified is ideological optimism for professionalization, which led Talentia to strive for political influence, educational development, and expansion of occupational monopoly on the labor market as strategies for professionalization. Other supportive strategies concerning internationalization, work ethics, and information campaigns have also been identified. Continuity and change in the strategies can be summarized as developing an optimism for professionalization that combined professional- and labor union interests. I argue that the licensure was rather assessed to be a shield against attempts of de-professionalization and to promote service quality for the clients. Municipal employers of social welfare professionals could not always be trusted to guarantee service quality, which has been a leading theme in the strategical work of the organization. The ideological optimism towards professionalization developed internally by individual actors, the institutional entrepreneurs of the profession that managed to persuade the members that professionalization was the right way to proceed. Since professionalization towards licensure is a longitudinal process that in this case has lasted for many decades, an ideology can function as a stabilizing driver during times when things are not proceeding as desired. The ideology can also be used to legitimize professionalization by spreading it over organizational boundaries to political decision-makers and the surrounding society.

The results indicate that ideology, political influence, and alliances with representatives of interest groups in higher education can be important for the quest for professionalization in different contexts.

Keywords

Finland, Licensure, Organization, Social workers, Strategies

Family support for older relatives from far away - distance caregiving as a topic for social work research

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: In most European countries labour market mobility and changing family patterns are increasing while the number of family carers of older persons in close proximity decreases. These trends result in a rising demand of insights on „distance caregiving“ and support from far away. So far, there is limited social work research on characteristics of these distance care arrangements and helpful social support from informal as well as professional helpers. The presentation is embedded in a binational project with an interdisciplinary German and Swiss research team. The project aims to explore challenges for distance carers and implications for family relationships, social networks, professional helpers and wellbeing of distance caregivers. It also aims to identify the conditions for the labour market and support services and strategies of distance carers that enable successful distance care arrangements.

Methods: This paper presents the results from N=45 qualitative interviews in Germany with distance carers with specific focus on support from network partners around the care arrangement. In order to be able to fully grasp and understand the overall arrangements, we used a qualitative ego-centric network analysis. For this purpose, we combined egocentric network maps and simultaneous problem-centred interviews with N = 35 distance caregivers in Germany and N = 10 in Switzerland. The results of the qualitative interviews are based on qualitative content analyses.

Findings: The findings underline the importance of emotional relationships among the relatives and the general ambivalence towards the distances from each other. On the one hand, the spatial distance enables the distance caregivers to distance themselves emotionally from caregiving and that satisfaction with their own state of health, for example, is relatively high. On the other hand, it is evident that the challenges for personal contacts placed an emotional burden on the distance carers, e.g., through uncertainty and concern about the health status of those in need of care. The findings also highlight the social embeddedness of these distance care arrangements and how the research design contributes to evidence-based interventions and implementation in social work. In this way, a variety of hitherto "invisible" support services, strategies and convictions could be identified that contribute significantly to the success of care at a distance.

Conclusions: For social workers can be concluded: Distance Caregiving can have negative consequences for mental health of caring relatives, such as loss of control, feelings of guilt or fear of the future. Of particular importance are also possible conflicts with local helpers if there are no clear agreements or responsibilities. These results are specific starting points for the establishment and further development of psychosocial support in the area of distance caregiving.

Keywords

distance care, caring relatives, social support, proximity, reconciliation of work and family

CoRe: A participatory research project for community activation and resilience for responsible welfare

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Full participation of the various sectors of society in social planning is a widespread need and a regulatory obligation that has not yet been fully realised. This is especially true in times of emergency.

The COVID-19 pandemic made clear the need to address major societal challenges by overcoming parcelled-out approaches and adopting systemic actions capable of intervening harmoniously on several factors at once.

Hence the necessity to finetune research and social programming with the needs expressed by community members by means of a collaborative approach to allow different forms of knowledge and expertise to come into dialogue.

We shall argue that this is consistent with a peculiar idea of welfare. Responsible welfare adopts an approach that includes and brings together various social policy stakeholders which act at all levels and in different spheres.

Study design and method

Within such a framework, we will present the study design and main results of a participatory action-research project titled “CoRe – Resilient communities supporting vulnerable people and groups”.

CoRe was funded under FISR 2020 (Special Supplementary Fund for Research) to develop an operational prototype for community mobilization to overcome post-COVID-19 emergency situations. CoRe provided for the prototype serving as an interconnected set of resources and operational instruments inserted in a strategic plan to support a socially and economically vulnerable community.

The prototype was conceived by means of a participatory action-research process based on principles and methods of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), therefore implying active involvement of citizens, civil society organizations, institutions, social and economic actors, decision makers. Consistently, the action-research process aimed at generating change through active listening, valorisation of community resources and direct involvement of a variety of stakeholders.

We will shortly highlight how a “whole community approach” to emergency planning was conjugated to integrate collective knowledge generation through Community Based Participatory Research. The guiding principles and the specific instruments and participatory tools which were mobilized will be presented.

Main findings and implications

To reach the ambitious objective of conceiving an operational community mobilization prototype to support vulnerable groups and people in post-emergency situations, CoRe was articulated in four interrelated levels: literature review, needs and resource mapping (through focus groups, community walks, interviews, and visits), scenario building and co-creation (through Scenario Workshop), and communication.

The literature review evidenced the need for primary prevention and fostering generalized preparedness. Furthermore, the contextual nature of prevention and preparedness is frequently underlined along with the need for bottom-up approaches, which requires that solid relations among institutions and community actors are built and well-looked-after.

These guiding principles resonated with our empirical evidence which furthermore pointed out four context related operational foci to prevent and tackle emergency situations: material support; networks and coordination; local presidia; information and communication.

Those four operational foci were declined along the possible levels of Co.Re.'s community mobilization prototype: preparedness, responsiveness, and recovery. The paper will present the main operational solutions that were identified along those three levels. These will be discussed to highlight the main implications for policy and further research.

Keywords

Community, Action research, Participation, Emergency planning, Co-creation

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Exploring local historical trauma in the context of social work

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

Is a difficult legacy in the field of social work a burden or an underappreciated source of knowledge and inspiration? What valuable lessons can we learn as professionals from the past to apply in the present and take into the future with a focus on education, research, and value-based practice? The aim of the symposium is to discuss the impact of broadly understood 20th-century violations of human rights on contemporary social work: its theoretical orientation, educational and research approaches, and professional practice. Sharon Macdonald's [1] "difficult heritage" conception is the theoretical foundation for analyzing local history and exploring historical trauma in the context of social work. Regardless of the role played by social workers/ers/carers - perpetrators, victims, or bystanders, to use Raul Hilberg's [2] terminology - it is important to recognize opportunities to include this often voiceless heritage as an important resource: 1) of social work history and identity as a profession and

discipline, 2) for completely understanding the essence of responsibility towards the vulnerable, which is determined by a difficult heritage, 3) of knowledge about shared resilience in traumatic reality - defined by Orit Nuttman-Shwartz [3] - as one of the key phenomenon defining human relationships in society experienced by trauma. All authors presenting in this symposium have their unique approach to the topic within their professional expertise, research interest, and national history. Nevertheless, their experience and findings prove the same – difficult legacy and historical trauma are not – and should never be – overlooked or unwanted parts of our history and professional identity. It is our opportunity to learn from our predecessors who often put the values of social work into practice during the most tragic times, our responsibility to preserve the heritage of social work history and raise awareness about its significance for today, and last, be not least, our privilege to learn and teach what the topic demonstrates so clearly: the core of social work – human relationships – stays the same through all times, circumstances, and places.

[1] Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, London: Routledge 2009.

[2] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945*, New York: HarperCollins 1993.

[3] Orit Nuttman-Shwartz recently, *Shared Resilience in a Traumatic Reality: A New Concept for Trauma Workers Exposed Personally and Professionally to Collective Disaster*, „Trauma, Violence, & Abuse”, 2014, November 2014, 1-10.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Where humanity prevailed: The legacy of social work in the Terezin ghetto.

BACKGROUND: There are still many white spaces in social work history, including a lack of research on social work during the Holocaust, although the past events could be an irreplaceable source of knowledge and inspiration. There is also an overlooked need for better axiological education with an emphasis on connecting the social work history and identity of the profession with contemporary practice, education, and research in the field of this profession.

METHODS: We conducted historical research combined with content analysis and a visit to the Terezin Memorial research room and triangulation to validate results.

FINDINGS: This presentation offers a better insight into the yet unexplored topic of social work in the Terezin ghetto in 1941-1945 and describes this little-known part of social work history not just as a closed chapter from the past. It also outlines the significance of the seemingly “only” historical event a valuable source to contemporary professionals in the field of social work.

CONCLUSIONS: Social work in the Terezin ghetto is an inspirational example of professional principles and values and also proves that the potential of genuine human relationships was, and remains, one of the most powerful tools in social work practice. Most of Terezin’s prisoners died during the Holocaust and soon there will be no survivors alive. It is up to us, younger generations, to keep their legacy alive and make the best use of the precious opportunity to learn from their experience.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Understanding the essence of responsibility towards interpersonal relations in the space of difficult heritage: Axiological education in former KL Plaszow in Kraków.

Background: The speech contains reflections on the activities for the difficult heritage community in the space of former concentration camp Plaszow, relating to the complex issue of responsibility. The most promising method is teaching and research based on axiological education providing direct experiences and first-hand knowledge.

Methods: For years in the post-camp space and its vicinity we conduct qualitative and quantitative research. As part of activities based on acquiring knowledge about the difficult local history and its heritage through the confrontation with post-camp space, we organise axiological walks around the former camp, we care about direct face-to-face contact with inhabitants, we conduct studies of present sources.

Findings: The results show that we are dealing with peculiar example of a ambivalent conflict zone. For inhabitants the process of „fighting for the right to space and responsibility for it” may now be more important than the post-camp area itself – it has started to characterize them and to bind them together.

Conclusions: Our activities stimulate social memory, but also represent an approach supporting community development. It is crucial to implement the developed method for in-depth research on the specificity of difficult heritage communities - especially in dimensions meeting the challenges of contemporaneity in the context of heritage. In this area, social workers will play an increasingly important role – difficult heritage should be seen as an invaluable source of inspiration for social-oriented activities.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

When past trauma never become a past: caring for aging Holocaust survivors within social work.

Background: Clinical work and empirical data of Holocaust survivors underscore the adverse mental and physical outcomes of mass genocide in early life, persisting into old age. This presentation will focus on these aspects on both an empirical and a clinical level.

Methods: The presentation is based on two separated studies. The first study included 63 older Holocaust survivors and 57 matched participants without Holocaust experience hospitalized in an Israeli hospital (79.79 and 77.29 years respectively). Participants completed self-report questionnaires assessing cognitive appraisals, coping strategies, and psychological symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization. The second study comprised of an older Israeli community-based sample, including 159 Holocaust survivors and 87 matched participants without Holocaust experience (mean age 82 years). Participants completed self-report questionnaires assessing cognitive processes, posttraumatic stress symptoms, post-traumatic growth, depression, physical health, and a non-invasive measurement of heart-rate variability.

Findings: In the first study, Holocaust survivors reported higher levels of emotional distress, appraised hospitalization more as a threat, and used more emotion-focused than the comparison group. In the second study, Holocaust survivors showed a combination of higher mental and physical vulnerabilities, combined with resilience, compared to the comparison group.

Conclusions: The presentation expands the knowledge on the physical and mental effects of the Holocaust and of early mass trauma and genocide in general. Understanding these effects is essential for identifying older adults at risk and providing supportive and suitable social work interventions for this population.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

How can we teach trauma to young students who had never faced such an intensive situation?

The profession of social work differs from other therapeutic professions in several unique aspects that characterize it as a profession. For example, a student who lacks the sense of Empathy should learn what Empathy is and try to

develop it because the therapeutic-relationship, the treatment-process and its success depend on it. In contrast, a surgeon who lacks this sense can completely heal his patient while the other is in fact under anesthesia.

The question often arises whether a student/a social worker who did not grow up in poverty, single-parent family or, who was not a drug addict, knows how and can treat clients who belong to one of these population groups? Those questions and more arise when it comes to teaching Trauma: for example, does the students' gender play a role? Do their young age and the fact that they have not experienced Trauma in their life have any weight in their ability to internalize basic or advanced Trauma therapy techniques?

Teaching Trauma today is essential and we need to focus on the questions of how do we do it? Will we focus on the theory or the practice of Trauma care? In what doses? What sub-themes to include (loss/bereavement/crisis/etc.)? What are the most effective techniques for teaching Trauma (simulations, interpersonal encounters with trauma victims etc.)? I will try to answer that and more in my presentation.

Keywords

historical trauma , difficult legacy, social work responsibility, community resilience, social work education

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Evidence-informed social work approach to mental health of vulnerable groups before and after the Covid-19 pandemic

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: The Covid-19 pandemic is related to adverse mental health outcomes, impacting everyday lives, and leaving long-term consequences for individuals and societies. The study objectives were to monitor mental health indicators over 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic in Croatia and to examine the relationships between pandemic-related stressors, potential risk factors and resilience with mental health indicators.

Methods: A cohort survey of the general population was conducted at four time points: July and December 2020, and July and December 2021. The adult sample (18 to 65 years; (N_{T1} = 1201, N_{T2} = 1106, N_{T3} = 1200, N_{T4} = 1014) was nationally representative for age (M = 41.37 years, SD = 12.864), gender (50.1% female), level of urbanization and country regions, and recruited through the online panel. The questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic data, health information, work status, family environment, media exposure, pandemic-related stressors, positive consequences of the pandemic, psychological resilience and mental health indicators. The assessed mental health indicators included depression, anxiety, and stress (DASS-21), adjustment problems (ADNM-8) and wellbeing (WHO-5).

Findings: Monitoring of mental health indicators over 18 months during the Covid-19 pandemic shows non-linear trend of symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, adjustment problems, and wellbeing, with low at 10 months into the pandemic (T2, December 2020).

Examining the role of risk and protective factors for mental health showed relatively consistent results over time for different mental health indicators highlighting specific risk groups. Participants with physical health problems, previous diagnoses of mental health disorders, those who have been exposed to more pandemic-related stressors, and participants who excessively followed news about the pandemic, showed more mental health problems. Additionally, for some indicators, the risk factors were lower income and not having a partner relationship, while living single or with others showed opposite results for different indicators. Younger participants were at higher risk for mental health problems. Women in this study were at higher risk than men only for adjustment problems. More resilient participants and those who perceived some positive consequences of the pandemic showed better mental health.

Conclusions and implications: Mental health indicators of population exposed to Covid-19 pandemic fluctuate over time, probably depending on the complex interplay of the different individual risk and protective factors, and environmental factors, such as public health restrictions. The study highlights the need for a comprehensive mental health care policy for all citizens, and specific targeted social work interventions for particular at risk groups, vulnerable both before and after the pandemic.

Keywords

social work and mental health during Covid-19, wellbeing, resilience, at risk groups

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Teaching community development and participation in a post-pandemic world: Lessons for social work education

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Community engagement and development has been a significant feature of support provided throughout the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK and internationally (LSA, 2020; Kenny, 2020). There is also a significant and increasing emphasis on the role of the social worker in supporting community development in Scottish Government policy and social work education. This project builds on work undertaken by the project team in 2016 that focused on the extent to which community development was taught in social work programmes across Scotland, an exploration of how this could be strengthened and consideration of the role adopted by social workers in community development internationally.

This study explores the extent to which community work features in social work education across Scotland and how such learning and teaching has been shaped by the Review of Social Work Education and the subsequently revised Standards in Social Work Education (SSSC 2019), relevant national policy and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It draws out wider implications for education, policy and practice.

Methods

The aim of this study is to build on this previous research to explore the extent to which HEIs have responded to the emphasis on community work in the revised SiSWE social work standards (SSSC 2019) and the Covid-19 pandemic. The study uses two different methods:

- 1) To update current understanding of the relationship between community development and social work by completing a literature and policy review focusing on new research carried out between 2016 and 2021.
- 2) To enhance understanding of the ways in which community development is conceptualised and taught across the social work curriculum in Scotland, by carrying out an online survey with representatives across HEIs in Scotland. The aims of the survey are to assess the extent to which community work features in social work education across HEI institutions and any associated barriers and opportunities to learning and teaching. The sample involves HEI representatives across Scotland.

Findings

The key findings from the project are the emphasis of community development within legislation and policy mandates internationally and nationally. This approach has given social work educators and practitioners a new lens to approach social problems. Whilst there is evidence that community development was not represented in some social work curriculums, other countries have successfully incorporated this approach. Whilst there are challenges to implementing community social work, these approaches are being applied. The Covid-19 pandemic has also offered opportunities and well as challenges for practitioners to engage in community development.

Conclusions and implications

The study has highlighted the importance of community development within research, policy and practice. The main implications of the study are:

- 1) The need to review HEI social work curricula to assess how the principles and practice of community development can be strengthened within social work qualifying programmes.
- 2) Advocate for the inclusion of a community development approach within social work policy and practice with policy makers and social service regulators.
- 3) Develop the capacity of the social services workforce in community work skills and values.

Keywords

community development, social work education, curriculum development, Higher Education Institutions

Assessing capacity for sexual consent in women with intellectual disabilities: An Assessment of International Policy and Practice.

Marie McElroy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

People with intellectual disabilities have long been viewed as being asexual, or promiscuous, and discouraged from sexual expression (Murphy 2003). Consequently, the discourse surrounding sexual consent and intellectual disability is contentious, if not hidden. While the right to have relationships with others, is part of all our human rights, and is generally taken for granted and guaranteed in national and international law, in the case of women with intellectual disabilities, the State asserts a right to monitor that right. This paper will offer a critical analysis of national and international policy and practice, conducted as part of my ongoing PhD study, "An exploration of individual advocacy and institutional power: consideration of sexual consent for women with intellectual disabilities". Aligned to the overall conference theme: "Social work research through and towards human relationships", my paper will consider to what extent current policy, practice and legislation promotes sexual autonomy and the right to intimate relationships for this group of women. Aligning to the conference sub themes (1 & 2) my paper offers an analysis of policy and practice, not just across national and international boundaries, but across social, professional and cultural boundaries, in the context of social work and human relationships and in an ever-changing European context. Thus, the centrality of rights based policies become critical aspects of the decision making processes which assess and support the right to safe and intimate relationships for this group of people.

When the 'norm' is to construct people with intellectual disabilities as non-sexual, a culture of silence is created and sexuality is often considered to be non-normative. Therefore, connecting disability and sexuality in the context of normative, rights based social policy, creates challenges for both policy, practice, research and education. And, if statutory social work, continues to operate largely from a subtext which translates 'intellectual disability' to mean 'unable to parent', then complex as it is, the narrative needs to be challenged and it needs to be changed, so that the right to intimate citizenship also has a meaningful place in the policies of safeguarding and capacity. Drawing on the discourse of sociology, Foucault's perspectives on exposing governmentality, will be considered in the context of hierarchical, policy and legislative barriers which often prevent or preclude the promotion of rights based sexual autonomy and the right to choose.

People with intellectual disabilities have been having sex for a very long time. Despite the best attempts by a eugenics movement to control this, it did not work. Institutional segregation, did not stop people with intellectual disabilities from having sex. They were also subjected to harm in the form of sexual abuse perpetrated by members of staff. (Starogiannis, Hill, 2008) Connecting disability and sexuality may well be a challenge, but my study and my paper will argue, that issues of capacity and consent in this context, should, first and foremost, be issues of social justice, liberty and human rights. (McCarthy 2014)

Keywords

intimate citizenship, women, intellectual disabilities, policy, rights

Working in greyscale: understanding the role and position of social work in mental health services in England and Wales

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work in England and Wales has played an integral role in mental health services since the formalisation of mental health care. However, development of the profession has been organic and responsive, with neither the scope of provision nor the role itself clearly conceptualised. This has left contemporary mental health social work nebulously defined and unclearly situated within mental health structures. Moves both toward and away from integrated care have contributed to role erosion and recent policy-led role definitions have been unsuccessful in addressing this, with social workers struggling to engage with these, leaving the primary formal practice framework for as legislative.

Social work roles are deemed quasi-professional and difficult to articulate, highly susceptible to the external gaze of other professionals and to organisational expectations, which can prompt role defensiveness. However, understanding of the interplay of these factors in mental health is limited. This research adopted a mixed-method approach to establish an overview of mental health social work and to explore how mental health social workers perceive their role, accounting for variation and similarity across the range of practice contexts.

An initial survey of mental health social work providers generated a framework of provision to inform a survey of 248 social workers, thirty of whom also completed an in-depth semi-structured interview. Both the survey and the interviews explored participant views on professional social work identity and practice context. Descriptive statistical analysis was undertaken to explore the overall perspective of participants on their role and their relationship with the practice environment, while non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to explore statistically significant variations in experience linked to practice context. Interview data was analysed using a Framework thematic approach in order to enable the two-way review of findings which provided for an overall analysis whilst also sustaining the link to the specific context of the data.

Participants articulated their professional status as an interaction of task-based, values-based and knowledge-based roles which informed a distinctive approach to practice. The externally facing task-based roles were frequently unique to specific job titles and practice settings and seen to be sensitive to practice environments and influences, in particular the organisational context itself and the influence of other professionals within that context. By contrast, however, the values and knowledge-based roles were presented as consistent across settings. These emphasised a person-centred, holistic, social justice informed approach, which prioritised a social understanding of mental health and sustained this in the face of shifting organisational priorities.

Overall, the research indicated a need for definitions of mental health social work to be distinguished from the activities of practice if this workforce is to be understood and deployed effectively. Formal frameworks provided an inadequate descriptor to capture the unique social work contribution and their relevance was directly related to practice context. By contrast, knowledge and values underpinned the practice activities and may provide a more useful starting position to understand the social work contribution. Further research to elucidate the values and knowledge base being employed across contexts would be beneficial in developing this.

Keywords

mental health services, interprofessional relations, professional role, organisational culture, mental health professionals

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How can user participation for people in vulnerable situations be understood from an intersectional perspective?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

This presentation is based on an empirical study of user involvement for people in vulnerable situations in their meetings with health and welfare services in Norway. Intersectionality is employed as an analytical lens to illustrate how social categories and power structures are intertwined and mutually constitute each other (Fahlgren & Sawyer, 2006; Mattson, 2021). A main objective within an intersectional perspective is to illustrate how social categories, with different meanings, intersect. The intersection of different social categories helps us to both understand complex identities and how social structures impacts peoples living conditions (Mattson, 2014). In this paper, the aim is to explore possibilities and barriers to user participation from an intersectional perspective. The overall research question is: How can user participation for people in vulnerable situations be understood from an intersectional perspective?

Following sub questions are posed:

- 1) What social categories are present and intersecting?
- 2) In what ways are the social categories intersecting?
- 3) What implications do the intersections of categories have for user participation?

Methods:

The study is based on three case studies with different user groups and services. Case study 1 has studied user participation among people with dementia living in nursing homes. The user group in case study 2 is homeless people who started a self-administered housing facility with social enterprises. Case study 3 has investigated participants in the introduction programme for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. The empirical material is based on qualitative in-depth interviews, observations, group interviews and dialogue meetings with users, employers and next of kins.

Findings:

Our preliminary findings show that user participation is conditioned by what social categories the user group is positioned within. Unequal power relations combined with social categories that often are marginalised makes user participation difficult to fully achieve.

Conclusion and implications:

Based on our cases we will illustrate and discuss what and how social categories intersects and what implications it has for user participation for the three different user groups. Intersectionality as an analytical concept is helpful in the sense that it identifies deeper structural mechanisms' that makes user participation difficult to attain for groups that are in vulnerable situations.

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Keywords

intersectionality, user participation, immigrants, dementia, homelessness

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PROMOTE NETWORKING FOR RELATIONAL AID PROJECTS: THE ACTION-RESEARCH OF COLLOQUIA FOUNDATION IN ITALY

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Networking (let's call it faRETE, as a literary license from the Italian future tense of the verb fare, such as to do, -in this case, you'll do, as a warm invite! - , to make but also to act, to build and to perform) is a very difficult task. Perhaps it is the most difficult of the social tasks.

And if networking wants to be bi-dimensional, such as to comprehend the individuals and at the same time positively contaminate the non-profit organizations towards the helping relationship, the task is even more challenging, because it involves two worlds that do not have taken for granted relationships.

With this intervention, we intend to tell the story of a small family based Foundation, its founders and friends who, by forming the organizational Network, are following a personal life plan focused on helping relationship learning.

Through the simple Scenario of individual experiences of life and work, past and present, the encounter with the Research-Action as a method of guidance and learning, the sharing of paths and perspectives of people and organizations that generate Orienting & Educating Communities, Colloquia is even more taking shape as a small family foundation, container of experiences towards the Helping relationship understanding.

It is with this perspective, both personal and social, that we think that you will make the path to follow.

The oral presentation will illustrate the outcomes of the action-research that monitored and studied how the practice of accompanying and supporting the elderly, care givers and people in conditions of severe marginalization has changed over time thanks to ongoing training and supervision. Through questionnaires and a focus group, it was possible to observe how the aid projects proposed by the Foundation have changed towards a more relational and less assistance-oriented practice. The data also show how "networking" has enabled all the actors involved - volunteers, coordinators and service users - to increase their technical and experiential knowledge and rediscover a new value in co-constructed help.

Keywords

Networking, Individuals/Organizations, Contaminate to change, Helping Relationship, Action-Research

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Preventing youth crime and facilitating change: An exploration of how case managers adapt to a new system of youth justice in Denmark

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In Denmark, a new youth justice system was introduced in 2019, which includes a Youth Crime Board (YCB) and a Youth Probation Service (YPS). This reform significantly changes the system responses to children aged 10-17 suspected of or involved in violent or serious, repeated crime. Prior to the reform, there was no separate youth justice system in Denmark, which meant that young people involved in crime were handled within the child welfare system and/or prosecuted in the adult court system if above the age of criminal responsibility (15 years). The law was introduced to ensure a more "swift and effective" response to children and young people committing violent crime or serious crime with a high risk of reoffending (Ministry of Justice, 2017 p. 12). It aims to remedy two challenges, one being that municipalities were too reluctant to initiate interventions, particularly for children

under the age of criminal responsibility, and the other being that the children and young people involved in serious and repeated crime were not motivated to engage in these interventions (Ibid). By introducing the YCB, the authority was removed from the municipal child welfare service, and the YPS was established to control the effectuation and compliance of sanctions issued by the YCB.

This presentation discusses how municipal case managers have accommodated to the new system and developed a number of 'work arounds' to remedy the system flaws. While authority has moved from the municipality to the YCB, child welfare services remain a key agent in the new system by providing a youth assessment for the YCB meeting and a recommendation for sanctions, and as the responsible agent for service delivery. The analysis draws on qualitative interviews with 15 case managers, which were produced as a part of a larger mixed-methods evaluation of the youth justice reform. The analysis is theoretically informed by Lipsky's work on street level bureaucracy. We identify five 'work-arounds' that in different ways serve the purpose of regaining authority with the service delivery for children and young people with complex needs. The work-arounds are viewed as professionals' responses to system flaws, such as the YCB being unsuitable for acute situations, the system being too rigid to accommodate to the needs of youth in very unstable life situations, and the system being too complex for children with cognitive impairments or psychiatric illness. Rather than directly opposing or critiquing the system, case managers have developed ways to secure system responses that can result in positive change for the most vulnerable children and youth.

Keywords

Youth, Crime, Desistance, Case management, Lipsky

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Decisions on contact between parents and children in child welfare care measures

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Our presentation derives from a social work research project and is in line with the subtheme Challenges and opportunities for social work practice in contemporary contexts. The presentation will be based on our project: Decisions on contact between parents and children in child welfare care measures[i]. The main purpose of this study is to develop knowledge on how child welfare employees assess and justify the extent and structuring of contact between children, siblings and parents after a care order. By exploring practices related to such assessments and how knowledge is used to support the assessments, we aim to detect the ways in which the professionals justify the decisions related to contact between children, parents and siblings after a care order.

Methods

We have obtained and analyzed audio recordings of discussions between child welfare employees in Norway. In these meetings they discuss and decide the extent and organization of visits and contact between specific children in care and their birth families. Our work has until now had three analytical starting points:

In the first article (ii) we used Niklas Luhmann's theory of decisions as an analytical framework.

We have two articles in progress, one looking into employees' understandings of culture when considering contact between minority ethnic children in care and their birth families. The other article will be looking into how the pandemic situation in 2020-2021 played a role when considering visits between the children and their birth families.

We are in the process of obtaining recordings of discussions between child welfare employees in Sweden, and by the time of the conference we might be able to present some preliminary reflections upon this material.

Findings

We will present findings presented in our first article (ii), where we show how expressions of various expectations determine the character and extent of children and parents' access to each other. For example, the length of the care placement becomes important in the assessment of the contact. The views of those involved concerning the birth family contact is also central to the decision. The child's development and the parties' experiences of earlier contact is also expressed as important expectations to consider.

We will supply the presentation with insights from the work with the two, yet unpublished, articles, and we might also present preliminary findings and reflections upon the material from Sweden.

Conclusions and implications

The study shows how employees in the child welfare service make decisions about contact between children in care and their parents. The research contributes to knowledge on social work practices concerning children in care measures, and the complexity in the child welfare assessments and decisions.

[i] Decisions on contact between parents and children in child welfare care measures - OsloMet

[ii] Aamodt, H. A. & Sommerfeldt, M. B. (in press). Hvordan besluttes samvær mellom foreldre og barn under offentlig omsorg (How do employees in the child welfare services decide the extent of contact between children in public care and their parents). Norges Barnevern (in press).

Keywords

child welfare, social work, birth family contact, care measures

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The co-construction of a methodological device of practice research: the collaboration place.

Cristina Coelho

CLISSIS / Centro Lusíada de Investigação em Serviço Social e Intervenção Social da Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The work we present is part of an ongoing academic research (Ph.D.) in Social Work, called *Trajectories of child abuse and the construction of decisions in the daily work of social workers – micro ethnographic case study of a Family Support and Parental Counseling Centre*. A Family Support and Parental Counselling Centre (CAFAP) is an intermediary structure of the Portuguese child protection system, so it's a proximity service that helps families where the risk and danger for the wellbeing of children exist.

Our objective is to present this methodological process, which was developed in a collaborative way with social workers. We will present the construction process of the methodological dimension of practice research of this particular investigation, the steps and mechanisms of co-construction and collaboration: from the opening and access to the field and the negotiation of the investigation problems to the moments of knowledge co-creation. Special attention will be paid to the figures of mediation represented by the social worker researcher and the direct practice social workers and to the interpretative zones where the analysis model was co-constructed and data was co-analysed.

This research is a micro ethnographic study of an organization. It directly involved 6 social workers. We did interviews, observation, document analysis, and audio records (17h40m) of the interactions of professionals with service users in several interactional frames (socio-therapeutic sessions, home visits, visit supervision) and with other colleagues (internal and external meetings, phone calls, informal exchanges). We also had access to the record files of the families. These documental and written materials and the audio record of the sequential activities of each social worker with a given family case, allowed us to study the trajectories of child maltreatment and to systematise the types of work done with the families. The audio material allowed us to micro-analyse what was being done by and in the interaction. We did conversation analysis to capture the micro management of interaction and to study how daily decisions are interactionally constructed. The zoom-in and zoom-out movement of the analysis allowed us to understand from both points of view (investigation and professional practice) how micro-interaction is constructed and construct organizational configurations. We organized a workshop *Communication with families and teams: what helps, what makes it harder?*, and invited social workers of other CAFAP. This was an important moment of co-analysis, knowledge co-construction, and validation of the investigative process and findings. For this, we used the CARM methodology (Conversation Analysis Role play methodology) developed by Elisabeth Stokoe. Participants considered that this methodology was an appropriate method of professional co-vision. The main aspects of their evaluation were: a safe place for analysis and reflexivity, professional development, individual, team, and organizational practices change, and a space for research and action proposals.

Keywords

practice research, methodology, social work, knowledge construction, micro ethnography

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What do Experiences of Children and Families Say to Specialists in the Situations of Child Removal from Families?

Lijana Gvaldaite

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The intervention of removing a child from the family is one of the most complex and most delicate ones carried out only in extreme cases requiring special attention and professionalism on behalf of specialists. The child protection workers have difficulties to act in these situations, they often find themselves in many dilemmas and even dangerous situations at times. Decisions made by child protection workers are legally and morally entrusted to meet children's best interests. However, the analysis of literature and the research data reveals that it is not always clear what is best for a child in a particular situation. This presentation will focus on the interviews conducted with both the families from whom children had been removed and the children taken away from families – the material used is part of an extensive research project "Workplace Quality of Child Protection Specialists" executed in Lithuania by team of researchers of Vilnius University. Ten (10) interviews were performed with young people who have lived the experience of being removed from families in the childhood and 20 interviews with families from whom the children were taken away, using the methodology of semi-structured interviews and content analysis.

The interviews with the parents revealed the complex situation of the parents' own families: childhood bullying, parental neglect, lack of care, suicidal considerations, problematic behaviour in childhood, etc. In most cases, they identify removing of children as a wrong and unexpected decision, although they blame themselves for the removal. As for the consequences in further life, the informants stated that after the removal, their psychosocial problems deepened, the relationship with their children weakened, and the parents experienced the rejection of relatives and social stigmatization.

The children interviewed often defined the removal as the darkest event of their lives. They also have leitmotifs of misunderstanding, surprise, ignorance and confusion, experienced stress, with strong impact on their further development and socialization. The trauma and feelings of frustration experienced during the removal were particularly pronounced by informants whose parents were unable to take them back after the removal, so the children were raised in institutions or by foster families.

In conclusion, the interviews or other information from literature testify that the removal puts its marks on lives, demonstrates the need and the request for understanding, empathy, careful and clear communication both to minors and their families, and finally respect towards them, which derives from the recognition of being a human being and having the same dignity. It can be stated that emotionally strong experiences of both children and families are important for specialists to know in order to react appropriately. The crucial element is competent communication of specialists that is not only verbal, but also encompasses proper attitudes towards children, paying attention to children's habits and the losses they suffer, so that they avoid traumatic implications.

Keywords

Child Removal, Children and Families, Child Protection Specialists, Traumatic Experience, Empathy, Competent Communication

How children's navigation on digital platforms challenges child welfare assessments

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

When a child is placed in public care, digital platforms create an arena for both the child and parents to stay up-to-date on each other's lives while living apart. Contact through digital platforms can, however, be unpredictable for some children, resulting in unintended adverse consequences and thereby undermining the stability of the placement. In this context, it is not uncommon for children and parents to have contact through social media or other digital platforms, also known as 'virtual visitation'. The aim of this study was to explore how children's navigation on digital platforms challenges child welfare work after a care order is issued. The primary question to be answered was to what extent children's navigation on digital platforms is (or should be) an element of the professional assessment when justifying the extent of contact regulation.

Methods

Data was collected through an online questionnaire addressed to child welfare workers in Norway from February to May 2020. All counties in Norway are represented among the respondents and 235 respondents stated that "working with children who are under public care was a part of their daily work. Questionnaires that were less than 95 percent completed (N=39) were excluded from further analysis. A total of 196 completed questionnaires were included for further analysis. The online questionnaire consists of 14 items grouped into three domains: (1) The child welfare workers' personal experience and knowledge of the use of digital media as communication platforms, (2) digital media as a working tool when communicating with children in public care, and (3) assessment of the child's access to digital media when regulating physical contact between a child and his or her parents. Inspired by Bratberg (2017), both descriptive data and text data from open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis.

Findings (in summary form)

Using content analysis, we identified three main themes on how child welfare workers relate to children's navigation on digital platforms when determining and justifying the necessity of contact regulation after a care order is issued:

The findings indicate a very limited consideration of both the child's access to digital media and their navigation on social media when assessing regulation of contact rights.

Conclusion

The findings from this study highlight the need for a new understanding of the possible connection between virtual and physical visitations after a care order is issued. Protecting children involves professionals understanding and

assessing new communication and socialization patterns where children participate. It is not merely a question of learning how to use digital platforms, it is also a question of professional development, and new ways of working with children in public care, when meetings between people increasingly take place digitally.

Keywords

out-of-home placement, professional assessment, Digital platforms, Contact rights, Child welfare

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Quantitative content analysis of independent child welfare expert reports: the development of a coding scheme.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: The lives of children and families that have contact with child welfare services are highly complex and independent experts can be engaged to assist with assessment and care planning. In Norway approximately 700 independent experts assessments are completed annually. Research shows that the conclusions of independent expert assessments are afforded significant weight in child welfare decision making (Augusti, Bernt et al. 2017). Thus, children's development and the protection of their rights, are dependent on high quality expert assessment. However, concerns have been raised about the quality and consistency of expert assessment work (Læret, 2017). In 2010, a National Commission of Child Welfare Experts (Commission) was established to quality assure all expert reports used in child welfare decision making. The Commission sits on an archive of over 8000 expert reports completed since this time.

There is a paucity of quantitative research concerning child welfare expert assessment. Little is known about the children that become subject to expert assessment and the way experts complete their assessments.

With access to the Commission archive the aim of the project is to generate knowledge to address this gap. Specific research questions are: What characterizes child welfare expert reports and the children they consider? Particularly: demography of involved children and families, background for concerns, thematic foci of assessments, theoretical perspectives represented, assessment methods applied, participation of children, and recommendations made. Of specific interest is whether child welfare expert assessment approaches and recommendations have altered over time, particularly in regard to their attention to issues of culture.

Method: The study has developed a coding scheme to enable quantitative content analysis of 300 expert reports from the period 2010-2022. The scheme registers biographic information about the children and families subject to expert assessment, methods of assessment employed, foci of assessment and recommendations and conclusions made and includes 125 variables. The quantitative data generated permits for statistical analysis to respond to the research questions.

Presentation: The presentation will focus on methodological development, with a clear description of process in which the coding scheme was developed, reliability testing, and how the coding process was completed, and fidelity ensured throughout. The study is innovative, and of particular interest for those involved in content analysis of expert reports and child journals, and quantitative research in social work more generally.

References:

Augusti, E. M., Bernt, C., & Melinder, A. (2017). Kvalitetssikring av sakkyndighetsarbeid—en gjennomgang av vurderingsprosesser i Barnesakkyndig kommisjon, fylkesnemnder og domstoler. Tidsskrift for familierett, arverett og barnevernrettslige spørsmål, 15(4), 265-289.

Læret, O. K. (2017). Sakkyndige som «demokratiets sorte hull»? En vignettstudie av sakkyndige psykologers vurderinger av barnevernssaker, University of Bergen.

Keywords

child protection, safeguarding children, assessment, quantitative research, research methods

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Social work in Poland in the face of the problem of refugees from Ukraine.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The presentation aims to present selected results of empirical research. The research concerned the involvement of social workers employed in local social welfare institutions in Poland in supporting refugees from Ukraine who came to Poland after the outbreak of the war in February 2022. Since the beginning of the war conflict, no other country has accepted such a large number of refugees as Poland. This situation affects the functioning of the entire public sector, including social work. In this presentation, I based on the perspective of perceiving a social worker as a profession called "disaster responders", whose task is to provide help to people experiencing catastrophic events, including war experiences.

The conducted research was aimed at answering many research questions, but during the presentation, I will analyze the following problems:

How do social workers assess the commune's preparation in assisting refugees (infrastructure, availability of services, availability of staff, availability of housing)?

What are activities for refugees carried out by social workers?

Do social workers feel prepared to provide social work for foreigners?

What barriers were identified in the provision of support?

The conducted statistical analysis allowed us to answer whether the above issues differ, considering the size of the represented institution, length of service, position held, and the size of the city where the duties were performed. The survey was carried out from July 6 to July 20, 2022, among employees working in social welfare centers in six voivodeships where the most significant number of refugees from Ukraine was registered for protection. The total sample size was 402 social workers from local social welfare institutions.

Chi-squared test (with Yates' correction for 2x2 tables) was used to compare qualitative variables among groups. In case of low values in contingency tables, Fisher's exact test was used instead. Mann-Whitney test was used to compare quantitative variables between two groups, while Kruskal-Wallis test (followed by Dunn post-hoc test) was used for more than two groups

Specific results are: social workers were satisfied with the help provided in their municipalities for refugees. Community assistance and grassroots initiatives for refugees were rated the highest, and the support from translators the lowest. Work in local social welfare institutions for refugees in Ukraine mostly involved social counseling as well as material and financial assistance. Integration and social activation services were provided much less frequently. Implications for practice include intensifying cooperation with volunteers and non-governmental organizations ready to engage in helping refugees in organizing their free time; development of cultural competencies, including language competencies, enabling social work with refugees. The main implication for further research: development of qualitative research describing experiences in working with refugees with different needs and ages.

Keywords

refugees from Ukraine , local social welfare institutions , social activation services, social work with refugees, quantitative research

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The strength of self/mutual-help networks: A study about Local Clubs of Alcoholics in Treatment (CATs) during the pandemic emergency in a Region of Italy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Self/mutual help groups were initially developed as an alternative to formal services, particularly in the USA. In Europe, Borkman et al. (2020) found an interrelation between the self/mutual help groups' diffusion of and formal

welfare systems, despite a range of differences between the various countries. In Italy, self/mutual help groups generally have a collaborative relationship with the public welfare.

This contribution aims to outline the potential - still largely unexpressed - of this collaboration, starting from the experience of the Territorial Alcoholic Clubs (CAT) of a north-eastern Italian region during the 2020 lockdown.

During the March-April 2020 lockdown, the local Public Alcohol Addiction Service and the CATs' Association promoted a listening and monitoring action targeted at families and single users who were in contact with the Services or who participated in a CAT. The groups' facilitators and the public services' social workers contacted the families and the single users by phone for brief conversations on how things were going, to find any urgent needs and offering emotional support where appropriate. During this conversation, the people were also asked how they perceived their conditions compared to those they experienced before the lockdown.

At this time, I was involved as a researcher, and a supplementary survey was organised to make the data already collected usable for research purposes.

Aims and method

The sample's composition made it possible to compare the perception of CATs participants with that of those who did not attend them despite severe frailty. The differences between the two groups were explored regarding (a) perceptions of their own problems' evolution; and (b) perceptions of families' climate and confidence in the future. The survey involved 659 families, whit 1,357 people. The questionnaires were administered by phone to a member of each family. In addition, between June and October 2020, a short phone interview with the facilitators of 85 CATs was administered to have a view about their actions with the groups during the spring 2020 lockdown.

Findings

In the lockdown distancing, one might have thought that groups were an out-of-play resource. The results indicate that this was not the case and suggest the opportunity to invest in the development of mutual networks. CATs seemed to show a protective effect for closer relationships, and families reported a lower impact of the lockdown on addiction problems. Thanks to the synergy between social workers and the CATs' network, it was possible to ensure monitoring and support for hundreds of people with addiction problems. These results have interesting implications for social work, health care, and social care policies.

Keywords

Self-help/mutual-aid groups, Italian Local Clubs of Alcoholics in Treatment, Addiction, Covid-19, Social and Health Services

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The co-dissemination relationship in participatory research with refugees: Shifting roles and power relations

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Proposal type

Abstract

Participatory research is increasingly used in social work to engage with participants as partners in generating knowledge and promoting social justice. Existing literature tends to focus on participation in study design and implementation while overlooking the dissemination phase. This presentation seeks to fill this gap by defining and discussing public and media co-dissemination (PMC) – entailing researchers and participants' joint dissemination of a research's findings via public events, demonstrations, social media and press interviews.

The presentation utilizes a case study of co-dissemination conducted with refugees. In 2018, the Israeli government initiated a forcible deportation plan to deport refugees living in the country to Rwanda. At the same time, we published research that explored the ramifications of this policy on the lives of Eritrean refugees who 'voluntarily' departed Israel to Rwanda. The published report revealed that the promises for protection in Rwanda made by the Israeli government went unfulfilled. Instead, the departees embarked on life-threatening journeys across the Sahara and the Mediterranean, eventually gaining protection in Europe. The co-dissemination of the research's findings served as a base for an unprecedented national and international civil society campaign, eventually leading to the cancellation of the forced deportation.

Placing PMC within the literature on participatory action research in social work, we discuss different aspects of power relations in the co-dissemination relationship. In our model, some elements were more collaborative and enabled the blurring of pre-existing hierarchies between researchers and participants. For example, researchers and participants shared the role of being interviewed by the press, putting both actors 'out of their comfort zone'. Other aspects were still primarily navigated by researchers: we had primary contact with the media and other stakeholders and the central role in deciding when and where to share the findings.

We conclude by offering to view politically engaged PMC as a potentially transformative phase that can challenge inherent researcher-participant hierarchical relationships, promote social work values such as social action and justice, and influence exclusionary policies. We offer further recommendations for participation in social work research with marginalized communities.

Keywords

research dissemination, refugees, participation, methodology, social work research

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Service user's involvement in Social work education in Belgium, France, Italy, and Sweden: the SWEET project

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

The SWEET project 'Social Work Education Experts by Experience Toolkit' aims at promoting the involvement of service users in Social work education. The project, financed by the French Erasmus+ Agency, involved 4 European countries: Belgium (Artevelde University of Applied Sciences), France (OCELLIA), Italy (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan), and Sweden (Jönköping University).

In these countries, Social work education is specific, although it is being harmonized as part of the Bologna process, and about the education of future social workers, they are facing common challenges, particularly those related to service users' participation in the curriculum.

The four partners found in this project the opportunity to strengthen their models and experiences of service users' involvement and to contribute to the diffusion at the European level, developing and sharing conceptual and practice tools. The project, developed in the framework of an inclusive education model aimed to value Experiential knowledge, took place over three years (2020 and 2023) realizing different actions: an overview of pedagogical actions about service users' involvement in each involved institution; 3 training sessions involving service users, social workers and lecturers; 3 students mobilities in which they experimented service users' projects in other countries; the development of an online toolbox that can inspire and support lecturers in realizing service users' participation.

These actions have been realized through a co-creation process involving lecturers, service users, experts by experience, and undergraduate social work students from each country. Several steps of this project have been accompanied by research actions.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Mapping of experiences on services users' participation in social work education programs (Veerle Baert)

In this presentation, we present experiences from each partner institution.

Ocellia (France) has been developing several actions involving service user's participation experimenting with a training module on the topic of the population living in precarious conditions and the links between precarious living conditions and not having access to rights, in partnership with a Collective called "SOIF de connaissances".

At Jönköping University (JU) service users' perspective is mainly included in the program through lectures and course literature. Service users are also included in some courses where they as individuals or as representants for a service user organization share their experiences with students.

This project is complementary to 2 projects led by Artevelde University of Applied Sciences: first of all, the Model of Professional Identity used in a social work bachelor program. This model encourages students' critical reflection on their professional identity and its impact on their relationship with service users. Secondly, field explorations, led at local (1st year of study in social work) and international (2nd year of study) scale.

At the Università Cattolica, the involvement of experts by experience in social work education programs occurs through several activities: Full Day meetings for first-year undergraduate students; Unconventional Practice Placements; Workshops led or shared with service users and carers.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Results from transnational exchanges on pedagogical experiments with service users: students and lecturers' point of view (Chiara Panciroli and Elena Cabiati)

This Erasmus+ project allowed social work students to experience different learning activities including service users. In the framework of Student mobilities, groups of students from one of the involved countries were hosted by another Institution from a partner country.

During these transnational mobilities, students and lecturers were able to share knowledge and participate in different teaching experiences with the involvement of service users. These experiences were documented and studied to contribute to the project's final toolkit but were also an opportunity to explore the strengths and obstacles of the proposed activities as experienced both by students and lecturers.

This oral presentation will describe the outcomes of a research study that took place during the 3 student mobilities. By filling in online questionnaires, students and lecturers from the participating institutions involved in the exchange program were asked to answer some questions concerning difficulties, feelings and emotions, resources, learning, and new awareness experienced during the training sessions. Participants were also asked to bring any suggestions for this kind of activity as well as to share the added value that this teaching approach can provide for professional future social workers.

The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively and the results will be presented and discussed during the symposium presentation. The research enabled an overview of the advantages and barriers for all actors involved in participative social work education experiences.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

The involvement of service users from the lecturers' perspective (Aimée Ekman)

The aim of this presentation is to give an outline of advantages, barriers and challenges of involving service users in social work higher education from the lecturers' point of view.

At the start of the SWEET project, data were collected by an online survey (N=83) and online focus groups (8 focus groups with 4-5 persons in each) with lecturers at three European social work higher education institutions (Sweden, Belgium, France). The collected data provides information regarding the lecturer's perspectives on the involvement of service users (SU) in social work education. A thematic approach was used to identify common patterns in the focus groups and the open questions posed in the survey. The results consist of three themes: advantages, barriers, and challenges.

The highlighted advantages refer to the fact that inputs from SU allow students to relate theory to experience and reduce the gap between SU and future social workers, improving the quality of social work education. The participants did also mention that the involvement of SU gives lecturers new insights and access to new sources of knowledge. The main barriers that were identified for involving SU in social work education were: lack of institutional support, lack of time, and lack of resources. Among perceived challenges, ethical issues and the triangular relationship between lecturers, students, and SU were mentioned.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

The SWEET toolkit: how to involve service users in social work education (Lien Agache and Julie Moutard)

This presentation aims to describe a new toolkit intended to support social work lecturers when involving service users (SU) in social work education. Based on the results of the research conducted during the project, the toolkit was created by social work education lecturers, SU, social workers, and students, from 4 participating countries. The online toolbox provides a step-by-step guide for involving SU in social work education along the following steps :

1. Starting points: Matters to consider before getting started, including a document on what is participation, its benefits and barriers, ethical issues, and some examples of SU involvement in educational modules.
2. Prepare and Plan: tools for planning SU involvement in the educational program.
3. Implement a list of things to consider when involving SU in education.
4. Reflect and Share: resources on how to promote a reflexive process and communicate on what has been achieved.

Keywords

Service user , Social work education, Co-creation, Participation, User involvement

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The "community advocates" to promote young people's participation in community work projects

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Community work is the action of practitioners who relate to and help people sharing common interests and concerns to meet and jointly implement initiatives that improve the living conditions in their community (Twelvetrees 2006). In community social works, a crucial element is recognising community stakeholders' experiential knowledge (Borkman, 1976) and right to be involved in defining and planning interventions together with social workers in the belief that well-being can be generated relationally (Donati, 2017; Folgheraiter & Raineri, 2017).

In Italy, there is no specific legislation on youth policies. Each administrative area autonomously defines welfare interventions in favour of young people. However, it should be stressed that community social work conducted in favour of youths will be more effective if the latter are allowed to participate in their planning. Such an approach involves considering young people as being able to make decisions concerning their lives and influence local authorities' choices, thus, generating subsidiarity and social capital.

Yet, several studies (Barnes, 2011; Diaz, 2020; Gallagher et al., 2012; Vis & Thomas, 2009; Winter, 2010) show how challenging is for young people to interact with local authorities and participate in decision making process.

In an area of northern Italy, a project was carried out with the aim of defining community work interventions with young people's participation supported by "community advocates". Three community advocates and three

community social workers worked with young people to listen to their proposals and help them present their ideas to the local authorities.

Methods:

A qualitative research was conducted to understand in which areas and to what extent young people were able to participate in defining community interventions; what were the outcomes of their participation and what role the community advocates play. Five in-person focus groups with young people and six semi-structured interviews with community advocates and community social workers were conducted. The total number of young people participating in the focus groups was 29 (20 males, 9 females). The youngest participant was 6 years old, the oldest was 17 (average age 11.5 years). Each focus group was conducted by two researchers, one with the function of facilitating the group discussion and the other with the role of observing and recording the meeting. A thematic analysis of transcripts was carried out.

Findings:

Results show that youth participation in the definition of social interventions within local communities is helpful on two levels: it allows to identify concrete initiatives of genuine interest to young people living in those areas, and it is an opportunity to experience a process of empowerment generating further interest in participating. However, it is also confirmed that youth participation is not easy. The research confirms the importance of offering young people specific support to encourage their participation.

Conclusion:

Young people want to participate; community advocates can play a crucial role in preparing youths to participate, deciding what to ask adults, and understanding how to engage with local authorities. Local authorities should engage advocates to support youth participation in policy making.

Keywords

participation, young people, advocacy, community work, communities

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Your Journey- an art based methodological development of ‘feeling at home’

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Author of Symposium Oral Presentation n.

Author of Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

At least 89 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes, they had to go on a journey and created, each of them an unique story. Among them are nearly 27.1 million refugees, around half of whom are under the age of 18. Youngsters arriving in new countries need to start a new life in a new country. They need to create a new home for themselves, but what is feeling at home to them?

The only similarity between each journey is that the main character went through a variety of experiences and has gained wisdom and insight at the end of it. This is the starting point of our project in which we are developing a methodology to connect young refugees and other young people and let them share stories, using both photography and storytelling.

The concept of home is becoming increasingly important when talking about theory and implementing solutions as the global humanitarian crisis is still increasing. Research has shown that it is difficult for young refugees to really find their place in society. Therefore, in addition, we will make different stories visible (through presentation of images) in order to show that in an inclusive society, it is important that different stories can coexist on an equal base. In addition, the collected stories will serve as a foundation for further research into the 'feeling of home' among newcomers.

In this European project the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Greece are part of the team. The aim of this project is twofold. First, we will explore different perspectives on what is needed to 'feel at home' through creativity, especially photography and storytelling. It is interesting to put different perspectives side by side; is the 'what is needed to 'feel at home' different when you have come from far away and fled a situation that was threatening than when you left the parental nest and are shaping a new life within the same country/city? There will be differences, but most likely there will be many similarities as well.

And second, we are developing new methods and tools that can be used by professionals to enable youth refugees to find a place in society faster and better.

We deliberately chose to work with a combination of photography and storytelling: it enables people to express their experiences beyond the use of linear rationality of language. Ideas, experiences and feelings can be expressed in multiple ways with space for contradictions and ambivalences. Both storytelling and photography provide for a transitional space where people can exchange feelings and thoughts.

The output of this project will be a methodology and tools, existing of photography and storytelling techniques, that can be implemented by youth/community/social workers, educators and creative workers all over Europe in setting up programs connecting youth refugees and 'local' youth, in order to contribute to a better integration of refugees in the European society.

Keywords

young adults, refugees , arts , homelessness, empowerment

530

The effectiveness of interventions to prevent child maltreatment: An umbrella review

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Child maltreatment impairs the child's integrity and is associated with physical, psychological, and social harm that may last into adulthood. Preventing the occurrence and chronicity of child maltreatment requires not only accurate assessments by social workers and other professionals at early stages, but also effective interventions. In response to this, interventions have been developed in recent decades and a substantial number of studies have examined their effects. The results of these studies have been synthesized in systematic reviews and meta-analyses for different types of interventions. What is lacking is a systematic and up-to-date overview and comparison of these reviews' findings. The aim of this paper is to fill this gap and answer the following three questions:

- How effective are interventions in preventing the occurrence and chronicity of child maltreatment?
- For which groups of people and in which contexts have interventions been shown to be effective?
- How robust is the empirical basis of these findings?

Methods: A systematic review of systematic reviews, called umbrella review, was conducted. Ten databases on OvidSP and Web of Science were searched up to January 2022. Search terms were predefined along the search criteria for the following dimensions (criteria): Review type (systematic reviews, meta-analysis), population (children, various terms from newborn to adolescents), intervention (various terms for types of interventions), outcomes (child maltreatment, abuse and neglect, including exposure to intimate partner violence). Publications were selected based on predefined inclusion/exclusion criteria applied to titles/abstracts in a first step and to the full texts in a second step. Narrative synthesis was used to document the reviews' findings. If several reviews were available for an intervention type, reviews were excluded according to the criteria of actuality, quality, and scope.

Findings: n = 39 publications documenting systematic reviews or meta-analyses were included out of 1,850 unduplicated citations. Reported effects for these intervention types and context were often accompanied with high uncertainty. Where effects were found, they were mostly small and rarely moderate. The presentation will provide an overview of specific findings for the following intervention types: socioeconomic interventions, media campaigns, community-based interventions, primary care interventions, parent training and family therapy, home visiting, family group conferences, and interventions for specific problems. An overview of the quality of systematic reviews and meta-analyses is provided.

Conclusions and implications: Limitations of the current state of research in relation to the review's questions are discussed (e.g., the problem of aggregating results from studies on different interventions, the problem of too few replications in different contexts, limitations in research designs, reasons why effects might be over- or underestimated). An outline is given of how these limitations could be partially overcome. Finally, implications of the current state of these outcome studies for practice are drawn.

Keywords

Prevention, Child Maltreatment, Interventions, Outcomes, Umbrella Review

Familism and mental health. A study in Chilean university students during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Recently, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has deepened mental health problems in the population. Recent research in university students has shown a greater presence of negative symptomatology, and less attention has been paid to identify protective factors to reduce it, such as familism. This construct has been defined as the cultural propensity of a society to place the family at the center of its value system, putting the interests of the family group before personal interests, autonomy and individualism (Reyes, 2016). According to Lay et al. (1998) cultures can vary in their degrees of individualism and collectivism. Triandis (1995) to distinguish between culture and individual called individualism at the personal level as idiocentrism and refers to collectivism at the personal level as allocentrism. Studies in this area have found that people adhere to familism values report fewer depressive symptoms (Stein et al., 2015). However, other research has found that the influence of familism on depressive symptoms is more indirect than direct (Campos et al., 2014). In this study we sought to explore direct relationships between allocentrism and idiocentrism with depression, anxiety and stress, in a non-probabilistic sample, composed of 451 in Chilean university students. Structural Equations (SEM) were used to test the hypotheses. The parameters of the structural model were estimated using weighted least squares robust (WLSMV). The model fit was evaluated considering the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the comparative fit index (CFI). The results showed that family allocentrism would be positively and significantly associated with depression, anxiety and stress. For its part, idiocentrism would be negatively and significantly linked to depression, anxiety and stress in university students during the health emergency in Chile. These findings provide empirical and theoretical support for the formulation of social policies such as the implementation of favorable conditions to reduce negative symptomatology and achieve greater well-being in university students.

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Keywords

533

Relational social work – accessibility and preferences in the use of relational support services in Poland and Norway

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The concept of relational social work concerns two main areas: the building of a professional relationship between the client and social worker (Folgheraiter, 2004; Ruch et al., 2010) and the support of the relationship between clients, especially spouses/partners. The second area seems to be less covered in social work research, education, and literature. Generally, this dimension of support for couples' relationships is placed within family social work (cf. Collins et al., 2013). Research clearly shows that the quality of interpersonal relationships influences the quality of life and also constitutes one of the stronger protective factors against the occurrence of dysfunction.

Considering that an increasing number of people are experiencing relationship problems leading to divorce and family breakdowns, relational support fits into the model of social work that undertakes both prevention and intervention of these issues. Poor relationship quality without support can have serious consequences including the worsening of the phenomenon of IPV (Feldman & Ridley, 2000; Jewkes et al., 2001; Vagi et al., 2013).

The aim of our study was to determine where people with relational problems seek help and the existing barriers to accessing those resources. We also aimed to identify how social work institutions are positioned in this system. The survey was conducted in 2021 in both Poland and Norway which allowed us to highlight the differences that arise from the characteristics of each country. It covered a representative group of 3000 respondents in each country aged 18 – 64 years old who had experienced an intimate/marital relationship for at least one year. Vignette technique was used in this study since it is a proven method for conducting comparative research, particularly internationally. Respondents were presented with a scenario where a married couple with two children, having relationship problems begins to quarrel. Respondents answered a questionnaire on their perceptions of the availability of support in this area. They determined to what extent individual resources such as NGOs, paid commercial services, church, family members, friends, social welfare centres, and the police were available (psychological, geographical, and financial availability), and to what extent they felt these institutions could help with the given problem and how effective they would be if the couple took advantage of the help.

The survey showed a big difference between the Polish and Norwegian contexts. In Poland, respondents in the case of relational problems asked for informal support and rated family and friends as effective, while in Norway, most preferred professional helping institutions. The greatest hindrances to accessing relational support services within the social work system in Poland were considered to be psychological barriers (38% of respondents) and physical accessibility barriers (37% of respondents).

The survey showed that a two-pronged approach is necessary. On one hand, it is important to prepare and implement programmes to support couples and families. However, it is also essential to introduce solutions that reduce mainly the level of psychological barriers to accessing relational support services.

Keywords

relational support, family social work, accessibility, public policy, welfare system

534

It comes with the job! Supporting sexual development as part of social work practices

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Supporting young people (ages 12-24) in their sexual development in a positive and culturally sensitive way, that matches their (online) lifeworld is part of the job for Dutch (outreaching) youth workers. Accessible help, focused on a positive self image, relationships and experiences, can contribute to the prevention of problems in sexual development and has a positive effect on resilience. However, it is not obvious that all youth professionals are well-equipped to address sexuality, intimacy and relationships. Professionals might experience feelings of shame, supporting sexual development can contradict personal beliefs, or available interventions do not fit the needs of the target groups they support. Last but not least, most existing methods focus on the risks of sexual activity instead of nurturing a positive approach to sexual and relational development that contributes to wellbeing and health (Dodd & Tolman, 2017; Romeo & Kelley, 2009).

The main question of our research project is “How can (outreaching) youth workers structurally support young people’s (ages 12-24) sexual development in an inclusive way, that matches with their (online) lifeworld?” It comes with the job! is a two-year research project that is conducted with eight youth and outreaching youth practices in three cities, the municipality of Amsterdam and national institutions specialized in sex education. In this mixed methods design based research project we map how youth workers currently support young people (ages 12 -24) in their sexual development, the difficulties they experience in doing so and their wishes regarding professional development in this field of expertise. Aim of the project is to better equip (outreaching) youth work practices to support the sexual development of youngsters, by sharing good practices, developing tools and formulating recommendations for structural implementation in the organizations. To make sure that the needs of youth are met, we include the perspectives of young people supported by the eight youth work organizations. In addition, we investigate the perspectives of social work students - the professionals of the future – and formulate recommendations for the improvement of teaching sexuality in social work education.

In this presentation we present the preliminary findings of the first phase of the research project. Also, we highlight the strong methodological focus on the connection between social work research and practice and the co-creation of knowledge. In line with the main theme of the conference, the focus on human relationships, our research indicates that the connection between youth workers and youngsters can be fragile. Youth workers are constantly asked to maneuver between pedagogical core values, the perspective and lifeworld of youngsters and their personal and communal belief systems and values. This makes supporting the sexual development of youngsters a challenging task for (outreaching) youth workers.

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Keywords

sexuality, youth work, professional role, prevention, wellbeing

535

From helpers to vulnerable people: consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic for self-sufficient older people in an Italian study

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has afflicted people of all ages. However, the consequences for older people have been particularly substantial, and almost all nations have issued indications and recommendations aimed specifically at protecting this category of people. According to several authors, the consequences of the pandemic, combined with the social distancing measures implemented, have amplified the effects of ageism, with consequences in different areas (Ayalon et al., 2021).

This work originates from a study aimed to identify the needs of both older people and their caregivers, and to understand how these have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the research results brought the theme of ageism to the researchers' attention; thus, the presentation attempts to understand the consequences that the pandemic and the lockdown have produced for the residents of the investigated area, if and how these events have increased the ageism, and the implications for social work practice.

Methods

The research was conducted between October 2020 and April 2021 in a municipality near Milan, in collaboration with the municipal administration. The municipality has a population of almost 35,000 inhabitants, residents over 65 years old represent 22.6% of the total (in the EU-27 the percentage is 19.2%).

The research used a qualitative methodology. In the first phase of the research, 16 interviews were conducted with volunteers and social workers, active in supporting older people. In the second phase of the research, 18 caregivers of disabled older people were interviewed.

The first interviewees were chosen based on agreement with the representatives of the local authority, snowball sampling was then conducted.

The interviews were open and semi-structured, actively involving the participants in the narration of the various topics. The interviews were transcribed in full and subjected to thematic content analysis.

Findings

The results of the study showed numerous consequences for self-sufficient people over the age of 65, including:

- they had to “stay at home” and this indication has operated a profound change in their daily life.
- Most of them were volunteers in associations of the community. The main consequence has been a transformation of their identity: from helpers to fragile people.
- As other people took care of their needs, they felt uncomfortable, and this decreased their self-esteem.
- The community has lost the contribution of numerous associations managed mainly by older people.

Conclusions and implications

The study highlights how, during the pandemic period, in the area where the research was conducted, the mechanism of categorization and labelling of older people has reinforced. The dynamics of ageism are present at different levels (institutional, interpersonal, internalized) and mainly affect self-sufficient older people.

Social work plays a fundamental role in addressing these issues, primarily by supporting the recognition of the dynamics of ageism and addressing its consequences. In the presentation this role will be discussed.

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Keywords

Ageism, Covid-19 pandemic, Older people, Gerontological Social Work, Human rights

537

Developing an adult safeguarding assessment framework: Opportunities and challenges

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

European countries are at various stages of developing legal and policy responses to adults who may require help to keep themselves safe from potential harm or abuse. Adult safeguarding assessment frameworks are at an early stage of development compared to child protection and to violence and against woman and girls (VAWG) practice sectors. Two of the resultant challenges are that there is very limited empirical evidence of what works well; and burdensome procedural policies fill the gap (McLaughlin et al. 2018). Conversely this presents opportunities for innovative co-production projects between researchers and practitioners to develop a practice model that can be tested. It also presents opportunities to transfer learning from these established sectors into adult safeguarding.

This paper presents findings from a comparative qualitative research project, involving researchers and social workers from N. Ireland, Scotland, England and the Republic of Ireland (ROI), conducted in 2022. It explored the possibility of adapting Building Better Futures (BBF), an assessment framework developed in family and childcare social work in N. Ireland, for use with disabled adults and their family carers in adult safeguarding situations. It considered how such a model might support practice in any country, regardless of the legal and policy context (Donnelly and O'Brien, 2022). It began with a thematic literature review of assessment in adult safeguarding. Telephone interviews were then conducted with 11 social work practitioners or managers across the UK and ROI to gain an understanding of current assessment practices in adult safeguarding. The final step was a focus group with 13 participants to share the BBF framework and to gain feedback about whether and how it might be adapted. Ethical approval was gained from the lead University and purposive sampling was used to invite social workers with relevant experience.

The findings, whilst not generalisable, highlighted commonalities across the four countries involved, and will be presented under four themes. 1) Motivation of social workers to develop own tools, or adapt tools from elsewhere, particularly around initial screening of referrals and risk assessment. 2) The positives and negatives of using tools. On the one hand they support professional judgement and increase practitioner confidence. On the other hand, they create a tick box mentality. 3) Importance of relationship-based practice, human rights-based approaches and supported decision-making in adult safeguarding. 4) Key points to consider in adapting the BBF approach included recognition of the different relational dynamics between disabled adults and carers. The presentation will end with an update on the plans for a larger co-production project to develop and test an adult safeguarding assessment practice model.

Donnelly, S and O'Brien, M (2022). Adult Safeguarding Legislation—The Key to Addressing Dualism of Agency and Structure? An Exploration of how Irish Social Workers Protect Adults at Risk in the Absence of Adult Safeguarding Legislation, *British Journal of Social Work*

McLaughlin, H., Robbins, R., Bellamy, C., Banks, C. and Thackray, D. (2018) Adult social work and high-risk domestic violence cases, *Journal of Social Work*, 18(3), pp. 288-306.

Keywords

safeguarding adults, assessment, qualitative research, carers, social worker-service user relationships

Substance use disorder: a model of atmosphere within families living with SUD

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Symposium Convenor

no

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Abstract

The overall aim of the research is to explore how family members of individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) experience its effect on the mental health and psychosocial state of other family members and the family system. The research questions were: How do the family members of individuals with substance use disorder experience the effects of the substance abuse on their mental health regarding depression, anxiety, and stress? And, how do they express the effect on their family atmosphere especially in relation to intra-family communication and cohesion?

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, and the participants were selected with a purposive approach. Three scales were used in the quantitative part of the study; the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) (n=143), the Family Communication Scale (FCS) (n=115) and the Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS) (n=115). The participants were family members of individuals affected by SUD attending a four-week family group therapy session at the Icelandic National Centre for Addiction Treatment (SÁÁ).

In the qualitative part of the study, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted—one with each of the 16 participants. The participants fit into groups based on the four primary roles within the typical immediate family: four spouses/partners, four parents, four siblings, and four (adult) children. Each group was evenly divided in terms of gender: two males and two females.

The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews indicated that family members with individuals with SUD experienced negative effects on the family system, including reduced family cohesion, fragmented intra-family communication, and degraded adaptability to changing conditions. The results showed that family members living with an individual affected by SUD can experience increased depression, anxiety, and stress compared to members of families that do not include a member affected by SUD. Significant differences were noted in how family members expressed feelings about family experiences, based on role relationships among spouses, parents, (adult) children, and siblings.

Based on the accumulated research, a new model of family dynamics and their response to the strain of SUD is presented, based on the family roles and emotional states of the participants, and is applied to real-world examples. This model includes an emotional range from devotion to hostility in terms of how people feel toward their close relative living with SUD and is a tool for Social Workers working with families in that position. The research reported here suggests that treating both the affected family member and the family as a whole can serve as a preventive measure for the family members of the next generation.

Keywords: Social Work, substance use disorder, family members, family systems, communication and cohesion, depression, anxiety and stress, atmosphere within families with SUD

Keywords

Social Work, Substance use disorder, Family members, Family systems, Model, atmosphere within families with SUD

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The emergence of discretionary space in social work practice - Reconstructing interactive dimensions of professional judgment in case conferences

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Research on decision-making in social work has produced a solid body of knowledge regarding implications of clinical and statistical judgments. It has been shown that fast and frugal decisions are prone to bias, rules and regulations are subjected to interpretation of individuals and groups. To understand social aspects of decision-making it is necessary to consider unintended consequences of social actions and to acknowledge that actors know more than they are aware of (Giddens 1983, S. 30–31). Discretion has been described as an inevitable element of professional decision-making. This process is expected to be guided not only by formal regulation but also of experience and negotiation. Case conferences are a typical setting in social work. Interactive processes of sense-making become visible as relevant factors to understand the emergence of discretionary space in performing work. The reconstruction and analysis of such social practices in case conferences are part of a PhD project.

Methods:

Natural data was collected in real case conferences in teams working with disadvantaged youth and analysed by a qualitative approach. The documentary method according to Bohnsack (2014) is being used in order to reconstruct formal and tacit knowledge applied by practitioners. A collective frame of orientation regarding the application of discretion is to be reconstructed. In focus of analysis is not the intended action of individuals but social practice rooted in social structures (Bourdieu 2014).

Findings:

Besides formal mandate, discretion in case conferences is being used implicitly, rooted in collective orientations. Facing uncertainty, teams apply formal and implicit knowledge while constructing or deconstructing discretionary spaces. The reconstruction of case conferences could show that discretion is not only formally given but also product of interactive processes to make a case workable. Practitioners accomplish different stages such as

negotiation of responsibility, re-enactment of the case and dimensioning discretionary space. The reconstruction of different habitual orientations implicitly guiding the use of discretion in teams provides an explorative typology.

Conclusion and implications:

Decision-making and the use of discretion demand professional knowledge, legitimacy, accountability and deliberation. Both, for theory and practice it is important to understand how professionals make sense of these requirements. The focus on teams allows insight into a specific setting in social work. Regarding the use of discretion, the relevance of implicit and theoretical aspects of professional knowledge requires further investigation. The social and interactive dimensions need to be considered.

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Giddens, Anthony (1983): Profiles and critiques in social theory. Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press.

Keywords

decision-making, discretion, professionalism, interaction, negotiation

542

Eliciting third person perspectives in social work discussions: a device for reflective supervision?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Reflective supervision is widely recommended as an effective way to support social workers to think about their relationships with service users and to make better decisions in their practice. Although previous research has proposed methods of pursuing reflective supervision, little is known about how supervisors attempt this in actual supervision meetings. One proposed method for supervisors is to elicit third person perspectives so that social workers can consider a situation from different points of view. In this presentation, we examine this method by analysing audio recordings of 12 supervision meetings from one local authority Children and Families Social Work team. Using Conversation Analysis (CA), we explore supervisors' attempts to elicit other people's perspectives, focusing on how such requests were formed and how the social worker responded. We found 35 instances of

supervisors attempting to elicit third person perspectives and identified four different ways that supervisors designed these enquiries. Supervisors oriented to two concerns, based on whether they enquired about a perspective that was currently established or projected into the future, and whether the information was verifiable through speech or actions, or imagined based on the other person's thoughts or understanding. We draw on CA work on epistemics and stance to show how these different approaches have implications for what the social worker is expected to know and how both speakers orient to the accountability of the social worker. We conclude by considering the epistemic friction between the design of these enquiries, the relevance of professional accountability and the possibilities for pursuing reflective supervision in practice.

Keywords

Supervision, Reflection, Conversation analysis, Accountability, Children's services

544

Hearing the voice of the child in safeguarding processes: Challenges and opportunities for social work research and practice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Hearing and responding to the voice of the child is essential to effective safeguarding practice. This involves sensitive and skilled social work practice to build relationships with children and their parents at times of acute stress. Research has consistently highlighted that children want to participate in decision-making processes and feel they have much to contribute (Kennan et al, 2018; Stabler et al, 2019). Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992) highlights the challenges of enabling the genuine involvement and empowerment of children. This research aimed to examine the way in which children's rights are understood and facilitated in the child protection process with a focus on participation rights. The research explored how children exercise agency and how their participation rights are enabled or constrained.

Methods:

Research was undertaken in a Local Authority in Northern England with young people who had recent involvement with safeguarding professionals. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 children aged from 6 to 16 years individually or in sibling groups. Creative approaches were developed to enable children to share their views. There were many challenges to overcome to gain access to vulnerable children and enable their participation in the research. Employing reflexivity and thematic analysis methods, the researcher sought to understand and make sense of the child's experience.

Findings:

The research found that children want to participate in decisions about their lives. Despite obstacles and challenges, they feel compelled to be involved and entitled to be informed when safeguarding decisions impact upon them. However, their experience of participation leads to disappointment and ambivalence. Children feel able to have a say and make their voice heard but are frustrated by experiences of exclusion and inequality and the limitations of their ability to influence outcomes. Nevertheless, examples emerged of positive and innovative practice that enabled the most vulnerable children to be heard and to be catalysts for change. The importance of building a relationship of trust with their advocacy worker, social worker or the Chair of the conference was acknowledged by children who were able to participate.

Conclusions and implications:

The safeguarding process is a professionally orchestrated, state-mandated system, within which power is not equally distributed. There is much to be learned from hearing the voices of children who have experience of child protection plans - research needs to be carried out using child-centred, sensitive approaches. This research found that change is needed to rethink bureaucratic processes and forefront the rights of the child to participate in ways that are meaningful for them. The responsibility lies with practitioners to bring empathy to their work with children and value their contributions. Meetings need to be coordinated in ways that are flexible and child-friendly. Recognising the contribution of advocacy workers in facilitating children's involvement enables practitioners to balance some of the competing demands. Listening to the voices of children promotes their empowerment so that children may be acknowledged as social actors and co-creators of a more effective and child-centred safeguarding system.

Keywords

Children, Safeguarding, Participation, Research, Practice

550

Implementing the new Child Sexual Exploitation guidance in children's services in Wales

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Although children's social care is an area rich in guidance, there is little research looking at the implementation of new policies in the UK. This is critical since implementation processes can hinder or facilitate how child protection guidance brings about beneficial social change for the most vulnerable people in society. Proctor (2012) who has undertaken similar studies in North America, argues that the greatest barrier to high quality evidence-based practice is the limited research relating to policy implementation.

In this presentation we report on our ongoing realist evaluation of the implementation of the new Safeguarding Children from Child Sexual Exploitation guidance in Wales. We are investigating what works to support effective

child protection policy implementation in Wales, for whom, under what circumstances and how. We discuss the development of an initial programme theory based on semi-structured interviews with practitioners and managers in three Local Authorities.

We developed theories across three areas through a thematic analysis and a review of implementation science literature: policy nature and development, implementation plans, and organisational context. Findings suggest that, for policies to produce a significant impact on practice, they need to be perceived as sufficiently different to social workers' current practice. Secondly, we found that coordination between national and local policies is critical for successful implementation as contradictions between them might lead to conflicting local team priorities. Finally, findings highlight the importance of effective communication of policy changes, as well as a supportive organisational culture to strengthen implementation in local contexts. These findings illustrate the complexity of policy implementation and the need for policymakers to consider the meaningful involvement of local practitioners in national policy development.

Keywords

Policy implementation, Child sexual exploitation, Child protection, Social care practice, Programme theory

551

Children's information: improving voice and data to improve lives

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Across Europe and internationally, social work policy-makers and managers increasingly rely on administrative data to plan children's services and monitor risk and need. We have come to expect that good use of data can improve policy and practice, to improve lives.

But the ethical use of data is also a growing public concern: benefits of using administrative data must be balanced against potential risks to people's rights and privacy. Core to this, in child and family social work, is ensuring that children's and parents/carers' voices about how their data are used are expressed, heard and taken seriously in professional decision-making and actions. Likewise it is important that children and families' voices appear within their data, so their lived experience can inform how their data are understood and acted upon. However, there is scant UK or international research evidence indicating that this is what happens. All too often children and parents are asked about their experiences, wishes and feelings, but these do not make their way into data used about them. They commonly feel their voices go unheard [1].

This paper presents emerging thinking and findings from the first 18 months of a 5-year study in England, where researchers, local authority partners, children and families are collaborating to co-produce, test and exchange learning from initiatives to improve ethical and effective use of children and families' data and voice. In particular, we discuss how our thinking has moved forward since we presented early ideas at ECSWR 2022. We talked then

about how voice is not fixed – it is situated and relational, it may be individual or collective, formal or everyday, verbal or non-verbal. Drawing on our findings, and on the work of Rob Kitchen[2], we now take a more sophisticated look at the relationship between voice and data, recognising that data too are not neutral and technical but social and political. We propose that voice and data are intrinsically and necessarily interwoven, albeit not always explicitly. That social work administrative data do not integrate well the voices of children and families is itself an expression of the voices of those who decide which data should or should not be collected, collated and used. We argue that it is only once data and voice are interpreted (not just gathered and/or collated) that they become information which may in turn be used, and that all these processes too are social and relational. This understanding underpins both the challenge and the promise of our co-productive project: to improve the quality and the representation of children and families voices within and about their data, in turn to inform meaning making and ethical use of information to improve their lives.

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Keywords

Children, Data, Voice

552

Social work challenges in crisis situations: The case of COVID-19 in Slovenia

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic affected people's health and socio-economic circumstances, and exacerbated their psychosocial problems, and consequently also affected the work of social workers (Amadasun 2020; Dominelli et al., 2020; Walter-McCabe 2020). At the forefront were health measures to prevent the spread of the virus, to keep the economy going and to prevent a rise in unemployment (Harrikari et al. 2021). Social workers were left with the sudden additional challenge of redefining their role and established way of working with people. To understand how social workers in Slovenia responded to the increased need for services in this situation, we conducted a study 'Social Work during COVID-19 in Slovenia'. The purpose of our study was to explore the complexity of social work conduct at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels during a pandemic, following the International Federation of Social Workers' global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014), which emphasises that social workers work with people and structures to address life's challenges and improve well-being. We examined how governmental measures to curb the COVID-19 pandemic in Slovenia affected the operation of social services and shaped the daily practice of social workers and how social workers adapted to the needs of people in this striking crisis situation.

The research took place during the first and second waves of the epidemic (March 2020 - January 2021) in Slovenia. Data were collected from the social workers and other staff members employed in state social services in Slovenia called social work centres using mixed methods: i.e., online survey and interviews with social workers. Content analysis and selective coding, thematic analysis, and univariate descriptive statistics were used for data analysis.

The analysis shows that the ability of social workers to respond to the growing and changing needs of people during the pandemic depended on the context in which they worked. Social work was perceived to be more effective and responsive in social work centres where professional autonomy was guaranteed and valued and where horizontal relationships existed between staff and management. Such a structure enabled prompt response to the needs of people as it enabled social workers to be flexible and autonomous in taking immediate decisions. It also enabled better organisations of staff which had to support their own family members, got ill or were afraid of infection.

The findings also show that the structural and institutional changes made in Slovenia in recent decades reduced social work conduct to the micro level and led to the exclusion of social workers from macro-level decision and policy-making bodies, which was particularly evident during the pandemic.

Study contributes to a better understanding of the context in which the pandemic occurred and identifies some structural barriers to successful social work that are internationally comparable and relevant. The results offer opportunities for further research and, in particular, for organizing social work practice in times of crisis.

Keywords

public social services, crisis social work, new public management, pandemic, professional autonomy

554

Challenges and opportunities for social workers in the field of reparation for human rights violations: A research on the practice of frontline professionals in the Chilean social outbreak

Carla Cubillos

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

We are currently witnessing a series of events that clearly manifest the political violence states have toward their citizens when they claim against oppression or lack of rights. Examples of this have been the Arab Spring, the independence movement (Spain), the demonstrations or "social outbreaks" (Colombia & Chile), or the recent racial demands under the slogan of 'Black Lives Matter' (USA). Serious human rights violations have occurred in these contexts. Under international human rights law, human rights violations require a response from states through the so-called "reparation measures." Participation of social workers in the design and implementation of reparation measures is undoubtedly a crucial global challenge (Androff, 2010). This challenge is essential not only for the professional practice of social work but also for social work research.

In Chile, several policies were developed in response to the human rights violations at the end of the civil-military dictatorship (1973 to 1990). These policies shaped in the 1990s were oriented to clarify the truth and give material and symbolic reparation for the victims (Cubillos-Vega et al., 2022). The Programme for Reparation and Holistic Health Care (PRAIS) was one of the main reparation measures implemented. PRAIS is a health policy aimed at the reparation of the after-effects of political violence suffered by the victims of crimes against humanity during the dictatorship. It has a multidisciplinary approach and Social workers usually coordinate professional teams.

The wave of social protests that began in 2019 (known as the social explosion of 18 October, hereafter 18-O) revealed the weakness of Chile's reparation policy. In this context, the police and militaries systematically repressed social protests and torture centres, similar to those during the dictatorship, were denounced.

This work aims to present an analysis of the response of frontline professionals who implement health reparation policies (PRAIS) in Valparaíso, Chile, to the challenges that emerged in the context of O-18. A qualitative approach was used for this purpose, among semi-structured interviews with professionals involved in implementing the reparation policy.

Since the social outbreak, PRAIS professionals have had to face the re-victimization and extreme re-traumatization of users due to the brutal political violence deployed by the police and military against the population throughout the country. They also had to meet the demands of new actors who came to the facilities in search of medical, psychological, social, and legal assistance. We highlight the ability of these professionals to add and omit procedures according to their convictions and interests. This capacity for agency and discretion to respond to emerging problems and needs enabled these professionals to deploy a series of policy construction/adaptation practices in their implementation during the recent social crisis.

Androff, D. (2010). Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs): An international human rights intervention and its connection to social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(6), 1960-1977.

Cubillos-Vega, C., Zúñiga-Fajuri, A., Faúndez, X., Gamboa, D. & Gaete, J. (2022). Evolution of the Conception of Justice within the Field of Transitional Justice in Post-dictatorial Chilean Society. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 16: 1-16.

Keywords

Human Rights, Reparation policies, Political violence , Transitional Justice, Professional agency

555

The Panopticon Effect: The use of surveillance and monitoring by foster carers and social work practitioners to minimise unmediated contact

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

In England childcare legislation has highlighted the importance of children and young people who are placed in the care of the state having continued relations (contact) with their birth family members. The responsibility of how this contact has been assessed and subsequently organised has rested with social work practitioners and foster carers. The use of digital devices and the Internet by young people in care to communicate with family members is challenging the nature of contact and how it is managed by social workers and foster carers.

A small-scale qualitative study was undertaken in order to answer two research questions. The first, the way in which children in care make use of digital devices and the Internet for contact with their familial and friendship networks. Secondly, how foster carers and social workers negotiate and manage contact undertaken digitally.

Methods

Using a purposive sampling strategy 12 triads consisting of young people in care (aged 13-18 years), their foster carers and allocated social workers were recruited. All respondents undertook a semi-structured interview, with the young people in care detailing what social media apps and other devices they used to contact their families via an Ecomap. The foster carers and social workers shared details of the methods and approaches they used to manage not only contact but, digital devices and the Internet in general. Data analysis was performed using a Framework analytic method to explore the various attitudes, as well complementary and contradictory perspectives of young people in care, their foster carers and allocated social workers. An inductive approach was applied to the identified themes, which were informed by the Foucauldian concept of disciplinary power and the analogy of the Panopticon that allowed for the interrogation of existing fostering practice.

Findings

The findings from the study highlight that the observation, monitoring and recording of the daily activities of young people in state care by their foster carers and allocated social workers is taken for granted, and that the same assumptions and practices have now moved to digital devices and the Internet. Moreover, that foster carers and social workers are using a variety of monitoring and surveillance methods that are buried in daily activities that embrace the 'techniques' Foucault categorised as examination, interrogation and visibility. The findings also revealed that some young people self-managed their behaviours as a response to the monitoring and surveillance they experienced. Whilst others used the 'technique' of resistance to avoid methods used by their foster carers and social workers to observe their digital life.

Conclusions and implications

Applying notions of child protection and social surveillance (Penna, 2005), what can be traced is potentially a transition within state care where monitoring that has primarily been linked to wellbeing, is now moving towards routine and systematic surveillance that extends beyond the physical to the virtual. As a consequence, there is a need for foster carers and social workers reappraise the taken for granted assumptions associated with how children in state care are monitored.

Keywords

foster care, contact, monitoring, social workers, digital devices

Social Work Codes of Ethics and Environmental Sustainability. A Cross-National Study

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The presentation focuses on the importance of environmental sustainability in national social work codes of ethics. It is based on a study of the codes from Finland, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and addresses, therefore, sub-theme No. 2 of the conference. The presentation is based not only on cross-national but also on cross-disciplinary research, connecting social work with sustainability studies and environmental ethics. By using content analysis, the study examined the occurrence and significance of terms and concepts such as environmental sustainability, ecology, and environmental justice in the four codes of ethics. The main question of the study was if the concepts appear in the codes of ethics and what meaning they have if they are used. The findings show that the connection between social work ethics and sustainability currently plays only a minor role on the national level. Even if environmental sustainability is mentioned, the national codes of ethics do not make the link to social work practice and do not address the question of what it would mean for the ethical behavior of social workers. An extension from human relationships to relationships with non-humans or more than human beings is largely missing. The implications for an ethical social work practice stay at best cloudy. Based on the results of this study, one can argue that the profession would need to make use of conceptual work on ecosocial work during the last 20 years and connect closer to social movements such as the environmental justice movement or the Fridays for Future movement. Furthermore, in times of climate crisis, the profession finally would need to take a stance regarding the environment and develop a clear concept of (social) sustainability in social work practice in cooperation with clients. The revision of national codes of ethics could be the first step in that direction.

References:

Liu, K., & Flynn, C. A. (2021). How the environment is conceptualised and represented globally in social work codes of ethics. *International Social Work*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00208728211020071>

Stamm, I. (2021). *Ökologisch-kritische Soziale Arbeit. Geschichte, aktuelle Positionen und Handlungsfelder* [Eco-critical social work: History, current positions and fields of action]. Opladen/Berlin/Toronto: Barbara Budrich.

Keywords

Social work ethics, Codes of ethics, Environmental sustainability, Ecosocial work, Cross-national research

Can complex systems be captured in real-world routine evaluation? Reflections from research on family group conferences

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Thorough evaluation of social care practice requires integrated research designs to capture the complex interaction of intervention mechanisms and context in the generation of outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2016; Pfadenhauer et al., 2017). But how can this translate to evaluation that can be carried out by practitioners and managers as part of their routine practice? The presentation will discuss this issue, with reference to the research project 'Family group conferencing for children and families: Evaluation of implementation, context and effectiveness (Family VOICE)'.

Family group conferences (FGCs) in child welfare bring immediate and wider family members together to decide on the best way to meet a child's needs. Unlike in professionally-led traditional case conferences, the aim is for decision-making to be genuinely shared with family members. Qualitative and mixed-method research with FGC participants tend to show positive experiences: most participants feel their voices are heard; and FGCs facilitate family-driven solutions and closer relationships - within families and with social workers. Although there is existing literature on FGCs, there is a paucity of robust comparative UK evaluations. Comparative studies internationally tend to emphasise the prevention of out-of-home care, but the evidence of effectiveness (from three international systematic reviews) is mixed. These comparative studies have tended to focus on a narrow range of outcomes, have not recognised the importance of context on FGC effects, and paid little attention to the quality of delivery. Some qualitative studies have considered process and context but there is scant measurement of these.

The Family VOICE study aims, firstly, to establish how FGCs improve outcomes for families and what factors vary their quality, and, secondly, to assess longer-term outcomes in terms of service use and associated costs. It is a multi-method evaluation over four years, funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research. The first phase includes co-design of a programme theory and evaluation measures with practitioners and family members who have experienced an FGC. Face-to-face workshops were run with adult family members (n=20) in two sites and online workshops were run for young people (n=2 to date, with recruitment ongoing) and practitioners / managers (n=18). It is intended that the co-designed evaluation measures will be usable in routine practice, beyond the duration of the funded research project. There will be critical reflection on the collaborative process and the extent to which it is possible to capture complexity in an evaluation tool that is suitable for routine use in FGC services.

References

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Pfadenhauer, L.M., Gerhardus, A., Mozygemba, K. et al. (2017) Making sense of complexity in context and implementation: the Context and Implementation of Complex Interventions (CICI) framework. *Implementation Science* 12, 21.

Keywords

Families, Participation, Co-design, child welfare, Complexity

561

Parent Advocacy & Peer Support in Child Protection: Exploring the conceptualization of current practice approaches redefining outcome achievement

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

Despite broad consensus regarding the ethical and practical importance of parent participation in child protection (CP) processes, studies have found the voices, needs, and experiences of families are often excluded and ignored by policy makers and practitioners. As a result, interest in innovative ways to meaningfully involve parents to promote CP system practice improvements has increased worldwide with stakeholders calling for CP policy and practice to move beyond the focus on parent participation at the interpersonal level to the participation of parents with lived experiences at a wider organizational and political level.

Parent peer advocacy and support programmes, delivered by parents with lived CP experience to parents receiving CP intervention, are examples of more inclusive practices gaining attention and early evaluations demonstrate positive outcomes. However, little is known about how individual programmes are conceptualized and delivered or how variation across programme typologies may influence outcomes. This scoping review of empirical literature on parent peer advocacy and support programmes begins to address this gap by examining 25 years of research that explores the design and delivery of these programmes as context for programme benefits and outcome achievement. This paper addresses conference themes by exploring the development, impact, and effectiveness of innovative practices that disrupt traditional professional boundaries and address current practice challenges through enhanced professional, parent, and peer relationships.

Methods:

Study methods were guided by PRISM-P scoping review standards. The review focused on studies published in English between January 1996 and June 2022. A search across a range of electronic databases, grey literature

websites, and peer-reviewed journals, resulted in 3,884 unduplicated citations. Eligible studies were those that examined programs delivered by parents with lived experience to parents in the CP system and addressed program development, delivery and/or outcomes. Studies were independently reviewed by two raters, and discrepancies resolved by a third rater. Data extraction (n=50) focused on programme characteristics, study methods and findings.

Findings:

Findings reveal an emergent evidence-base addressing a relatively wide-range of parent peer advocacy and support programmes distinguished by both programme and parent (service provider and recipient) characteristics. Further programme variation was identified in the theoretical underpinning of service delivery and anticipated outcome achievement with some examples of limited attention to theories related to parent empowerment and inclusion. Findings further reveal an evidence-base increasingly focused on programme effects and outcome achievement. Across studies, there was a reliance on traditional child and case-level outcome measures (e.g., reunification, maltreatment reoccurrence) in both practice and research and a need for a greater focus on equality- and rights-based measures eliciting the parent perspective.

Conclusions:

The results of this scoping review reveal the importance of contextualizing the parent peer advocacy and support empirical evidence with greater consideration to programme types and characteristics. A programme typology and outcome framework are presented to inform future programme development and to strengthen the developing evidence-base. Further implications include the need for improved theoretical transparency among parent peer advocacy and support programmes and alignment with the main tenets of these more inclusive models and approaches.

Keywords

child protection, birth parents, parent advocacy, parent mentoring, peer support

565

Matching in practice – how to find the right foster family home for the right child

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

The concept of matching refers to the process when a foster family home is selected to fit an individual child in placement. Matching is important for the quality of care, as the foster carers need necessary resources to meet the child's needs. Failure in matching can have negative consequences for the child, for example in the form of so called "breakdowns", which lead to change of foster homes (Sinclair & Wilson 2003; Thoburn 2016). Continuous meaningful relationships with caring adults are important to secure better outcomes for the children. The aim of the paper is to explore the social workers practice when matching children and foster carers to ensure that the children will receive good care.

Methods

The study has primarily a qualitative approach and is carried out with case-file studies and interviews with professionals. Social workers at the municipal social services as well as staff in private consulting firms have been interviewed about their work with matching. In the interviews, professionals reflect on what factors they perceive as most important in matching and what challenges they meet that complicates the matching process. The study is conducted in different municipalities with geographical distribution. In the presentation we will focus on the analysis of social workers' responses to the following two interview questions: "Would you like to tell us about a successful match that you have worked with, what went well, and what was important for it to be successful?"; "Do you have examples of a less successful match that you have worked with? What went wrong? What factors were important?"

Findings

Matching is a complex process where factors at different levels may be important, such as factors related to the child, the guardians and the foster parents (case-specific factors), organizational factors, external factors, as well as factors related to the professionals. Some examples of when the match went well according to the interviews with social workers were placements of infants and children who were "functioning well"; the child's parents were satisfied with the selected foster home; the foster parents were prepared to meet the child's parents; the child was involved in the matching process; the foster parents "followed the child" and went in the process "with their heart".

Conclusions and implications

The study will contribute new knowledge about relevant factors that social workers need to consider so that placements in foster family homes will develop to lasting relationships between children and foster parents. The study will provide knowledge about the social work with matching, which challenges arise, and how these can be managed. The presentation is related to the sub-theme "Challenges and opportunities for social work research, practice, policy or education in contemporary contexts".

References

Sinclair, I. & Wilson, K. 2003. Matches and mismatches: The contribution of carers and children to the success of foster placements. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33(7), 871-884

Thoburn, J. 2016. Achieving good outcomes in foster care: A personal perspective on research across contexts and cultures. *Social Work & Society*, 14(2)

Keywords

foster care, foster children, assessment, placement, social services

567

The development, implementation and evaluation of a new transitional blended care program for young care leavers

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The transition to adulthood is a difficult period for almost everyone, but especially for young people who leave residential care. Compared to their peers who have no experience in youth care, young care leavers encounter in this life phase high risks of social exclusion, for instance on housing, education, employment, relationships and financial status (Haggman-Laitila et al., 2019; Atkinson & Hyde, 2019). Transitional programs can support young care leavers in successfully transitioning to adulthood by helping them gain individual and social capital (Heerde et al., 2018; Gypen et al., 2017). In this PhD research, a new transitional blended care program supported by a digital application for young care leavers will be developed, implemented and evaluated. Based on the MRC Framework of developing complex interventions (Skivington et al., 2021) we brought different perspectives together to develop this new program. By means of a literature review, 12 in-depth interviews with young care leavers, a focus group with youth workers and the analysis of policy documents, we conducted a first draft of our new blended care program. After the verification with young care leavers, youth workers and the steering committee in different workshops, this draft was translated to a concrete new program based on three core elements: ownership of the youngster, integral working and involving the informal network from the youngster as an equal partner. The application is a tool that supports social workers in order to implement these core elements in practice. At the ECSWR 23, we would like to present this new blended care program. More specifically, we focus on the co-creation process of the development phase. Additionally, we will explain how we will use a mixed methods design to evaluate this new program in the next research phase.

Keywords

Young care leavers, Transitional program, Blended care, co-creation, Youth care

568

The relevance of ableism for theorizing social work research

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Rahe More
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no

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Historically as well as currently, social work cannot be considered without its importance for and entanglement in social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. While social inequality and exclusion have always determined the subject matters of social work, the perspective on social problems and their causes are changing alongside shifting theoretical debates. This includes shifts in the focus on the relationship between the individual and society; between the adaptation and normalization of individuals on one end, and advocacy for social change on the other. Within this complexity of human and structural relationships, social work has an active role in the discursive re/production of social problems.

Critical social work theory considers the role of the discipline of, as well as of the profession of social work in the determination of social problems. In addition, critical social work theory needs to be centrally informed by the addressees of social work practice and activist knowledge. Nevertheless, hierarchies between academically produced knowledge and lifeworld/activist knowledge remain. The aim of this presentation is to pose questions on and discuss the relevance of ableism as profoundly activist concept for theorizing social work research and about doing so through human relationships. The concept of ableism refers to a human corporeal norm reinforced by the dis/ability binary and the de/valuing of abilities.

A summary of the main points of the presentation

First, (changing) definitions of social work in its relationships to society and addressees are introduced and the relevance of activist and lifeworld knowledge for theorizing social work discussed, based on literature. Second, drawing from a storytelling approach to research, possibilities to co-theorize and co-research social work and the challenges therein are argued. Third, the concept of ableism is introduced as resourceful approach to theorizing social work and specific areas and fields of social work that would benefit from ableism as critical analytical and theoretical lens are suggested based on existing research.

As indicated, the presentation will address the theme of human relationships in theoretical and methodological considerations regarding ableism as relevant concept for social work research. The content of my presentation further relates closely to the subthemes of Theorizing social work and/or social work research; Connecting social work research and practice, including the co-creation of knowledge; and Methodological development, innovation and capacity building in social work research.

Conclusions

Discussing the relevance of ableism for social work research and linking the activist roots of the concept to epistemological and methodological considerations of co-creating theory, has implications for social work research, education and practice. At the same time, the complexity of ableism as both activist concept and theory needs to be explored further and, ultimately, theorized further through activist and interdisciplinary relationships.

Two key references:

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Phillips, L. G. & Bunda, T. (2020). *Research through, with and as storytelling*. London: Routledge.

Keywords

573

Capability Cards: a tool to tell and reflect on your own story

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Introduction

Since 2014, social work practitioners and researchers in Nijmegen (Netherlands) were inspired to work with the capability approach (CA). They started a Community of Practice (CoP) in which they collaborated with more than 30 bachelor students from social work and other disciplines from several universities of applied sciences. Over a period of 5 years the CoP developed a card-set to collect data and facilitate client-professional conversation. The set consists of twenty different hexagonal cards, based on Nussbaum's central capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011), and 25 fiches, based on the three types of conversion factors (personal, environmental and social). Use of the cards is based on the question 'what does a person value?', and the fiches are used to explore whether people are able to actually realize what they value, and which factors hinder or support this conversion process. Both cards and fiches contain easy to read language, symbols and drawings, stimulating people to tell their own story. A final version was validated in two studies, as well as in social work practices. In this paper we present this process of validation and reflect on the value of this tool for qualitative research and social work practices.

Methods

In the first study (February-December 2021) 18 respondents were interviewed dealing with vulnerable circumstances like having mental health problems or dealing with poverty. We focused on the significance of the neighborhood to the ability to live a life people value. In the second study (March-October 2021) we interviewed 8 respondents, which were elderly people living in social housing flats. In this research we focused on what people value in their direct living environment. For both studies we used open coding to analyze the data in a team of researchers.

Finally, we discussed the application of the Capability Card-set in two sessions with a group of 12 Dutch and Flemish social work practitioners and researchers in September 2021 and with 13 Dutch researchers, social work teachers, and experts by experience in December 2021.

Results

The first study yielded a typology of different vignette types reflecting different situations of capability facilitation or hampering. We created 6 different anonymized stories within the four vignette types. In the second study several types of preferences for the living environment were revealed. From methodological perspective all respondents were able to choose cards which helped them to tell their story and what they value for each card (intrinsic value), but they also made connections between the different cards (instrumental value).

Conclusion

The Capability Cards are a good tool for collecting data in narrative research. It invites the respondent to lead the interview, by choosing the cards and sharing their stories, going deep into personal matters. We conclude that capability card-set is very useful as a dialogical tool in social work practices, respecting the human relationship between professionals and clients, enabling clients to efficiently articulate what they value. It is an attractive and low-threshold way to operationalize capability concepts, like human dignity, in professional practices.

Keywords

Capability Approach, Narrative research, Storytelling, Methodology, Dialogical tool

574

Exploring the potential of eco-maps to facilitate co-creation of knowledge as part of a study with bereaved parents on engagement with social networks

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Current perspectives on grief and loss have moved from an intrapersonal to a more relational approach, recognising grief as a normal, universal, inevitable response to loss as a dynamic, situated process. There is increased emphasis on meaning-making after a loss with acknowledgement of the impact of family relationships on bereavement. The death of a significant person may give rise to loss of a whole relationship system within which their lives were connected and embedded. However, the dynamic interaction between families and their wider networks, in the context of end-of-life and bereavement is not well understood.

This presentation explores the potential of eco maps in co creation of knowledge as part of a study to explore the experience of network support among surviving partners with minor children. The study was underpinned by a relational approach to loss. Bereaved participants (n=12) were recruited through a specialist palliative care service.

The research combined in-depth narrative interviews with Eco-maps. Participants were invited to complete 3 ecomaps showing supports before and after death of their partner (maps 1 & 2). The third map outlines current

supports and networks. The ecomap was described by the researcher as a 'picture of relationships'. Participants were asked to indicate the strength of relationships by inserting a line between themselves and others: a thick line to indicate a strong relationship, a fine line, a less important connection, a broken line to represent a tenuous link, a jagged line to indicate a stressful relationship (Hartman, 1978). Formal and informal supports could be included.

One of the participants was reluctant to complete the ecomaps, describing the process as 'too complicated' but they were acceptable to all other participants.

Ecomaps served as a data elicitation tool in identifying pressures and supports within networks surrounding the surviving parent. They highlighted the strength or quality of relationships, as described. During creation of ecomaps, some participants described intergenerational 'family culture' which they experienced variously as barrier or enabler in managing change. Challenges in defining and redefining 'family' before and after the death emerged. Networks tend to be dynamic, and participants reviewed networks over time by comparing maps, reflecting on changes in support received and in their own network engagement. As map making proceeded and participants became more relaxed, they moved between maps, adding new information, frequently making reflective comments, telling stories within stories. The collaborative effort of creating ecomaps suited participants struggling to tell a personal story. One participant with limited English engaged with enthusiasm as it became a communication strategy when language failed.

Combining different research strategies means an interview can become a rich source of information about meaning, context, events, relationships and support networks. Ecomaps, familiar to social workers as a clinical tool, have research potential, particularly for practitioner researchers. More importantly, using a visual tool collaboratively facilitates the co-production of knowledge and Valentine suggests, can increase sense of care and concern which is essential in sensitive areas such as bereavement (2007).

The potential and limitations of using eco-maps will be discussed in the presentation.

Keywords

grief, networks, support, family, ecomap

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Joint ethics work on the principle of self-determination in a challenging, contemporary social work context: A discourse analysis of collegial discussions behind the scenes

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work as a profession is imbued with dilemmas and there is extensive literature on how individual social workers could or should deal with situations that lacks a given solution - including international and national codes of ethics. In contrast, this presentation will shed light on how social workers jointly deal with dilemmatic situations in discussions with colleagues. While team-meetings have a long history in social work practice, these collective aspects of social work have so far received scarce scholarly attention. Consequently, much of what is going on at meetings where social workers discusses cases behind the scenes – that is, without the presence of clients or other professions -- remains largely in the dark. This includes what is considered as meaningful to raise with other social workers in contemporary, differing, social work contexts - as well as how colleagues together find ways to deal with these issues.

The aim of the presentation is to discuss how social workers in Sweden jointly deal with the principle of self-determination in relation to cases where it conflicts with their perspectives on what is in the best interest of the individual. The presentation departs from a discourse analysis of naturalistic data of 39 audio-recorded regular team meetings among care managers (the professional title of social workers who works with older adults) in four municipalities in Sweden. The primarily task of care managers in Sweden is to assess older adults' needs for social services in the forms of home care and residential care. Their work is regulated by the Social Services Act [SSA] that, since 1982, advise social workers to apply the principle of self-determination without exceptions. Thus, in contrast to many other countries, e.g. older adults who are living with dementia cannot be declared as incompetent of making decisions concerning their care needs and social services cannot, legally, in any circumstances, be imposed on an adult citizen against his or her will.

The analysis focuses on how the care managers' discursively handle cases concerning older adults who are explicitly reluctant to accept the services that they are offered - and cases when the individual's "actual" standpoint is hard to determine. The analysis generated four suggestions on how to deal with the cases, that were raised and discussed among the care managers. In line with previous studies on how individual social workers handle similar cases, the suggestions could be considered as blurring boundaries between what is accepted by the client and what is imposed on her or him. Additionally, three ways of deciding on how to proceed with the cases were identified: reaching consensus, voting, and leaving the final choice of action to the care manager responsible for the case. Finally, building on the works of Banks, we will elaborate on how care managers' ways of discursively dealing with the dilemmatic cases could be framed as *joint* "ethics work" in terms of *collectively* "negotiating the tension between personal engagement and professional accountability" in a challenging, contemporary, social work context.

Banks S. (2013) DOI: 10.1080/13691457.2012.732931

Keywords

social worker teams, collaboration, needs assessment, social care provision, older people

578

The "sense of success": when things go well in the voice of the protagonists (not only professionals and judges!) in community experiences of juvenile criminal justice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

The research moves in the field of social work in juvenile justice (probation), with attention to the possible meeting with community restorative justice in territories where the crimes were committed.

We chose to study the successful stories of social work (Rosenfeld, 1997; Schechter et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2003; 2004; Jones et al., 2008) in community practices of juvenile criminal justice (called A.U.S.) in the North of Italy, with regard to forensic social work literature and practices with involuntary clients.

The goal of observing the "possible good" in professional practice (Schechter et to., 2008) has been identified to facilitate the listening- equal position- of social services-users and professionals to understand what could have worked well from every point of view. With a critical-reflective approach (Ferguson, 2004; 2008) the interest has been to co-construct a map of what can make a successful AUS for different actors of a juvenile criminal justice experience with the relational social work framework (Folgheraiter, 2005; 2011) in the wake of constructivist research (Pain, 2011; Parton o' Byrne, 2005; Gergen, 2001).

Method

Qualitative methodological framework with the degree of participation made possible by the peculiarity of the criminal and judicial context (participatory research methods, Aldridge, 2015; Devotta et al., 2016).

Textual analysis of narrative data with MAXQDA software.

Data were collected using 9 focus groups, created by associating the participants on a homogeneous basis of their role and their experience (including juvenile offenders, social workers, magistrates, lawyers ...), to co-construct a framework that describes the positive aspects for each of the perspectives of the protagonists. In a second phase, the collected data are analyzed in a focus group with mixed composition, including a representative of each role with which the previous focus groups were conducted, addressing the analysis of the first data in a participatory way.

Findings

The contribution offered by this research is to find choral, social data emerging from the relationships (Donati, 2013; Folgheraiter, 2003), through the use of Focus Group (Morgan, 1996) and, at the same time deep individual data related to the representations of meanings.

Results show that, if involved in justice response, community and people know how to actively collaborate in co-production of community restorative activities. The reconstruction of social services response process shows how successful practices can promote individual change and foster community confidence in a relational way.

Conclusions/implications

The implications of this research primarily affect Social Work Education and the supervision of forensic social workers. These highlight the importance of developing good interpersonal skills in professionals, as well as underlining the need to develop greater skills to contextualize the paths of assistance in forensic, procedural and criminal matters, also highlighting the need to refine the methodologies of facilitation/ catalysis of networks.

Future research in this field can help increase SW knowledge by highlighting the ethical challenges and attentions essential for the promotion of a "good service to the citizen" even when it comes to young people committing a crime (involving communities and families in building a justice response).

Keywords

co-creation of knowledge, juvenile criminal justice, success, forensic social work, experiential knowledge

579

Social work research in contexts of political conflict and human rights violations: the case of social protests in Chile and Colombia

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The guarantee of the right to health, education, pensions, and a healthy environment, among others, are a demand of citizens in the framework of recent social movements in Latin America. These collective actions are connected to the notions of autonomy, equality, and dignity: pillars of human rights. These human rights principles are at the basis of the discourse of recent emerging social protests in diverse geographical and cultural contexts.

The consequences of political violence, such as disappearances or executions of family members and torture or other cruel and degrading treatment, extend into the lives of the surviving subjects, affecting even several generations of descendants, widely impacting the well-being of individuals and the entire community (Martín-Baró, 1990; Madariaga, 2019). In post-conflict scenarios, there is a need to implement a series of measures or social processes of reparation, truth, and justice, framed in what is known as the field of transitional justice, in which social work professionals play a fundamental role.

Focusing on the comparative study of the cases of Chile and Colombia, we will explore the work of social workers in defense of human rights in contexts of violence. We reflect on social work's role in reparation policies for victims of human rights violations. In the case of Latin America, we focus on the social outbreaks in Chile, which began on 18 October 2019 (known as 18-O), and the subsequent one in Colombia, which started in April 2021 (National Strike). In both scenarios, there have been systematic human rights violations by agents of both states in their efforts to break up demonstrations and prevent the free expression of demands for social rights. We analyze the social worker's roles in these scenarios through a literature review in a comparative perspective. In both cases analyzed, social workers have played a fundamental role in the intervention with individuals, families, groups, and communities. They worked in the framework of human rights organizations, in contexts of great repression and political violence, both during the military dictatorship and later in the field of reparation for the victims of State terrorism, in the case of Chile, and the armed conflict, in the case of Colombia. In the area of human rights, in scenarios of armed conflict and crimes against humanity, the work of social workers is a valuable contribution to the well-being of people and the realization of social justice. Currently, the social protests in both countries have

led to new scenarios of conflict, where the repetition of human rights violations highlights the critical role of social workers in reparation and the defense of human rights.

Madariaga, C., 2019. "El 'Estallido social' y la salud mental de la ciudadanía: Una apreciación desde la experiencia PRAIS", *Revista Chilena de Salud Pública*, 23: 146-156.

Martín-Baró, I., 1990. "La violencia en Centroamérica: una visión psicosocial", *Revista de Psicología de El Salvador*, IX: 123-146.

Keywords

Social conflicts, Human rights, Transitional justice, Comparative study, Latin America

582

Swedish social workers support to women during post separation violence

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Women subjected to intimate partner violence (IPV) often need extensive support in order to leave their partner and/or manage post separation violence. Although the importance of such support is widely acknowledged, there is still little knowledge about how it is perceived by Swedish social workers and experienced by women. Increased knowledge in this area is crucial, as it can help improve social workers' support to abused women. This paper contributes to developing knowledge in this area by investigating support processes related to leaving and post separation violence in Sweden, specifically asking a) how women experience support from social workers during or after ending a relationship with a violent male partner and b) how social workers interpret and handle the support need of women that have been abused by a male partner.

The paper is based on individual interviews with 17 women with experiences of intimate partner violence and group interviews with 49 social workers in 13 different Swedish women's shelters and specialized social services units. In Sweden, the social workers in these organizations are tasked with helping abused women break free and recover from violence. The material has been analyzed using Braun & Clarke's (2020) approach to thematic analysis.

The paper identifies several challenges that social workers face when trying to help abused women break free from violence. Counselling and emotional support was the main goal for the social workers in the study, who underscored the importance of teaching the women about normalization of violence, the cycle of violence and emotional ties that women may have to their abusers. However, the interviewed women also expressed need of more concrete help with matters such as housing, legal counselling and so on (cf., Allen et al., 2004). It was not always clear however for the social workers (nor the women) where they could turn for such help. Furthermore, the interviewed women talked about post separation violence and emphasized the need for support several years after the separation. The women and social workers in the study shared frustration concerning the family law

system's handling of post separation violence. However, the social workers felt constrained by organizational factors and could/would not always help the women for longer periods. Some social workers also argued that the women primarily needed counselling to change their own behaviors, rather than long term support to cope with post separation violence.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the differences in how women and social workers in Sweden understand the support needs of abused women. This knowledge can be used to improve social work practice by increasing its alignment with the clients' experiences.

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Keywords

Social work practice, Post separation violence, Support, Men's violence against women, Interview study

583

Long-term effects of war on mental health of women - implications for social work practice

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: War and related traumatic experiences have both short and long-term negative effects on the mental health. Although the posttraumatic symptoms decrease over time, the higher prevalence of psychological difficulties in post-war communities and the transfer of difficulties from childhood to adulthood show long-term adverse effects (Mollica et al., 2004, Llabre et al., 2015). Most of the research on adverse effects of war focuses on men, while mental health difficulties of women have been investigated much less. The aim of this study was to examine the long-term effects of exposure to war-related events of adult women during their childhood or adolescent years on their current mental health and parenthood.

Methods: The quantitative data were gathered within the project "Intergenerational risk transmission for adolescent mental health", funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. It was conducted on a two-stage stratified cluster sample from three counties in Croatia which were heavily affected by the war (1991-1995). The participants

were 430 women with adolescent children (M_{age}=43,57, SD_{age}=4,881). The questionnaire items asked about different aspects of adverse events experienced during the war, current mental health wellbeing and parental functioning. Multiple regression models and bivariate correlations were used for data analysis.

Findings: Some of the analysed adverse war experiences proved to be significantly related to the current mental health of women. Specifically, sexual and non-sexual assault by a known person, sexual assault by an unknown person, death of a close one due to natural causes, and the experience of hunger and thirst - even after 30 years predicted higher depression and anxiety. The same predictors, with the exception of sexual assault by an unknown person, predicted higher level of stress. Women who currently experienced more PTSD symptoms also reported lower overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being, greater financial difficulties, higher daily and parental stress, and more frequent use of negative parental behaviours (refusal, chaos, and coercion).

Conclusions and implications: The long-term detrimental consequences of war-related events on various aspects of women's lives were identified even 30 years post-exposure. These data emphasize the need for continuous support for adolescent survivors of war in the life-time perspective, including the mental health wellbeing and parenting in adulthood. Range of psychosocial interventions in this context is also important in mitigating the potential transgenerational transmission of war-related trauma from parents to offspring. These findings are highly pertinent in the current context of the war in Ukraine, the likely negative consequences on the Ukrainian society, and also for the forced migrants throughout Europe.

Keywords

war, women, mental health, parenting, adolescents

587

The Application of Critical Race Methodologies in Researching Race and Adoption

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Within the UK adoption has become a highly politicised and racialised practice as successive governments have promoted adoption above other forms of permanence. In 2014, legislation controversially removed the requirement that adoption agencies should 'give due consideration to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background'.

This paper is drawn from the author's completed doctoral research and explores the application of Critical Race Methodologies (CRM) to examine how social workers have responded to this legislative reform, and to explore if and how race matters within adoption. This qualitative study took place in an English local authority and its associated adoption agency. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with nine children's social workers, six adoption social workers, an agency decision-maker, and a focus group with eight members of an adoption panel.

Through the application of CRM (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002) and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) the findings suggested that three interrelated themes: Racial Literacy and Social Work; Race, Adoption and Ethical Literacy; and Racially Literate Adoption Practice, highlight the salience of race within adoption practice. The study found that despite the removal of the ethnicity clause, race continues to matter for mixed race children within English adoption practice, as many social workers demonstrated an ethical commitment to the significance of race for children's adoptive identities. The study highlighted increased heterogeneity in categories of mixedness as participants sought to understand the complexity of children's lived experiences. However, the study identified a lack of racial literacy within adoption practice, which was reflected by an inconsistency in how mixed-race identities were represented in assessments and reports, and it was difficult to determine how race and ethnicity were considered in placement decisions.

The study concluded that race does not need to be an explicit feature of discourse to remain an invisible presence and highlighted the potential of CRM to understand racialisation within adoption. The study offers recommendations regarding future research; adoption policy and practice, and social work education and training, with the intention of improving the experiences of mixed-race children who are seeking adoption.

The application of CRM methodologies in social work research is emergent in the UK, and this paper suggests that the social justice philosophies of CRM are consistent with the transformational capacity of social work practice to challenge racism and other forms of inequality and have utility in researching race in all aspects of social work practice in racialised societies.

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Keywords

CRT, Race, Adoption, Methodologies, CRM

591

Memories of social workers: lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemics

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background. Social workers deal with inherently complex and ambiguous situations looking for the best possible solutions and usually, they do so in direct contact with service users. Because of Covid-19 pandemic direct contact was no longer taken for granted and became a source of tensions. Research about social workers' experience and challenges met during Covid-19 show that they had to substitute direct contact by online working, but they lacked

skills in using new technologies, felt unsafety and distrusts (Bank et al, 2020; Dauti, 2020), but according to Farkas (2020) despite all inconveniences due to pandemic, the relationship with a client remained the central method of work, and social workers all around the world tried to find the ways to give services. The goal of the presentation is to present the memories of the social workers during the pandemic situation Covid-19 in Lithuania and to discuss what short time lessons have become a new social work practice reality.

Methods. In order to find out the memories of social workers qualitative research methodology was used. Non-probability purposive sampling was applied for finding research participants - social workers working with children and youth in Covid-19 pandemic situation. In depth interview was used for data collection.

Findings. Content analyses of collected data revealed three categories: challenges of social work during the pandemic, positive factors of work during the pandemic, ways of working during the pandemic; and seventeen subcategories: adaptation to restrictions, organizational works, teaching, cooperation with other institutions, filming, IT knowledge, psychological aspects, activeness and tension at work, spending more time together, improved competencies, closer communication with other institutions, closer communication among social workers, courses and seminars, volunteers, IT programs, various types of consultations, creativity.

Conclusions and implications. Social workers experienced challenges and positive aspects while working during Covid-19 pandemic. According to participants' memories, they experienced different challenges at their work concerning adaptation and restrictions, organizational works, educating, cooperation with other institutions, filming and video making, lack of ICT knowledge, some psychological threats, activeness and tension at work, but there were also some positive factors of working during the pandemics like spending more time together, improving competencies, closer communication with other institutions and among social workers, possibility to take part in various seminars online, work with volunteers, learning to use new methods at work based on IT programs. For social workers Covid-19 pandemic has been a test to prove their creativity, resilience, and flexibility, they had the opportunity to renovate their commitment towards the most vulnerable people in society, discovering unusual ways of helping, together with solidarity with other practitioners, citizens, volunteers, and local communities. These lessons have changed participants' activities not only for short time but stayed inhabited in everyday practice. New and continues research for investigating long-term changes are needed.

Keywords

social worker, service users, Covid-19 pandemic, short-term changes, long-term changes

593

Financial social work intervention for families facing complex financial problems in Finland

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work clients often face complex financial problems. Although social workers can address clients' financial problems through a variety of practice strategies, little is known of the effectiveness of these strategies in responses to clients' financial difficulties (Birkenmaier et al. 2022). We have developed a novel financial social work intervention and aim to study its effectiveness and feasibility in the Finnish context. In this paper, we will examine how financial social work can support families with children who have difficulties in managing finances and how financial social work intervention affects a) the financial literacy skills, b) financial anxiety and c) financial self-efficacy of parents in families with children.

Our study will adopt a pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) design. Participating social workers will contact their clients who meet the inclusion criteria and ask them to participate in the intervention. Our purpose is to recruit 70 families with financial difficulties and/or financial anxiety between September 2022 and December 2022 from ten municipalities in Finland, and randomly assign them into the treatment group (n =35) and the control group (n =35). Treatment families will meet their social worker together with a project researcher five times during the program. The sessions build a collaborative counselling process that aims to support motivation for change in financial issues (Scanlon & Sanders 2017). The relationship between the social worker and the client is essential in this intervention.

Data is collected at three measurement points: prior to the intervention, the second measurement immediately after the intervention, and the follow-up measurement three months after the intervention. Our primary outcome measure is Financial Literacy Scale, and secondary outcome measures Financial Anxiety Scale (FAS) and Scale of Economic Self-Efficacy. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and regression models. In addition, we will collect two qualitative data sets, one from the participating clients, one from the participating social workers. These data will be analysed using content analysis. Fidelity of the intervention is supported by organising training and by providing ongoing guidance and manuals for social workers.

This study is the first to utilize a financial social work intervention in Finland and it, thus, contributes to filling this research gap. Our study sheds light on clients' complex financial challenges and whether a manualised intervention can be an answer to these challenges. Our study thus far has shown a clear need for developing financial social work interventions further. In addition, it's crucial to encourage social workers to regularly assess clients' financial needs as part of their daily work.

Keywords

psychosocial intervention, randomised controlled trials, families, evidence-based practice, financial social work

594

Poverty in old age – contemporary challenge for social work research

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Poverty in old age (65+) in the European Union is growing in recent decade, it raised from 13.2% in 2014 to 16.8% in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022). It is higher for women (19.1% in 2021) than for men (13.8% in 2021). The causes for the raise are many folds. The last few years have been marked globally by disasters, partly due to climate change (floods, hurricanes, landslides), natural disasters (Covid-19 pandemic) and man-made (armed conflicts and wars - recent one in Ukraine). The concentration of these events has led to uncertainties, such as food shortages, energy shortages (electricity and fuel), high inflation, etc., which are increasing levels of poverty also in the developed world. Contemporary responses to this situation are inadequate because they are increasingly partial and segmented, focusing on particular aspects of poverty (i.e., food poverty, energy, poverty, educational poverty, etc.), what is a consequence of recent changes in the welfare state and new residual social policies. The response to this narrow understanding of poverty is increasingly introducing benefits in kind such as the development of food charity and food banks, energy vouchers etc., which are substitutes for monetary social benefits. Such policies cause many people to fall through the cracks of the welfare state because they do not fit the criteria due to the narrow definitions of each type of poverty.

For social work, the increase in old-age poverty and the concomitant lack of addressing the structural causes of poverty is a particular challenge at several levels, including the lack of data, which leads to a poor understanding of the problem. In the basic research project Life course and everyday life of older people living in poverty, launched in autumn 2022 at the Faculty of Social Work of the University of Ljubljana, preliminary data on the extent of the problem were collected. The basic research question was about the gender difference in poverty in old age and what are the main reasons for gender gap in poverty. Secondary data were used for the analysis and the main source were statistics from EU-SILC and Labour market surveys.

Data show that despite the slight decrease of the at-risk-of-poverty rate in general, for older women aged 65+ and 75+ the rate increased. While the at-risk-of-poverty rate for men in Slovenia is lower than the EU27 average, the rate for women is higher than the EU average. The gap is therefore gender specific. The main reason for that is an accumulation of inequalities in old age which can be interpreted as horizontal and vertical gender segregation on the labour market, which have negative effect on the height of pension and cause gender inequalities in old age.

These results point to the important aspects of social work research of poverty in old age. Namely the problem cannot be understood without taking into account life course and everyday life perspective. Life course explains how and why inequalities are accumulated in old age and everyday life explains how the poverty is experienced.

Keywords

poverty, old age, life course, gender gap, segmentation

599

Travelling meanings: meaningful measures at a child protective service in the Netherlands

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: In recent years, a child protection service in the Netherlands has concentrated on developing a collection of instruments, questionnaires and assessment tools that are family-centred and aid professionals in their decision-making, while also offering insightful data for the organization's monitoring and evaluation. They have dubbed these newly created instruments "meaningful measures". The organisation's aim is to lower the bureaucratic burden on professionals and to align organisational metrics and indicators with the work being done on the ground. These professionals are tasked with planning and coordinating care for families and to guide them as they move through a multi-institutional trajectory. This study aims to gain an understanding of how professionals are working with these instruments in providing good care and how the meanings of the instruments travel and are conceptualised as boundary objects.

Methods: A qualitative study in which 34 professionals were interviewed regarding their perspectives on the importance and function of "meaningful measures" for themselves, families and their organisations. Respondents were chosen at random, and all levels of seniority and experience were included. The research team conducted a thematic analysis of the data with two rounds of open coding.

Findings: In this study we found that the instruments interact with different layers of actors and their governance structures involved, and that they are nested within wider networks of standards and institutional practices. The instruments help professionals to gain insight into and overview of the family's needs and situation and to reflect upon their own actions and those of the families. In team meetings, professionals argue their scoring in a discussion. The scores are experienced as highly subjective and simplistic, a characteristic that is actively taken as a positive means to spark debate and reflections upon each other's work. While professionals feel a degree of control over the meaning of the measures' outcomes on the ground, this gets lost in cases of (accused) malpractice and legal complaints. What started as notes and insights into a family's situation, becomes material or evidence in a court or a hearing. The possibility of losing one's job and professional registration puts pressure on how such scores and results are documented and used by the professional and the organisation.

Conclusions: A child protection service in The Netherlands is implementing a collection of instruments, meaningful measures, with a three-tiered aim: to be valuable to professionals, families and the organisation. This study aimed to understand how the meaning of these measures travels and we have found that while meanings need to be negotiated and are subjective in the daily work of professionals, their discussion is deemed valuable. It is crucial for professionals to understand what information needs to be recorded and to feel safe whilst filling out forms, for translational work to be carried out, and for the legal framework to become more in line with the daily practice of professionals, as these measures will be taken out of the context of the organization and daily practice to facilitate accountability and legal checks.

Keywords

Risk assessment instruments, Good practice, Child protection, Family-centered, Meanings

602

Changing landscape: Barriers and Challenges of Social Work Practices in responding to Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The prevalence of gender-based violence against women is increasing due to technological and digital advancements. Mobile phones, spyware, GPS position monitoring, and social networking platforms are just a few examples of digital gadgets and programmes that have evolved into new tools for abusers to track down, harass, and harm their victims. Technology-facilitated domestic abuse (TFDA) is a pervasive form of intimate partner violence that is continually expanding and evolving and has far-reaching consequences for women, children, and communities. However, little is known about how social workers and experts in family violence respond to TFDA. This presentation reports the findings of a scoping review of empirical and grey literature which investigated the obstacles and difficulties faced by social workers and other support providers in responding to TFDA. In addition, it examined the role of social workers in addressing this expanding and dynamic problem. Thirteen studies were included which reported the context of social workers' and other service providers' beliefs, practices, roles, and obstacles in responding to TFDA. Overall, findings showed that social workers and other support providers encountered several difficulties in managing this kind of abuse, including inadequate technology expertise, obsolete or little knowledge of service practices in the context of constantly changing issues; safety concerns of both victims and service providers; the ambiguity of employing strategies in dealing with the victim, the complexity of legal protection; a high level of victim blaming; and limited external resources. Findings suggest the need for: further applied research on the TFDA; the development of appropriate practice policies, tools, and approaches; better awareness of legal frameworks; training to improve the practice response; and the need to center victim's safety. The presentation critically reflects on these findings to make a series of recommendations for future research, policy, and practice.

Keywords

Technology-facilitated domestic violence, Social work practice, social workers, digital technology, domestic violence

607

Grandparents through the Lens of Family Constellation Theory: Anchors in Uncertain Times and Alternatives to Adoption?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This chapter is concerned with circumstances in which non-consensual adoption might be considered by the State when parents are no longer capable of caring for their children. Alternative care might be appropriate when parents are unable to look after their children for a plethora of reasons, including drug and/or alcohol abuse,

learning disability, mental illness or domestic abuse. It is suggested that, in many cases, children might receive equally effective - or superior - care from grandparents to that which can be provided by the State via adoption orders. This is because grandparents are powerful 'anchors' linking children to their memories and identities. If children can be cared for without endangering their welfare, it is proposed that grandparent care may provide the best protection to children's identity rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Article 8 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The UNCRC is an important (albeit non-binding) legal document which ought to be considered when determining the best measure of long-term care for a child (such as non-consensual adoption or kinship care). It is also the most authoritative legal document on children's rights and serves as an interpretative tool to key concepts including identity and the collective rights of families. It is argued that emphasis ought to be placed on how the 'family relations' aspect of identity under UNCRC Article 8 is crucial to children's wellbeing and how kinship carers, such as grandparents, may contribute towards and support a child's sense of identity. The UNCRC, viewed from the lens of 'family constellation' theory, would provide greater protection of the relationship between children and their extended kinship networks, including grandparents.

Keywords

grandparents, kinship, adoption, connections, identity

611

Understanding the complexity of informal caregivers at risk of loneliness: the potential and barriers of practice and policy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the last decade a lot of European countries have been challenged in organizing their health and care system due to an ageing population, tight budgets, ... Responding to these challenges the Belgian, and more specifically Flemish regional policy level responsible for long term care, focused on the socialization of care. As a consequence, care and support have become more and more the responsibility of society. This resulted in several developments: citizens are supposed to rely more on their own network for support, vulnerable groups receive personnel budgets to choose and buy their own care (in their own social network or professional support), local governments are expected to work on an inclusive policy and stimulate informal care and volunteering, Informal care takes a more central role in contemporary care.

Although informal caregiving generally starts from a positive intention, it often also burdens the informal caregivers. Research with regard to informal care has demonstrated that informal caregiving can be as a stressful experience resulting in emotional strain, quality of life problems, emotional distress, fewer social contacts and loneliness (Vasileiou et al., 2017). A recent study on informal caregiving in Flanders confirmed that adult informal caregivers in Flanders have a significantly higher risk on loneliness than others (Bracke et al., 2022). Nevertheless, several practices, like peer support groups, aim to support informal caregivers. In addition, the Flemish

government launched a renewed policy plan on informal caregiving in 2022. On the one hand, we know that informal caregivers have a higher risk on loneliness, however, little is known about which informal caregivers are more at risk of loneliness. On the other hand, we do not know whether current practices to support informal caregivers and policies actually target these at-risk groups.

Therefore, we will identify the potential risk groups of loneliness among informal caregivers. For this purpose, we will conduct multivariate analyses on a representative survey on informal care among adults (18+) in Flanders. This survey was completed by 7.439 respondents and showed that 34.4% of the Flemish people provided informal care in the past 12 months. In the study we will distinguish between the dimensions of social and emotional loneliness as they require a different approach when it comes to addressing feelings of loneliness. In addition, we aim to map out existing practices that support informal caregivers: on which target groups do they focus and in which manner do they aim to address feelings of loneliness. In this manner, we can compare the existing practices and policy measures with the potential risk groups of loneliness among informal caregivers and on the other hand identify potential gaps.

In general, with this study we explore more into depth the impact of the socialization of care among informal caregivers. This will result in specific recommendations for practices to support informal caregivers as well as policy recommendations.

Keywords

informal caregiving, loneliness, needs, quantitative research, socialization

616

Social inclusion of persons with mild intellectual disabilities: the dilemma of (not) labelling

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the Netherlands, persons with mild intellectual disabilities are encouraged to live independently, participate in social activities and find support in their neighbourhood. This is in line with policy ideals of deinstitutionalization, the socialization of care and social inclusion.

This paper presents findings from our qualitative research project into concrete practices of neighbourhood participation of persons with mild intellectual disabilities in Amsterdam. The aim of the project was firstly to explore how social professionals and volunteers, working in low threshold community facilities in different Amsterdam neighbourhoods, experience working with this target group and which dilemmas they encounter. Secondly, we explored how persons with mild intellectual disabilities themselves experience participating in social activities in their neighbourhoods.

In the paper, we will present a central dilemma that emerged as highly relevant from our data and illustrates the precariousities of the human relationships through which social workers and social work researchers operate. This dilemma concerns the need for target group-specific expertise and approaches on the one hand, and unease or even reluctance to ascribe a label to these particular residents on the other.

Our interviews with professionals and volunteers show how they struggle to balance these two aims. On the one hand, they are intent on a universal and welcoming approach, refraining from possible stigmatization or the reduction of people's identities to a label. Often informed by a capabilities approach, they emphasize the talents and strengths of persons with mild intellectual disabilities. Social professionals work very carefully to establish a relationship of equity and trust with these residents. In their view, the use of a label might hamper this relationship.

At the same time, they clearly indicate the need for specific, specialized knowledge on the phenomenon of mild intellectual disabilities, and for specific approaches to ensure that the particular needs of this group are met. Without this specific knowledge, participation and social inclusion in the neighbourhood will not be self-evident – according to our respondents. In their everyday practices, social professionals in neighbourhood community facilities alternate between these two – potentially contradicting – aims.

The same dilemma manifested itself for us as researchers in the relationships we developed in this research project, particularly with members of the target group. This was the case for the recruitment of interview participants. The label 'mild intellectual disabilities' represents a very broad, diverse category of persons. Within that category, acceptance of a diagnosis or label varies significantly. Besides, formal diagnoses are not always made. For these reasons, we had to be careful in how to approach participants.

In addition to these practical consequences, we needed to address the moral implications of categorizing. Therefore, part of the research process was a constant reflection on the sensitivities of categorizing and labelling persons, and the importance of careful use of language.

In our presentation, we will further unpack and analyse this dilemma's implications.

Keywords

social worker-service user relationships, social inclusion, learning disabilities, deinstitutionalisation, community center

617

Dealing with client-autonomy, freedom and resistance through meaningful relationships in social work practices of homelessness

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (2021) states that no one has to sleep outside due to a lack of good shelter and no one has to stay in the shelter longer than necessary. While principles such as 'housing first', together with a focus on work and participation are central in the Netherlands as possible positive perspectives on autonomy of homeless people, there is also a broad international transition of social policies that focus on responsibility-as-accountability (Mounk 2019), as the dominant interpretation of what it means to be an autonomous citizen. This is apparent in the social work practices with homeless people as well.

Our research question is how this autonomy discourse of 'responsibility-as-accountability' takes shape within social work and helps or hinders the reintegration of the homeless?

Our methodology is an empirical ethics approach to focus on daily practices of social work on the re-integration of homeless people. From September 2022 to March 2023 the first author did two periods of three months of ethnographic fieldwork within two teams in two larger cities in the Netherlands by participative observations of daily practice such as meetings and intakes and following three social-workers who work on re-integration trajectories intensively, next to 12 interviews with social workers, clients and stakeholders as well as three focus-groups. These teams are specialized in guiding people who are without a home or are in danger of losing it towards housing and work.

For the analysis of the data, we made use of the concept of discourse (Foucault) as an ordering and normative power within institutions and stately governance going together with social-bodily governance. Moments of tension between candidates and social workers were a starting point for the analysis. In these moments the dominant discourse on autonomy came to the surface, because it contrasted with alternate views on what it means to be an autonomous citizen.

In the presentation we will show results on

- ways in which homeless try to escape the discourse of autonomy
- how this discourse at the same time pushes people out of care
- how social workers respond to the tension between the dominant discourse - as apparent in their trajectories - and how homeless people try to escape this discourse

Our results deepen our knowledge on the relation between autonomy and freedom. Social work should approach autonomy as a relational value in which dependence and independence can be complementary. As such, meaningful relationships between clients and social workers can bridge the tension between re-integration or being pushed out of care and being marginalized further.

Keywords

Autonomy, Discourse, Homelessness, Social Policy, Relational

Racial/ethnic and gender disparities in child protection decision-making: What role do stereotypes play?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose. A wide range of studies have revealed racial/ethnic and gender disparities in child protection decision-making. Over the past decade, many scholars have shown that families of minoritized racial/ethnic groups seem disadvantaged by decision-making processes and more often receive intrusive child protection interventions, such as out-of-home placements. Further, some studies have suggested that maltreatment by mothers is more often followed by providing child protection interventions compared to cases where fathers seem responsible for child maltreatment. This study investigated whether disparities are mediated by stereotypes that professionals may hold, by applying the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), which suggests that stereotypes are formed by perceptions of sociability, morality, and competence.

Methods. The study applied a 2 × 3 randomized experimental vignette design. Participants read a case in which the gender of the parent responsible for maltreatment (mother or father) and race/ethnicity of the family (white, Black, or Latinx) varied. 258 professionals (133 current staff and 125 trainees) from Colorado (United States) participated in the study. After participants read the vignette, we asked them to rate the level of risk to the child if no intervention was provided, to what extent they believed a supervision order was needed, and to what extent they believed that the parent responsible for maltreatment was sociable, moral, and competent.

Results. A SEM model (CFI = .94, RMSEA = .05) with free parameters for trainees and current staff was estimated. No significant association between stereotypes and race/ethnicity and gender appeared. However, evidence for disparities emerged. In the trainee group, scores to decide for a supervision order were higher for white fathers, Black mothers, Latinx mothers, and Latinx fathers ($\beta = 0.18$ to 0.25) compared to white mothers. Current staff provided larger risk scores for Black mothers and both Latinx parents ($\beta = 0.20$ to 0.22) compared to the white mother, resulting in increased inclinations to decide for a supervision order ($\beta = 0.26$). Lastly, negative perceptions of morality increased supervision order scores ($\beta = -0.55$ to -0.36).

Conclusions and implications. We found evidence for racial/ethnic and gender disparities in child protection decision-making. However, our study did not find evidence that these disparities were mediated by stereotypes that professionals may form about parents. That said, we found evidence that professionals' perceptions of morality in general had an impact on the decision-making process: if professionals perceived parents as immoral (e.g., dishonest, not trustworthy, and insincere), they seemed more inclined to provide a supervision order. This study suggests that action should be taken to diminish disparities. Furthermore, additional

Keywords

Decision-making, Disparities, Stereotypes, Gender, Race/ethnicity

Interim findings from an evaluation of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court in Wales pilot

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) is an alternative form of care proceedings. It offers a promising, non-adversarial, problem-solving approach to helping parents overcome problems related to substance misuse and improve outcomes for their children. Key components include therapeutic support provided by a multidisciplinary team, and consistent judicial monitoring by the same specially trained judge. Following the London pilot which concluded in 2012, FDAC now operates in 15 sites in England.

Research suggests FDAC helps parents address their substance misuse and reduce the need for children to enter care¹. However, it is not known whether these promising findings translate to other UK contexts. In 2021, the Welsh Government commissioned a two-year pilot of FDAC in Wales. This presentation focuses on the first stages of the pilot evaluation, and presents interim findings based on a report published in October 2022.

The study is a theory-based evaluation exploring whether the Welsh pilot is implemented as intended, signs of potential, the attitudes and experiences of those involved, and whether it operates in a way that enables scaling. The presentation will discuss activities in Phase 1 of the evaluation, including a policy review of existing FDAC provision (interviews with all 16 current FDAC sites), and empirical research on initial implementation (focus groups and interviews with professionals and quantitative throughput data about families involved).

Our findings contribute to understanding how FDAC has been adapted to improve chances of success and how it is implemented outside of England. Interim data suggests FDACs in the UK have adapted across three broad themes. Interim data also supports previous findings² on the barriers and enablers of FDAC at three main levels (policy, local authority, court), particularly in relation to buy in, training and availability of services. However, our data identified another level of implementation (individual) and factors that enable or inhibit FDAC implementation at this level. Some factors, such as buy in, training, funding, and Covid-19 feature across multiple levels of implementation.

We provide recommendations to progress the pilot and support wider development of FDAC. These center around the provision of training and support for FDACs to improve buy in, understanding, knowledge, and embeddedness of the model.

The remaining phases of the evaluation involve following a sample of families in the Welsh pilot to explore their experience of FDAC, and a quantitative comparison of data from the Welsh pilot and one or more English sites.

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Keywords

Family drug and alcohol court, Substance misuse , Social work theories, Problem solving approach , Implementation

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Hospital visitation restrictions during Covid-19: The impact on social work staff

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

The positive impact of hospital visitation on patients has long been recognised, with visits shown to reduce patients' anxiety (Falk et al, 2012) and improve communication (Hurst et al, 2019). Selman et al (2020) also note that hospital visitation also has a positive impact on family members, particularly where the patient is receiving end of life care. Covid-19 resulted in worldwide bans on hospital visitation, and this study explores the impact of this on healthcare professionals. The initial study was carried out in a large teaching hospital with social work staff, however other healthcare professionals will be included in the next phase.

Methods

This qualitative study utilised semi structured interviews with 12 social work staff, who ranged in experience from basic to senior grades. All staff worked in the hospital for at least 1 year prior to covid and were able to reflect on the contrast between pre-covid and covid experiences. Detailed records were kept, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The data were analysed by both researchers to ensure reliability in the coding.

Findings

Five key themes emerged

Participants commented that the core social work skills of communication and advocacy came to the fore during the visitation restrictions. Participants also highlighted increase in patients presenting with loneliness, isolation and low mood resulting in an increase in counselling referrals. They had to adapt very quickly to the use of technology in the practice to counteract the restrictions. Families struggled with not having face-to-face meetings so social work staff were vital advocates for such families, ensuring that virtual care planning meetings took place particularly regarding discharge planning or end-of-life care.

All participants described the emotional toll of virtual end-of-life planning meetings and having to facilitate final conversations between family members and patients using iPads. Peer supervision was essential in these circumstances, but participants commented that despite the distress, they felt privileged to be able to facilitate those final conversations.

Conclusions

Hospital visitation restrictions due to covid-19 resulted in patients and families feeling vulnerable and isolated. Participants commented on the need to 'fill the gap' left due to families being unable to visit. Despite the gravity of the global pandemic, the participants also recognised the key skills that social work offers in terms of communication and systemic thinking, and how well-placed and responsive social work was to deal with the needs of patients and their families. They noted that they adapted to new technologies quickly and found creative ways to ensure that patient care was prioritised. An unexpected outcome that emerged from the interviews was the level of pride and sense of accomplishment that the participants displayed as they described their experiences. There appeared to be a renewed sense of the value and worth of social work practice and a desire to claim the professional space of social work within the healthcare setting.

Keywords

hospital visitation, end-of-life care, social work role, supporting patients and families

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How to mitigate loneliness from a neighbourhood perspective? An explorative study.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

During the past years, loneliness has been increasingly recognized as an important societal challenge. The Covid 19-pandemic reinforced this, since feelings of loneliness significantly increased across all ages during this period. In addition, the Covid 19-pandemic clearly showed the importance of the place where you live, e.g. having neighbours, shops, common meeting spaces, a park ... in the vicinity significantly affected the opportunities of socializing, relying on others, meeting others. Loneliness has been put high on the policy agenda of several European governments, among which the Flemish government (i.e. a region in Belgium). The Flemish government published a 'Flemish loneliness plan' in 2021, which states that the neighbourhood can play an important role in tackling loneliness (Beke, 2021). Understanding how the neighbourhood relates to feelings of loneliness can have significant implications for social work practices, policy and further research on loneliness. As practices to prevent and alleviate loneliness are often addressed from an individual perspective, adding the neighbourhood perspective can offer practices and policies additional tools in reducing feelings of loneliness (WHO, 2022). However, whereas loneliness has been significantly studied from an individual perspective, little is known about the impact of neighbourhood characteristics on loneliness (Buecker et al., 2021).

Therefore, we explore which practices and interventions focusing on the neighbourhood exist to prevent and alleviate loneliness.

For this purpose, we conduct an integrated literature review and in-depth interviews with citizens and local actors. We focus on loneliness among all adult ages, from the age of 18 years, as loneliness is of all ages. In the literature review we apply an integrated review approach. We explore the potential of a neighbourhood, place-based approach in preventing and addressing loneliness. Therein we distinguish between physical and social neighbourhood characteristics. The first refer to the man-made built environment, features of urban design and public space, environmental exposure and access to resources. The latter concerns the social fabric and norms, levels of safety and the social organisation of places (Diez & Mair, 2010). With regard to loneliness, we take into account the multidimensional nature of loneliness, such as emotional, social and existential loneliness (van Tilburg, 2021), but also temporary, situational and chronic feelings of loneliness. As little is known about this topic, we will additionally conduct explorative in-depth interviews with citizens and stakeholders in Flanders. In this manner we can add insights from the literature with specific insights about the Flemish context and thereby to new theoretical frameworks and insights on loneliness from a neighbourhood perspective by assessing, critiquing and synthesizing the current scientific knowledge.

Preliminary findings of the literature review on practices and the in-depth interviews are presented. This will result in a scientific oversight of the current state of the art of the effective practices that exist to prevent and mitigate loneliness from a neighbourhood perspective. In addition, we aim to build a conceptual framework on loneliness from a neighbourhood perspective based on the literature review and in-depth interviews which can guide future social work practices, policy and research on loneliness.

Keywords

Loneliness, Neighbourhoods, Interventions, Literature review, interviews

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Working with Partner Violence Across the EU: A Comparison of Danish and Italian Policy and Practice

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Partner Violence Against Women (PVAW) remains a major issue in the EU as one in three women reports exposure to sexual and/or physical violence from a partner at least once in their lifetime (FRA, 2014). At the moment, only limited research has compared how work with PVAW is organised differently across the EU, and detailed scrutiny of PVAW policy is called for in the literature that does exist (Corradi & Stöckl, 2016). In this study, Italian and Danish policy addressing PVAW, as well as everyday routines and practices enacted by workers in the field, are compared in an institutional and historical perspective. The analytical focus is on the relations between the

historical process of institutionalisation of work with PVAW and contemporary understandings of what constitutes violence.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Which differences and similarities appear when comparing conceptualizations of partner violence, as they appear in Danish and Italian policy and practice, and how does the differences and similarities implicate EU wide policy?

METHODS

The study is a comparative discursive analysis of Danish and Italian data, composed of state and organisational documents (etc. laws, action plans, statistics on violence) and interviews with practitioners working with PVAW

FINDINGS

In both a Danish and Italian context, the historical institutionalisation of work with PVAW is defined by both synergies and tensions between practitioners' (predominantly feminist) approach to working with violence, and the state's bureaucratic approach to organising welfare provision. In Denmark, the integration of PVAW into the mainstream welfare state has meant, that where violence previously was conceptualized as a gender-political issue, related to structural inequality between men and women, it is now, primarily and officially, conceptualized as an individualized psychological health issue, that both men and women experience (Bertelsen, et al., 2020). In Italy, the process of bureaucratisation of work with PVAW has predominantly involved a shift towards a service-oriented and technical approach, capable of offering standardised and measurable services, but unlike in Denmark, the feminist conceptualization of violence remains dominant in Italy (Pietrobelli, et. al, 2020). This could be explained by the relatively higher impact Italian women's movement(s) have had on more recent policy development compared to that of the Danish. It is also to be considered whether supranational organisations (EU, UN) and international discourse on the topic, has had a greater impact on Italian policy development than on Danish.

CONCLUSION

Since the Beijing Declaration in 1995 most UN Member States have taken up the call to end violence against women, and since the Istanbul Convention in 2011 most EU member states have committed to prevent domestic violence across the EU. With this study, we have shown that beyond the fact, that the work with PVAW is organized differently in the two different welfare contexts, the understandings of what constitutes violence also varies from a Danish to an Italian context. This has implications for how a supranational organisation, like the EU, best can structure its effort to tackle PVAW across the member states.

Keywords

government policy, nonprofit organisations, European Union, domestic violence, institutionalisation

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Social Work in the promotion of the independent living of people with disabilities: the cases of Portugal and Spain

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Breogán Riobóo-Lois

Proposal type

Abstract

In the middle of the 20th century, a relevant event occurred worldwide. Beyond suspicions about the preponderance of Western countries or the global North, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a turning point for human relations. However, it has been possible to verify how different groups have been forced to raise their voices remembering that it is also for them. Ethnic conflicts or the feminist struggle are two clear examples. Both the research and the practice of Social Work have integrated and internalized these claims. On the other hand, the same does not happen with other groups, which is why in 2006 the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was approved, in such a way that almost 60 years later they sought to make human rights accessible: to recognize their right to have the same rights.

From this point of view, the present paper seeks to analyse the situation regarding the promotion of personal autonomy and independent living of people with disabilities in Portugal and Spain. Consequently, the main regulations on the matter are analysed, as well as the evolution that access to instruments such as personal assistance has had, considered the main tool to guarantee that people with disabilities can live the life that they themselves decide. In addition, it is intended to delve into the role that Social Work has and must have, in the immediate future, to facilitate and promote progress in access to the rights of these people, as well as in the consolidation of services such as personal assistance.

Undoubtedly, the main topic of the 12th European Conference for Social Work Research covers this work. For Social Work research to serve as support for human relations, it must contemplate all people, especially those who claim that their most basic rights are being systematically violated. Likewise, the theme addressed is related to several of the sub-themes of the Congress, as it is configured as one of the main challenges not only for research, but also for the design of inclusive social and care policies that respect the dignity of all people. The possibility of analysing the situation in Portugal and Spain, with similar welfare systems, while with important differences in their implementation and development, allows interesting conclusions to be drawn regarding the impact that Social Work, among other professions, can have for the transformation of their respective societies.

Finally, this paper lends itself to a constant longitudinal review to monitor the evolution of policies in both countries, as well as the possibility of carrying out comparative analysis with other countries that have welfare system models different from those of the Iberian Peninsula.

Keywords

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Social Work, independent living, personal assistants, equal opportunities

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Safe spaces: shelters for LGBTQIA+ people victims of violence and discrimination in Italy

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Proposal type

Abstract

Precarious housing condition can be included among the consequences of discrimination and violence suffered by queer people, especially those who have a lack of economic autonomy. Gaetz et al. (2013) provide a definition of homeless youth as young people aged between 13 and 24 who live independently of their parents and do not have a source of income nor a shelter at a place of permanent residence, therefore having difficult access to support networks to foster a safe and adult transition.

Moreover, young LGBTQIA+ homeless are more likely to suffer substance use, mental health issues, poverty, and survival sex and exposed to violence by peers and institution, especially by policemen (Ventimiglia 2012). Moreover, public shelters and refuges are often inaccessible or even dangerous places for them, being not tailored on sexual and gender diversities and their staff biased by heteronormative and cis-normative beliefs (Fraser et al., 2019).

In Italy, shelters for LGBTQI+ victims of violence and discrimination lack a national legal and methodological framework, even though recently public funds have been provided by UNAR. Moreover, so far no systemic study has been undertaken on this field. This contribution is based on the findings from a field study carried out by the CNR aimed at filling this gap by mapping the LGBT shelters at a national level and investigating shelters' practices of intervention.

Seven shelters dedicated to queer people living in precarious housing have been identified. In-depth interviews were conducted with managers and practitioners to highlight the organizational structure, and the specific needs intercepted from their fieldwork. The thematic analysis of data collected made it possible to highlight the influence of shelter's genealogy and nature on the identification of LGBT+'s people needs people and, consequently, the methodological approaches adopted to respond to them.

Two main groups emerged from the analysis, characterized by different targets, goals and methodological approaches:

1) Shelters managed by multiservice cooperatives working in field of social exclusion and marginalization, addressing young LGBT+ homeless people from 18 to maximum 35 years, victims of discrimination and family SOGI-based violence based. The methodology adopted by these shelters is prevalently psychoeducational and aimed at the capacitation and social integration of users.

2) Shelters managed by community-based associations, addressing LGBT+ people victims of structural violence without age limits. Their approach is intersectional and focusing on the support different forms of marginalization suffered by LGBT+ subjectivities, such as poverty, sex work-related violences, migration discriminations and aged people's solitude.

Moreover, financial issues divide these two groups of shelters, being the first group of services funded by local administrations, while community-based projects are mainly self-funded.

The study primarily aims at filling the lack of research in this field in Italy. Secondly, considering that it was carried out at a time of great changes, also due to the funds made available by the UNAR, it is intended to represent a starting point for future studies and policy proposals.

Keywords

LGBTQIA+, SOGIESC based violence, shelters, social work practices, homelessness

What skills for the Welfare Manager?

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Recent research carried out in Italy (Sanfelici, Gui, Mordeglia, 2019) shows that out of a sample of 16,616 social workers involved (out of a national total of 44,611, about 37%) those employed in management, coordination and planning roles are 25.5%.

The competences of the social worker with master's degree ('specialist social worker') are defined in the Italian law (in particular in Presidential Decree 328/2001), among which are: elaboration and direction of programmes in the field of social policies, planning and management of services, analysis and evaluation of interventions' quality.

The main research question is: are the functions described in the law actually required and exercised within the welfare system?

In order to answer this question, at the University of Turin, master's degree in social work and social and services, a research group, composed of lecturers and students, carried out a survey on the distinctive skills of the specialist social worker.

After a review of the literature and regulations on the subject, questionnaires were submitted to middle managers and top managers of social services working in Piedmont, selected from those working for internships of the master's degree course.

The main focuses of the analysis are: 1. the comparison between the competences, knowledge and skills that came out from the research and those typical of the specialist social worker, provided by the aforementioned legislation; 2. the differences between management of public and third sector.

In a second phase, through a participatory approach, the results of the questionnaires analysis were discussed in focus groups with trainee students, with the aim of comparing the skills highlighted by the managers with those that the students are developing in their master's degree course.

The results show that the following functions are considered as central: team management, planning, analysis and decision making. With respect to the exercised skills, managers use most frequently: problem analysis and decision making, team management, networking, planning and service organization. The managers showed their own training gaps and had to supplement their basic knowledge with constant updating on legislation, resource management and development, social planning, occupational safety and stress management.

The focus groups revealed that the students, during the training, acquired skills on human resources management and development, teamwork and networking. At the same time, communication skills, strategic vision, flexibility and change management are lacking.

The research will be an opportunity to identify challenges and possible innovations for the university training of future specialist social workers, promoting further participatory research based on relationships and exchange of views between the world of services and academia.

Keywords

social work education, internship, professionalism, managerialism, specialist social worker

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Safeguarding young people in transition to adulthood: unsettling binaries and spanning boundaries

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

In the UK, recent years have seen increased practice and policy attention given to how social care approaches can be improved to support young people experiencing risks and harm in peer and community contexts (e.g., sexual and criminal exploitation or youth violence). This paper draws on early findings from research exploring responses to young people experiencing such risks and harm as they transition into adulthood. The paper explores efforts in the UK to find new ways of working that unsettle traditional binary perspectives (childhood-adulthood, victim-perpetrator, vulnerable-responsible, protection-participation) and which align with the boundary-spanning concept of Transitional Safeguarding (Holmes and Smale, 2018).

Summary:

The research informing this paper is part of a four-year UK-Economic and Social Research Council funded project on innovative interventions that safeguard young people from peer and community-based risks and harm [<https://theinnovateproject.co.uk/>]. A review regarding effective responses has proposed that approaches should be youth-centric, attend to specific needs (including those arising from trauma experiences), support protective relationships (both individually and in peer and community contexts), and address underlying structural issues (such as poverty, racism and other forms of exclusion) (Firmin et al., 2022).

However, where responses are situated exclusively within existing child protection frameworks, young people will 'age out' of services despite ongoing needs, with support for younger adults either lacking or targeted at (often older) adults with very high and long-term needs.

Thus, young adults experiencing risks and harm in peer and community contexts are a population that is largely 'invisible' to services, or 'seen' only through selective prisms (e.g., criminality, homelessness, or mental health difficulties). A lack of attention to their holistic needs as young people in transition – a life phase often

characterised by immense changes in relation to identity, social relationships and living situations – can lead to a fragmentation of services into siloed systems, each following their own logic, processes and thresholds.

Aims:

The paper will present innovations that seek to challenge binary perspectives and span the boundaries of fragmented and siloed systems, promoting a paradigm of ‘care’ for the whole person shaped by transitional, relational, and contextual approaches. Transitional Safeguarding as an emerging concept is introduced and the key issues, barriers, and enablers of new ways of supporting and safeguarding this population of young people are discussed.

Conclusion:

Contemporary UK social work research, practice and policy are shaped by binary perspectives and siloed services and systems, which have the potential to exclude populations that do not readily fit or fall between the gaps. This paper addresses this challenge and presents findings from research on early-stage innovation developments aiming for social care system changes that have implications for social work practice, policy, and research that better addresses the needs of young people in their transition to adulthood.

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Keywords

Transitional Safeguarding, young people, risks and harm in peer and community contexts, innovation, boundary-spanning

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Homelessness within a nest of crises in Greece: Challenges and opportunities for social work practice and research

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The aim of this presentation, based on an ongoing PhD study, is to critically examine and discuss the: a) Greek social policies for homelessness and their implications for social workers and b) social workers’ roles and practices regarding the homeless population in Greece.

Homelessness has hugely increased globally, while constant multiple crises (refugees, pandemic, climate, etc.) and welfare states' responses have had a significant impact to homeless people and people at risk of housing eviction. In Greece, a country that has been affected by ongoing crises since 2008, there are major indications which imply that there is a rapid increase in homelessness (FEANTSA,2018). Yet, there is no official national data, and therefore, the true dimensions of the phenomenon remain unknown.

In recent years, successive Greek governments have implemented a number of social policy measures and programs (i.e., 'Housing & Reintegration', 'Housing & Work'), aimed at supporting homeless people and people at high risk of housing eviction. Previous research (Kourachanis, 2018) and pre-liminary findings of this study indicate that such policies seem to offer a brief and shallow relief for people instead of a long-term provision of services, oriented in social integration actions. Social workers, being in the first line of support, empowerment and inclusion of the homeless population, face a number of challenges rooted in this context of limited policies and 'nest of crises'. Unfortunately, there is limited research evidence for social work practices with homelessness in Greece. This presentation seeks to offer insights for engaging into critical social work practice and research with homelessness, relevant for other contexts too, beyond Greece.

Keywords

Homelessness, Social Policy, Social Work Practice, Crisis, Critical Social Work

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Social Work during COVID-19: Glocal Challenges and and Implications for the Future of Social Work.

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

In early 2020, the coronavirus spread across the globe, surprising the entire world and bringing about wide-scale effects on the economy, politics, communities and people's everyday lives. As of this point of writing the abstract (12 October 2022), 628 million people worldwide have been infected and 6.5 million have died from the virus.

Even if there is plenty of experience in social work practice and research on working in human emergencies and natural disasters, the global COVID-19 pandemic has been a novel kind of experience for social work professionals, teams and organisations. Social workers, their clients and the organisations they represent have been affected by the pandemic in multiple ways. Social workers have been forced to experience the pandemic and its effects both as residents of the global village citizens of the state and from their various social positions, one of which is the

professional role of a social worker. Social workers have lived, worked and been parts of varying social-ecological fabrics, all of which define their professional operating environment. The pandemic and its effects on the lives of social workers have been pervasive and comprehensive in such a way that the boundaries between social workers' private and working lives have faded away. Professionally, the pandemic has called for social workers to reflect, adapt, innovate and change their activities.

The symposium will be an international book launch and based on four chapters included in the book called *Social Work during COVID-19: Glocal Challenges and Implications for the Future of Social Work* (Routledge 2023, early April 2023). The objective of this symposium is to offer a wealth of knowledge related to social work in different local and cultural contexts during the global pandemic. With experienced social work researchers across a diversity of settings, contexts and research traditions, the symposium is reflective of the 'glocal' responses of social work, where the phenomenon causing the need for social work is global and shared but in which the solutions being developed are often regional and local (think globally, act locally). Offering new perspectives on the challenges social workers have faced in dealing with the pandemic, the symposium aims to provide critical and timely insights into the innovations and adaptations in social work responses with a strong empirical basis. The oral presentations included in the symposium are:

1. Transformative Disruption? – Reflections on care in social work under a COVID-19 pandemic lock down. (Andreas Møller Jørgensen, Mie Engen and Maria Appel Nissen)
2. Social Work Research with Communities in Pandemic Context: Exploring health and economic conditions. (Malathi Adusumalli)
3. Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Irish child protection social workers' experiences of a national cyber-attack during a COVID-19 lockdown (Joseph Mooney, Declan Coogan, Caroline McGregor and Olive Lyons)
4. UK Social Worker Burnout and Coping during the First Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Paula McFadden, Ruth D Neill and Jill Manthorpe)

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Transformative Disruption? – Reflections on care in social work under a COVID-19 pandemic lock down

This presentation focuses on the possibilities for sustaining care in social work with vulnerable families during a pandemic lock down and discusses if disruption of normal practices can be a source for learning and transformation. First, we argue that a pandemic lock down can disrupt professional care but may also reveal structural weaknesses and offer paths for critical reflective transformation. We exemplify this by presenting an empirical case from a research project on the possibilities for care in social work (2018–2022). We introduce to the current structural challenges in the context of Danish social work with vulnerable children and families related to expectations of cost-effectiveness, efficiency, scarce resources, and time. Next, we present an analysis of, how social workers experience and reflect on the possibilities for sustaining care during the lock down. The analysis shows that prioritising scarce resources to enable care becomes paramount. While the social workers experience moments of enabling and (re)discovering the "essence of social work" and a sense of community with families, they also feel "worn out" and wonder what will be the future possibilities for care: Will management acknowledge and prioritise resources and time for care in the aftermath of COVID-19, or will conditions during the lock down become "the new normal"? Based on this, we discuss the possibilities for transformative disruption in terms of recognising the caring purpose of social work.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Social Work Research with Communities in Pandemic Context: Exploring health and economic conditions

Pandemic effects in the context of urban communities had been the focus in India, with return migration of rural folk from urban areas, evoking concerns of social justice and human rights. Rural areas have suffered tremendously due to the pandemic, as well as the return migration. However, the effects of pandemic need to be understood in the complexity of the pre-existing social practices and social infrastructure which have both macro and micro dimensions. Culturally, the villages are in the twilight of rapid urbanisation. In this scenario the pandemic made a meteoric impact on the lives of the people.

The public expenditure on health has been a major concern with out-of-pocket expenditure increasing in the communities, prior to the pandemic. This paper explores the impacts on health and economic situation due to the pandemic and their interconnections, based on insights derived from a larger study involving 16 'project affected' Uttar Pradesh villages in India. The study was conducted from July to November 2021, using both qualitative (FGD) and quantitative methods (Household Survey covering such themes as livelihoods, health, education, basic amenities, including the impact of the pandemic on their health and asset position).

The paper concludes with certain recommendations for the well-being of communities, the prioritization of creating accessible health infrastructure, strengthening access to small credits for alleviating distress and creating sustainable rural livelihoods to improve the economic condition of households

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Irish child protection social workers' experiences of a national cyber-attack during a COVID-19 lockdown

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic introduced periods of lockdown in Ireland where, outside of emergency situations, key services could not access vulnerable families. On the 14th of May 2021 core Child Protection Service IT infrastructure was also shut down due to an external cyber-attack. This paper presents the findings of empirical practice research project that gathered the insights of social workers who were working in statutory child protection services in Ireland during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The paper provides a specific focus on the social workers' interactions with and use of technology. Data were gathered on the experiences of ten frontline social workers in child protection and welfare services via qualitative interviews and reflective diaries. A constructivist grounded theory approach was adopted. While the overarching research project focused on social worker's experiences of working through the pandemic, data were collected during a period of a national cyber-attack which shut down the Irish Child Protection Services' computer networks. Social workers shared their experiences of connection and disconnection in this context and provided interesting comparisons of experiencing these two unrelated 'disaster' events simultaneously. Reflections related to the use of technology within social work child protection practice, connection with vulnerable clients, and re-connection with team members. The findings of this study demonstrate the value of person-centred practice and also the role of technology in our work with children and families.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

UK Social Worker Burnout and Coping during the First Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult period for the health and social care workforce, especially social work professionals. During the pandemic, social workers continued to provide services, finding new ways of working and adapting to rapid change in their own lives, as well as work life. Social work services have been essential to both short and long-term responses to the crises that evolved in practice, addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised populations. A UK study by McFadden and colleagues, aimed to examine the impact on social worker wellbeing and coping during this challenging time. The main findings of this study showed that despite increased pressures and a change in the way services operated, social workers continued to work in creative ways, using online platforms and adaptive risk management approaches. However, there is no doubt that continuation of services has taken a disproportionate toll on their wellbeing and burnout is higher in relation to personal and work life, than service user related burnout, suggesting levels of compassion and empathy for service users despite

impact on other areas of life. This chapter will examine findings from this research, to explore the impact on wellbeing and work-related quality of life, when burnout co-exists. The authors will reflect on 'how' social workers cope in the context of crises and maintain energy and compassion for service users as well as how these impacts on well-being over time.

Keywords

Disasters, Social work approaches: ecological approach, International Social Work, Relationships: social worker-service user relationships, Staff: social workers

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Adolescents experience of The Breakdown of their Foster Care Placement - Implications for social work practice

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Placement in a foster family is one of the out-of-home care arrangements available for children and adolescents, who cannot live at home. Foster care is considered temporary, while the goal is to rehabilitate the child and his biological family. In spite of the official policy, most of the placements remain till adulthood. One of the most difficult periods during the years of foster care is adolescence, which places major challenges for both, the fostering parents and the adolescents in a way that might eventually lead to what is known as "foster care breakdown". This research aims to retrospectively examine the experience of the foster breakdown from the adolescent's point of view.

Methods: Phenomenological approach is adopted to interview 14 young Israeli adolescents, aged 16-30, who experienced foster care breakdown during various stages of adolescence.

Findings: Interviewees experienced the difficulties of foster families in containing behaviors inherent to this developmental stage. This led them to a lack of belonging sense to the foster family, which missed its main purpose as a provider of a secure base. The interviewees have also described a lack of mediation between them and the foster parents done by the social worker which led to difficulties in handling conflicts.

Conclusions and implications: The breakdown was experienced as a trauma with long-term impacts, on the interpersonal aspect. Understanding foster breakdown dynamics from the adolescent's point of view may shed light on the practice used by social workers in these situations and enable the development of more precise interventions.

Keywords

Foster carers, child and adolescent mental health services, family relations, qualitative research, social worker-service user relationships

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Hidden Harm: Safeguarding Family Carers from Carer Harm

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

'Carer harm' is when carers experience violence or become subject to controlling or coercive behaviour, either on an incidental or systematic basis, resulting in physical, psychological and/ or sexual harm (Isham et al.2020, p.2). Little is known however about the harm experienced by carers at the hands of the person to whom they provide care. Challenges are often faced by social workers and other professionals when care and violence intersect, and a service user is the alleged perpetrator of abuse against their family carer. Practitioners struggle to engage with families' testimonies about harm in the context of care and illness and there have been calls for all stakeholders to work more proactively with families where care and violence intersect (Isham et al.2020). This study explores the concept of carer harm from the perspective of family carers of people with dementia and autism and relevant professionals including, social workers, public health nurses and the police. It set out to develop and co-design information and education resources in order to better understand, prevent and respond to carer harm.

The project deploys an engaged research approach that codeveloped knowledge in collaboration with family carers and professionals. The research design is mapped over three work packages. Work Package 1 involved narrative interviews with six family carers of people with dementia and six family carers of children/adults with autism who self-identified as experiencing carer harm. Interviews were used to build four fictional case study typologies. Work Package 2 involved three focus groups with relevant professionals including social workers, utilising the four fictional case studies as a focus for discussion. Work Package 3 comprised one World Café Co-Design Workshop with family carers, professionals, and service providers where education and training materials were developed. Content for the World Café was informed by evidence gathered in Work Packages 1 and 2 and explored the learning needs and readiness of professionals to have conversations and make interventions in cases of carer harm

While not generalisable, findings indicate high levels of unmet need and psychological distress with family carers of people with dementia and family carers of adults/children with autism reporting regularly experiencing verbal and physical aggression. Those experiencing carer harm described 'falling through the cracks' of support services. Key themes included fear, shame, stigma, helplessness and despair. Health and social care professionals reported lacking confidence in dealing with cases of carer harm with social workers in particular reporting ethical dilemmas in practice contexts highlighting the need for specialised training. Information booklets for family carers were subsequently developed to raise awareness of carer harm and to empower family carers to protect themselves and seek help. A practice guide was also developed for professionals and support organisations in order to improve understandings of, and responses to those experiencing carer harm.

Isham L, Bradbury-Jones C, Hewison A (2020). 'Female family carers' experiences of violent, abusive or harmful behaviour by the older person for whom they care: a case of epistemic injustice?' *Sociology Health Illn.* Jan;42(1):80-94.

Keywords

Carers, abuse, adult abuse, social work, Health professionals

658

Pathways for merging knowledge: creating presence and impact for knowledge from experience

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Proposal type

Workshop

Abstract

In recent years the discourse on the importance of including knowledge from life experience has deepened. It is even applied in various teaching programs for social work students and in participatory research. Along with this discourse, there is an increased recognition that to solve complex social problems we need to combine different types of knowledge such as professional knowledge, academic knowledge, and knowledge from life experience. Therefore, the need to develop participatory methods had intensified.

However, behind the word 'participatory' there is a wide range of possibilities, including partial and temporary participation, tokenism, as well as high levels of partnership. In studies and in knowledge development processes in welfare organization where participation is carried out at higher levels, co-researchers usually take part in collecting data, interpretation, analysis, and in writing and presentation. Collaborative work between people with knowledge from experience, social workers and academics, at these stages, can be challenging in many aspects, for example: How do we merge such different types of knowledge? How do we maintain the authenticity of each type of knowledge but also convey a common message? How do we create the dialogue between knowledge agents? How to create a comprehensive panorama of influential knowledge by merging the types of knowledge?

The goal of the workshop is to practice capacity building while focusing on the challenging phase where the merging between the types of knowledge in social work, is carried out. I will present the Merging of knowledge model (created by the ATD Fourth World Movement) as a method of research, teaching and practice in the field of social work, and together we will work on the different ways to deal with the challenges discussed.

An additional goal of the workshop is to develop a network of people who are interested in this methodical, ideological and intellectual challenge, that takes place in participatory research and teaching processes. The ability to produce a symphony of knowledge consisting of all stakeholders involves critical thinking alongside deep participatory techniques and is currently required for further development in the field of social work. The workshop will include joint practice and also an offer to the participants to continue with ongoing development of the methodology.

Pedagogical methods of the workshop: Description of the gap between the discourse on participation methods and the implementation of participatory practices; revealing and demonstrating the MoK model; practicing the 'merging' phase based on authentic data; discussing the ideas and challenges that arose from the practice; sharing the experience that the workshop participants will bring from their experiences.

Keywords

merging knowledge, knowledge from experience, Critical research, Critical pedagogy, participatory methods

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Community loneliness: a new conceptualisation of loneliness in old age and its implications for social work practice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Loneliness experienced by older people is a complex and problematic phenomenon that has become increasingly prevalent since the COVID-19 pandemic. The links between loneliness and illnesses such as coronary heart disease, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease are well researched and demonstrate the life-changing impact the experience can have. Despite significant developments in the global response to addressing loneliness, social work practice continues to lack the tools and resources to identify and address loneliness in the community. While social workers have voiced concerns, loneliness is seldom discussed explicitly due to the limited frameworks available. This creates the risk of increasing medicalisation of loneliness as social prescribing and correspondent scales become more prevalent.

With the (re)introduction of social prescribing in the UK, the future of gerontological social work is in a precarious position. The combined impact of COVID-19, an ageing society, and increased prevalence of ageism is a global concern and social work practice is struggling to address it. In an attempt to describe the nature of this change, research findings will present the novel concept of community loneliness as both 1) an experience and 2) a framework. Carried out during the pandemic, in collaboration with a day centre in the Northeast of England, a participatory action research project with older clients, their carers, staff and volunteers has been carried out to understand experiences of loneliness and the role(s) of the day centre.

Firstly, three separate components of the experience of community loneliness will be presented: i) the failed promise of the good life- as (mis)conceptions of the third age created by social pressure and an increased distrust of the state, amounted to a sense of being failed by society ii) a lack of understanding- encompassing a yearning to be seen as more than just an 'old person' and iii) destructive risk-averse behaviour- a tendency to reduce and restrict relationships in old age as a form of risk-management. Each of these aspects are bound together by an overall sense of disconnect, outlining a need for practitioners to meaningfully identify loneliness while seeking to re-build trust in the state and statutory support.

The community loneliness experience sheds light on the relational nature of loneliness, highlighting the need for an interconnected, contextual approach that looks to the community to better understand an individual's experience. The community loneliness framework highlights three contextual factors that shape the experience, i) relationships, ii) the environment and iii) processes. The framework is dependent on and celebrates the importance of human relationships. To challenge the increasingly medicalised narrative of loneliness that is emerging, gerontological social work requires a nuanced framework and conceptualisation to work with older service users to imagine and realise a better and more connected future for social work.

Keywords

Gerontological Social Work, Community, Loneliness, Relationships, Ageing

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Drug-Related Death Bereavement – why do the support and help fail?

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

Annually, about 500.000 people die by direct or indirect drug-related causes worldwide. Estimating that eight people are intimately affected by each of these deaths, the impact reaches about four million people each year. Many of these deaths can have severe long-term social, mental, and physical health-related consequences for those bereaved. Consequently, there is a call for knowledge on how drug-related deaths (DRDs) impact the ones that are left behind: what they endure, how they cope, what help they might need, and what help they experience. Social work research on this marginalized group of bereaved people discloses challenges concerning their situation and psychosocial state, as well as professional services' way of relating to them.

The current research shows that DRD-bereaved people struggle with poor social health, elevated rates of prolonged grief reactions, complex social relations and often stigma, guilt and shame. The social support they perceive and experience is often inadequate. Therefore, it is good reasons to believe that many in this group need attention and help from professional help services. Still, research from our studies shows that a majority do not receive professional help or are dissatisfied with the help they have received. Adequate help for children in families seems especially missed. On the other hand, professional service providers often lack awareness of DRD-bereaved people's needs. In addition, the professional services operate in challenging help contexts due to the circumstances surrounding the death and the need for cross-service coordination and collaboration. The research presented in this symposium provides opportunities to reflect on how social services can fall short in encounters with bereaved people who have experienced DRD and other stigmatized deaths, and aims to raise awareness among social workers and other helpers on how professional practice towards these groups can be improved.

The symposium will focus on different parts of the Norwegian research project “Drug Death Bereavement and Recovery” (END). END is an extensive research project with five studies focusing on the drug-death bereaved and the professionals involved in follow-up. The data in the studies derives from questionnaires with 255 bereaved and in-depth interviews with parents (n=14), siblings (n=14), and close friends (n=18). In addition, data is collected from public and non-governmental service providers from focus groups (n=105) and a questionnaire (n=103).

The symposium will describe the END project’s research design, empirical data and results. The symposium will consist of four presentations by researchers from the END Project, representing perspectives from professional helpers and bereaved siblings, parents and close friends, as well as perspectives from bereaved who have problematic substance use.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Help needs of those bereaved by a drug-related death (DRD) and the health services perspective

Background: Few studies have investigated DRD-bereaved people's needs for help and experiences with help services, and no previous studies have explored how professional helpers relate to them in the acute phase. The two studies presented here investigate these phenomena.

Method: 255 DRD-bereaved people answered a cross-sectional survey, and the results were analyzed quantitatively. Twenty-seven professional helpers participated in six focus groups, and interviews were analyzed thematically and reflexively.

Results: More than 80% of the bereaved participants reported needing professional help after the death. About 50% of them had received help, and half were satisfied. Help from crisis teams and psychotherapeutic help increased the likelihood of satisfaction. Furthermore, only a quarter of participants reported that the bereaved children had received help, and less than 30% were satisfied with this help. DRD-bereaved people were not recognized as needing help which caused the helpers in the acute phase to abstain from initiating proactive psychosocial follow-up. They describe it as demanding to identify DRD-bereaved, establish contact, and assess needs. The service context requires collaboration between services, which creates challenges for adequate service provision.

Conclusion: DRD-bereaved people were less often offered follow-up in the acute phase than those bereaved by other traumatic deaths. Help for children in the family was missed, and a family perspective should guide help-providing. There is a call for awareness of DRDs as potentially traumatizing and to address barriers to organizing proactive follow-up for DRD-bereaved people.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Why informal support fails for siblings bereaved by a drug-related death?

Background and purpose: Drug-related deaths strongly impact the lives of the bereaved and helpful informal support is decisive when it comes to managing one's grief processes. The aim of this presentation is therefore to convey research-based knowledge about siblings' experiences with informal support after the loss of a brother or sister in DRD, and to enhance social work through and towards human relationships.

Methods: A sample of 10 siblings was extracted from the total sample of siblings (N=79) participating in the larger END-study (N=255). They were selected according to an optimum breadth of background variables (i.e., across gender, age, place of residence, education, and age of the deceased). Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted, and reflexive thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data.

Findings: Three main themes were identified from the analyses: (1) the valued support that elaborates on the range of desired support and content of the support received; (2) the barriers to support which are connected to complex family relations, different grief reactions, and stigma, shame, and devaluation; and finally the siblings pointed to (3) ways to promote support, which focuses on the importance of openness and mutual closeness.

Conclusion and implications: The interpretation of the reasons for the scarce support revolves around a "strong" sibling role, complex family relations, stigma, protective silence, and disenfranchised grief. By addressing this in social work practice, practitioners may optimize this vital support potential for the bereaved experiencing drug-related death.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Help and support for drug death bereaved with substance use problems

Background and purpose: People whose lives are dominated by drug use often have close relationships with others who use drugs and are at particular risk of losing people through a DRD (Kenny et al., 2022). Bereavement can increase substance consumption, and people with substance use issues are especially vulnerable to developing complicated grief (Parisi et al., 2019). Despite this, the experiences of bereaved persons with substance use problems have been given little attention in research. Aiming to enhance social work towards bereaved people with substance use problems the paper presents an analysis of experiences of help and support after experiencing DRD bereavement among those who use drugs themselves.

Methods: The study employed a qualitative exploration of interviews with 13 people who had been bereaved following a DRD and who had their own substance use problems.

Findings: We identified three themes when exploring the bereaved experiences of help and support: 1) Not being acknowledged as one of the bereaved in need of help 2) Substance use hinders social contact, and 3) The nature of the help received.

Conclusion and implications: Findings suggest that the bereaved who have substance use problems are deprived of both social support and professional help. The focus seems to be on drug use rather than on bereavement. The dominant substance use position may hinder seeing the complex lived experiences of this group of people and point to a challenge for social work practice in contemporary contexts.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

What do social workers need to know about the consequences of high levels of prolonged grief of drug-related death bereaved family members?

Background: Unnatural deaths like suicides and accidents are found to cause serious and long-lasting consequences for those close to the deceased person. Rates of prolonged grief are reported to be especially elevated in bereaved individuals following unnatural losses compared to other causes of death. Drug-related death (DRD) is unnatural, and grief following DRD has been scarcely investigated. This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of prolonged grief symptoms in bereaved family members after DRDs, identify predictors of prolonged grief, and examine whether symptom levels decrease with time.

Method: A cross-sectional design based on survey data from parents (n = 93), siblings (n = 78), children (n = 24) and other family members (n = 39) was conducted (n = 234).

Results: The strongest associations were found between a high level of symptoms and "months since the loss", "suicidal thoughts", and "withdrawal from others". The analyses showed that time does not always "heal all wounds", and the bereaved who lost one to two years ago had the highest level of prolonged grief symptoms.

Discussion: The high levels of prolonged grief symptoms and its connection to DRD trigger a "special grief" where many bereaved socially isolate themselves. The importance of addressing the need for knowledge in social work practice about DRD bereavement to facilitate support to the bereaved will be highlighted.

Keywords

grief, bereavement, service development, stigma, problematic drug use

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Personal and Sociocultural Perspectives of Adult Siblings - a forgotten group in social work

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: Research articles dealing with siblings as next of kin or as bereaved often refer to them as a forgotten group (Bowman et al., 2014) because this group is scarcely studied (Smith-Genthôs et al., 2017; Templeton et al., 2018). In this oral paper presentation, based on four analyses, the aim is to convey research-based knowledge about siblings' life experiences and bereavement in families where substance use is present, to enhance social work through and towards human relationships.

Methods: This presentation's empirical results originate from a larger Norwegian study on the bereaved after drug-related deaths. Our presentation focuses on studies of bereaved siblings and is based on interviews about siblings' experiences before and after the brother or sister's death. The data consists of in-depth interviews with 14 bereaved adult siblings. The presentation is based on four studies (Løberg, A. H., Lindeman, S. K. & Lorås, L. (2022), Lindeman et al. (review), Lorås et al. (review), and Ph.D. project (Meen). Using thematic-, narrative- and discourse-analysis, we reveal findings about siblings' specific needs as users of social services, as well as how sociocultural discourses about siblings impact their positioning as to whether they need help from social services.

Findings: The results from studies on siblings' life experiences while living with brothers or sisters' problematic substance use show how siblings make extensive efforts to help their family members and how their family life, relations, and identity, also in the long term, is influenced because of these experiences. The results of the sociocultural studies are not yet published. The sociocultural perspective focuses on what impact discourses regarding grief, grieving processes, and sibling relationships have on bereaved siblings.

Conclusions and implications: Our analysis shows how social and health problems, such as problematic substance use, challenge social work research, practice, and policy. Social work practitioners need increased knowledge considering the entire family system when supporting individuals living with severe health problems and bereavement. Knowledge about sibling experiences is essential in the development of promoting the well-being of siblings who live with siblings who have problematic substance use or have lost a brother or a sister by understanding the health and mortality risks associated with it (Bolton et al., 2017). We argue that research on

siblings' experiences provides valuable knowledge about siblings' own needs for social-oriented support in families where one or several children have problematic substance use problems, but also provides valuable knowledge about the whole family's life situation and support needs. By addressing this in social work practice, practitioners can also gain a valuable understanding of siblings' situations in families where one or more children have different challenges.

Keywords

Siblings, Family relations, Bereavement, Drug use, adverse childhood experiences

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Using Participatory Action Research with a Medical Social Work Team to examine awareness and attitudes towards Adult Safeguarding practices in the Acute Hospital Context

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The investigation of, and interventions on, the alleged abuse of vulnerable adults has become an important feature of social work and other professional practices in Ireland and beyond. This implies important organisational challenges in ensuring that adult safeguarding responsibilities are delivered in ways that ensure positive outcomes for all stakeholders. Many factors can influence staff responses to concerns in acute care contexts. This can relate to awareness of the many forms of abuse and reporting obligations, attitudes to adult safeguarding and understanding the impact of abuse. Acute hospitals offer unique opportunities to intervene in abusive situations and to offer support to those at risk (Warburton-Wynn,2022). This study had two main aims:

1. To explore the awareness, understanding and attitudes towards safeguarding practices of staff in a large Dublin teaching hospital using a Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR).
2. To increase the research capacity of the social work team using a PAR approach with social workers acting as co-researchers.

A participatory action research methodology was utilised involving a social work academic and six members of the Medical Social Work team as co-researchers in the study design, data collection and data analysis. This methodology was employed as it facilitated an examination of current practices regarding adult safeguarding in the acute hospital as well as fostering social work practitioner research. A quantitative, descriptive study design was adopted, which utilised a cross-sectional online survey of hospital staff which generated N=176 responses from a variety of hospital staff including nurses, doctors, social workers and health and social care professionals.

Findings indicate that acute care staff have varying levels of awareness of different categories of abuse. 54% of respondents stated they had made a referral/report of abuse in the last 6 months of which 56% were to the

Medical Social Work Department. When asked about confidence levels in recognising and reporting suspected harm, neglect, or abuse of an adult patient, 35% of respondents reported being 'Very Confident', 46% reported being 'Somewhat confident' and 18% reported being 'Not Confident.' Only 58% of respondents reported being aware of their mandated reporting requirements under The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

This study suggests that staff in acute care contexts lack confidence and knowledge in detecting and reporting the abuse of adults at risk, including their mandated reporting obligations, with 90% of respondents stating that they need further training in this area. This presents important considerations and opportunities for the social work profession in helping to upskill and provide training to hospital staff in order to improve adult safeguarding reporting processes and increase confidence and competence in this area of practice.

Warburton-Wynn, A. (2022). Sexual assault of older people by hospital staff in England. *The Journal of Adult Protection*.

Keywords

participatory action research, medical social work, adult abuse, hospitals, adult safeguarding

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Social workers' competencies in meetings with young people

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Everyday thousands of meetings between young people and social workers take place. It is essential to know what is important to talk about and how to do it. The model MySocialworkPartner presents 11 dimensions from analyzing 340 videotapes of meetings in real-time statutory social work (casework) (Antczak & Steensbæk, 2020; Birkholm Antczak et al., 2017). Following the model, a rating system to value the meetings was developed and tested to guide supervisors' recommendations to social workers. We have rated 117 social workers and young people meetings and will present and discuss social workers' competencies: What dimensions are they well or less suited for? Also, we will present whether the competencies can be related to the type of conversations, social workers' acquaintance with the young person, number of meetings, young persons' age, sex, and municipality.

The goal is to develop the individual social worker from novice to expert (Dreyfuss & Dreyfuss, 1988) through videos. The model initially followed a widely used model from the teaching world, which used video recordings and assessed interaction and supervision (Hamre et al., 2013; Jimenez et al., 2015). It made it possible for social workers and supervisors to address real-time issues and improve future meetings in a social worker's context.

MySocialworkPartner is inspired by theories of interaction (Rogers, 1965; Stern, 2004) and ecological interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These interactions are influenced by law, local rules, and local organizations when social

workers make statutory government work and have to ensure the involvement/participation of families when sometimes working against their will (e.g., Munro et al., 2016).

Antczak, H., & Steensbæk, S. (2020). *Samtaler med unge - At balancere mellem relation og myndighed*. Akademisk forlag, København.

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Keywords

young people, videos, statutory social work, dimensions of meetings, supervision

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Challenging the National Hegemonies of Social Work Education to a more Holistic Transnational Perspective.

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Proposal type

Abstract

Despite the strong presence of a Global Definition of Social Work (IFSW, 2014) many nation states impose different standards and expectations of their social work education programmes. These standards are determined by various professional statutory and regulatory bodies, but all operate within the pervading national political environment. Additionally in some jurisdictions, as can be seen for example in the UK context, legislation directs and constrains the priorities of social work education and subsequent practice.

Over the past decade, research has begun to emerge which shows a tension between social work as a discipline and regulations linked to neoliberal policy, evidence-based practice, and defined competence requirements within the welfare services. We can relate this to a fundamental distinction between an autonomous professionalisation from within, and a governing professionalisation from above (Evetts, 2003). The body of research to date primarily explores the local or national context, highlighting a data gap in respect of comparative analyses.

The Transnational Social Work Education Research Group (TSWERG) has collaborated since 2017 and has been particularly concerned with the relationship between models and methods of education, and preparation for practice in the profession (Laidlaw et al, 2020).

This paper presents the findings from the latest TSWERG research collaboration, which focusses on the regulation of social work education within different welfare policy contexts. The study explores the impact of national, localised approaches to social work education standards, on professional practice within those environments. An analytical framework approach is firstly used to compare the accreditation and approval standards for social work education programmes in four countries: Ireland, Italy, Norway, and the United Kingdom. The priorities of the respective nation states which underscore these regulatory choices are then analysed through a critical social work lens.

Provisional findings indicate that similarities and differences between prescribed standards for social work education in the four countries, reflect the socio-political expectations and priorities of the different national contexts. When translated into practice on the ground, this leads to national differences between what is considered optional or essential for the discipline of social work.

In their conclusion to this paper, the researchers argue that if we wish to give precedence to social work being an international discipline that has unifying concepts within local arrangements, we must begin to understand what it is we do as educators, how this is shaped by current political discourses, and how each state differs in determining expectations and priorities for qualification and registration under the title of Social Worker.

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Keywords

Social Work Education, International, Research, Professional Registration, Socio-political

From a distance: learnings from COVID-19 for relational social work practice with young people leaving care

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Every year around 13,000 sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds in England leave their foster homes or residential care and negotiate the transition to adulthood. They are expected to navigate a number of changes in their lives (setting up home, managing day to day living and their finances and maintaining education, employment or training) at a much younger age than their peers in the general population and without the levels of practical, emotional and financial support that families typically offer their children (Stein, 2006).

The Care Leavers, COVID-19 and Transitions from Care (CCTC) study aimed to understand how COVID-19 impacted on care leavers' lives. Drawing upon findings from the CCTC study, this paper will explore local authority responses to supporting young people negotiating the transition from care to adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will explore the impact that COVID-19 had on young people's experiences and transitions; where young people went, what services and support they received, and how young people got on.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews took place with 82 participants, including young people who transitioned from care during COVID-19, leaving care managers at local authorities, leaving care workers and health professionals with a remit for supporting care leavers. The interviews explored perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on care leavers' transition pathways and explore what measures were put in place to protect and promote the welfare of care leavers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including what worked well and what could be better.

Findings

The study found that COVID-19 added extra layers of complexity to support and services for young people leaving care, which were already reported to be over-stretched. Social distancing measures disrupted traditional models of direct social work practice at a time when care leavers' need for support was heightened.

Leaving care services had to adapt the types of support they provided and the ways in which it was delivered to young people. In some cases, the pandemic served as a catalyst for innovative adjustments in approaches to service delivery and the levels and types of support available to care leavers. There was some indication that during COVID-19 services for care leavers had moved away from bureaucratic and 'task-focused' practices and towards more personalised and relational support.

However, reflecting on the pandemic, care leavers who took part in the study had mixed views about the degree to which they had felt supported by leaving care services. Whilst some young people appreciated an uplift in services

and support during the pandemic, others did not recognise any change and were ambivalent or negative, experiencing their workers as 'unavailable' or 'unhelpful'.

Conclusions and implications

The pandemic presented new challenges to local authorities and there was wide variation in the level and quality of support provided to care leavers. This paper brings learning from the COVID-19 context with important implications for policy and practice. Lessons focus on the importance of ensuring organisations and individual practitioners have the capacity to deliver high quality relational practice that meets the individual needs of all care leavers.

Keywords

Leaving care , Social worker-service user relationships, COVID-19, Children's social care , Qualitative research

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Florence Kelley life and work as a challenge case to research on social work and social welfare

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

From the Portuguese speak countries point of view, considering not only Portugal itself but above all Brazil as a relevant and influent strand of reconceptualization movements and its affiliation to Marxian thought, is astonishing the veil of ignorance about social work pioneer's engagement in social reform and policy practice as legacy to critical and radical social work and today's social work agenda.

Facing this perspective, the Florence's Kelley life and work appears as a paradigmatic case and challenge to the relevance of the research on social work in the Lusophony context.

This presentation is part of a wider ongoing research on social work and social reform in the Progressive Years, adopts an historical approach and consider Kelley's letters and other primary sources as a useful resource to develop the research on social work and social welfare history. We propose to analyse the correspondence as one source to gain a more deep understand of their thought and work, to explore their relationships and networks and their relevant contributions.

Main points of the presentation

The communication has as starting point the Florence Kelley conversion to Socialism. The focus, but not exclusive, of this presentation is Kelley's relationship with Fredrich Engels and European and American socialist movements in the context of the broad alliances that supported her engagement and achievements in labour and social rights through social legislation also considering Kelly's condition as Hull-House resident ("the socialist in Chicago").

How the presentation will address the conference aims and themes

Firstly, this is a contribution to a very ignored story of social work history, namely in European and Lusophony contexts. Secondly, because revisiting and gaining a deeper understanding of the social work roots is a heuristic and inspiring legacy to think the social work identity as a profession and discipline. Thirdly, this approach is a valuable contribution to social work education for human rights and social justice in contemporary contexts.

Conclusions from and implications for practice, policy, or further research.

The research presents the hypothesis that can explain the omission of Florence Kelley relationship with Fredrick Engels and her commitment with European and American socialist movements in the critical and radical narratives of Social Work history in the Portuguese-speaking countries and other latitudes.

The research puts in evidence that the social reform towards the social justice is a foundational element of the profession social ethics. According to this, one of the major implications for education and practice is to stress the social work conception as policy-based profession and the development of competences in social policy analysis and policy practice, but also the critical reflexivity about professional purpose and the political dimension inherent to social work values.

Keywords

Florence Kelly, Fredrich Engels, Progressive Years, Social Work History Narratives, Social Justice

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Social work history from the standpoint of women sentenced as vagrants

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The main roots of professional social work are typically seen in poor relief systems, charity organisations and social movements as part of western modernisation. Besides this, social work also has its roots in police practices, criminal sanctions and oppression. The western canon of professional social work history often highlights the work of individual social work ancestors and pays less attention on the collective processes and human relationships in formulating the history and the present. The Nordic welfare state has been seen as woman-friendly and the state as an important ally for the women's movement. But at the same time the empowerment of upper-class women and also social work profession as a social institution are partly built on the oppression of poor women.

What does the history of social work look like if we examine it from the perspective of those women who were the objects of social work actions in the beginning of professionalization? In this paper, I will take a look at Finnish social work history in the late 1800s and early 1900s in the capital city of Finland, Helsinki. In the words of Dorothy Smith, I am taking the “standpoint” of women who were convicted as vagrants. These women were sent to work prisons because they had – according to the 1883 Vagrancy Act – made a habit of an idling, loitering and immoral way of living.

In this paper, I explore what kind of different institutions of helping and punishing were involved in their lives at the time when professional social work started to develop in Finland. I describe the encounters these women had with the vagrancy control systems and the evolving social work institution. What kind of human relationships were the encounters based on? I analyze these questions based on previous historical research literature and archival data from institutions of Finnish vagrancy control.

Keywords

social work history, women, sentences, feminist theory

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Living Technology in Social work: embedding VR in professional working methods in youth care

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In a rapidly changing society in which technology gains importance in the daily life of citizens, new opportunities and challenges arise in the social work domain. In multiple studies the added value of Virtual Reality (VR) as an assessment, treatment or training tool in a variety of health and social care settings has been shown. Also, in the Netherlands the potential of VR in improving the professional support of vulnerable people and their outcomes has gained momentum and popularity among social work organizations. Despite the recognized significance of VR in the social work domain, the sustainable integration of VR in the structure and content of regular professional working methods is still highly complicated.

This study aims to fill this gap by developing a VR intervention that is embedded in the regular working methods of social work professionals. This will be done in the field of youth care that provides services and support to families involved in high-conflict divorces, which is seen as ultimately challenging by professionals to deal with due to the complex dynamics in the parental relationships.

In the Netherlands, approximately 70.000 children are involved in a divorce each year. Most of these parents handle their separations relatively well, but about 20 to 25% end up in high-conflict divorces. These divorces are characterized by ongoing and often long-lasting conflicts between parents that negatively affect their children. It is expected that VR might help to break this persistent and destructive pattern of conflicts by allowing parents to

step into the shoes of their children and experience the situation from their perspective. An immersive VR experience can be a powerful and effective 'perspective taking' tool for professionals in order to increase awareness, self-reflection and empathy of parents and ultimately their willingness to change their behavior.

By means of a two-year participatory action research, in close collaboration with youth care organizations and a VR developer, A VR intervention will be developed that is embedded in the professional working methods in youth care. Throughout the study action and reflection, theory and practice simultaneously assist in knowledge development and the implementation of VR in general practice. The study sheds light on the many issues regarding in how and when to use VR in this typical context, how it can actually support clients and how VR interacts with the supportive process and in outcomes.

We will present the research findings based on action research methodology from the first year of this study, that include the challenges and breakthroughs throughout the development and implementation process of the VR intervention. The findings reflect the experiences of professionals and clients with VR in this specific context as well as the extensive challenge to incorporate technological innovations in professional working methods in the field of social work.

Keywords

Virtual Reality, youth care, embedding technology, high-conflict divorces, action research

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"Let imagine ourselves in the future to improve our community today". A qualitative research on Community Future Dialogues in community social work.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In community social work, social workers are asked to involve community members in planning social interventions in order to face problems and promote community's wellbeing. Therefore, social workers should use collaborative methods aimed at working in partnership with community members. Community Future Dialogues (CFD) are a collaborative method, based on Future Dialogue technique, aimed to cope with a growing worry, shared by community members and practitioners, and create a plan to improve community wellbeing. CFD promote participatory decision-making processes, that encourage people involved in identifying new and creative strategies to face community problems. CFD session is composed of two main phases: (1) the interview from a future perspective and (2) the definition of a concrete plan in the present. This method also involves the presence of two external professionals whose role it is to facilitate dialogue.

The contribute presents an action research aimed to experiment and study the CFD in a community social work projects implemented in a municipality in the outskirts of Milan (Italy). The project foresaw the implementation of 7 CFD sessions, starting from shared worries identified by two community social workers in the local community,

mainly connected to isolation and ghettoization of some groups of citizens, and the lack of recognition of the rights of vulnerable categories of citizens. Community social workers worked in partnership with citizens, service users and other practitioners and used CFDs to plan in a collaborative way activities and social interventions. The implemented projects refer to traditional and emancipatory/transformational community social work approaches.

This paper presents a part of findings of the action research. In particular, 4 focus groups with 19 participants who experienced CFDs were carried out. Focus groups were aimed at collecting the participants' points of view about their feelings, resources and limits of their participation at a CFD. Thematic and content analysis, based on theory driven approach, was carried out.

Findings show that CFDs are helpful to reflect on community resources and on how their members can take care of themselves and find coping strategies of communities' problems. Participants consider the discussion of these problems from different points of views as a great opportunity.

However, the process of a CFD is not easy. Participants need help to think to the future in order to find coping strategies and to come back to the present to define a shared plan. The role of the two facilitators of CFD sessions is really important. In fact, they help participants to understand the process, feel comfortable, respect engagement rules, and manage the dialogue.

Participating in a CFD allows community members to create important relationships and make decisions on further common issues. Moreover, participants appreciated to learn a new planning method to use in various life or professional situations.

In conclusion, if properly prepared and facilitated, CFD sessions help community members to cope with their concerns defining new and unexpected strategies and solutions to take care of themselves.

Keywords

Community social work, Participation , Community Future Dialogue , Action research , Focus groups

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Social Sustainability: “For you it is a house, for us it is a home”.

Aniek Santema, Robin Smits, Annica Brummel
HAN University of Applied Science, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

This research explores how to develop inclusive partnerships between social work professionals and residents in vulnerable neighborhoods. In the Netherlands, vulnerable neighborhoods are affected by societal challenges such

as shortage of housing, insecurity, poverty and social exclusion. This sparks more attention for connecting the physical and social domain in policy and practice.

This research focuses on evaluating a unique partnership between a welfare organization, contractor, housing corporation and residents in a social housing project. The goal of this participatory action research is investigating the impact of the project, to describe a method with clear steps and tools. The capability approach (Nussbaum 2011) and social quality (Verharen 2020) inform the method. In this presentation we focus on a key question that arose during the research: “What are opportunities and challenges of working together with residents and organizations in the physical and social domain to improve social quality of neighborhoods?”.

Methods

The research focused on two diverse neighborhoods in the city of Nijmegen. Since 2016, a total of 499 houses and 103 maisonettes are renovated. 82% of the households had contact with social workers during this process.

The research team works together with representatives of all partners in a ‘core group’ to co-create knowledge. Data has been collected from 24 residents and 9 professionals through semi-structured interviews with capability cards, focus group discussions, and a community activity. After transcribing and open-coding, our research team, including an expert by experience, held analyzing sessions. The outcomes informed co-creation of improvement actions that were tested and evaluated.

Findings, Conclusions and implications

One value of the project was working in partnership with residents. While valuable, this also appeared to be a challenge in both neighborhoods. New methods of working together were tried out and evaluated, like more communication with residents and shared decision-making on improvements for the neighborhood.

There are complex challenges in the power dynamics in the partnership. While involving residents is often a core point in social work practice, there is an inherent challenge because the partnership has not been initiated by the residents. The project is brought forward by the social housing corporation that carries their own agenda. This agenda, and the agenda of the welfare organizations are often biased towards a situation where residents take the lead in becoming a resilient, democratic and sustainable neighborhood. At the same time residents are seen as contributing to the problems in the neighborhood. While the residents often do want to participate actively in improving the social quality in their neighborhood, most residents rely on the social worker to initiate such actions.

Exploring what works in the combination of the physical and social domain is highly relevant in today’s social work practice. Thus, it is crucial to understand the power dynamics to develop meaningful collaboration with residents.

Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press.

Verharen, E. A. J. (2020). *Being there: Working together to strengthen social quality*. Nijmegen, HAN University of Applied Science.

Keywords

Social and physical domain, Partnership, Co-creating knowledge, Social Quality, Residents

Social workers knowledge work in assessment and decision-making of the need of emergency placement

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

When social workers assess whether the child is in immediate danger or not, the available information is crucial for building the understanding of the child's wellbeing and risks, and for proceeding the assessment and following decision from the starting point to the very end. Social worker must make sense of the different information in situations which can take a place on any time of the day, and where they may face significant lack or overload of information and other senses-stimulation along with high level of emotional impact and stress. At the same time, they are forced to gather more information often hastily within a limited timeframe to decide whether the child needs to be placed out of his/her home by an emergency placement for 30 days.

The objective of this presentation is to explore what kind of information social workers use in their assessment and decision-making processes. The question is, what information social workers adopt, how they understand and conceptualize the gathered information and how they use it in assessment and decision-making. The analysis underlines social workers' knowledge work, which means the sense making of the information including both, the rational and intuitive processes.

The theoretical framework is inspired of the former ethnographic research in social offices and home visits, and the concept of researching practices and knowledge constructing with professionals. The findings are based on thematic analysis of the ethnographic observation data during the period of 12 months, including interview data of 51 front-line social workers in two Finnish municipalities. The data was gathered as part of PhD- study 'Decision-making of emergency placements in child protection'.

When speaking about the knowledge work, the interviewed social workers used 77 different expressions to describe their work with information. Social workers emphasised the rational and analytical way of making sense the information, but intuition was included as well as other ways of working through the information such as using emotional and experiential knowledge. The findings suggest four different functions for knowledge work. First, they use a variety of different types of information such as facts, sensory perceptions, and intuition. Secondly, information is used for different purposes as a functional tool in assessment and decision-making. In other words, it refers to social worker's practices of using information in present situation. Thirdly, the decision-making process leans on the different information as the information has a significant role directing the assessment and decision-making processes. Fourthly, the information has a power hierarchy as the different types of information (from different sources) have unequal weight in decision making. Therefore, the power hierarchy may influence the outcome in the acute situation.

The findings highlight the assessment and the decision-making as a complex and demanding knowledge work which includes choosing and excluding, analyzing and sense-making. The social workers understanding of whether the child is in immediate danger is build up on the foundation of the knowledge work.

Keywords

emergency placement, assessment, decision making, knowledge work, ethnography

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUNG VOLUNTEER AND HIS MENTOR: EVALUATING SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUTH VOLUNTARY SERVICE

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Volunteering is a resource for social work organisations and also a possibility for volunteers to enhance their competences. The question is what could help volunteering to become significant life changing experience for volunteer. The long term YVS program had two important elements in order to secure the quality of the experience and to assure learning from the experience to happen. The first element was that young people participating in the YVS program were supervised by two adults: a curator who accompanied the volunteer at the host organization and a mentor appointed by the other organization. And the second is Digital Badges System (DBS) which was a tool used to gather evidence of the development and important achievements that young people make during volunteering and to see the progress of their development. The role of mentor in the relationship between young volunteer and his mentor which develops during the long-term Youth Voluntary Service (YVS) will be discussed in the presentation.

The presentation is based on the results of the qualitative research, semi structured interviews with 15 ex-participants of YVS. All participants finished YVS in 2019 or 2020 and during research were studying at institutions of higher education. The research was conducted in November-December 2020. Due to the quarantine all interviews were held on the Zoom platform. This research was funded by Youth Department at Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

Based on the descriptions of the relationships of former YVS participants with their mentors and curators, the roles of mentors and curators they performed for volunteers during YVS were reconstructed. One role was assigned to one person, so the mentors and curators can be grouped according to their roles they had to volunteers. Curators performed the following roles: significant adult; friend and equal partner; the organizer of the volunteer group activities, and the formal leader. Mentors performed the following roles: significant adult; friend; an old acquaintance; formal - "through outstretched hand". Volunteers were most influenced by mentors and curators in the roles of significant adult and least in the roles of formal leader.

Some volunteers were sincerely involved in collecting digital badges, and the DBS motivated them, while others collected digital badges only because they were mandatory, and the DBS did not motivate them. Data analysis showed that the relationships with the mentor and curator were crucial both for the functioning of the DBS and for the YVS experience to be considered a significant, life-changing experience. When the mentor and curator, or one of them, were perceived as significant adults, they became authoritative adults that the volunteers trusted and opened up for a sincere relationship. Implications for practice: DBS cannot replace a real relationship between a volunteer and a mentor, it is only valuable as a tool to help the volunteer and mentor together set volunteering goals and measure achievements. YVS mentors must take their task seriously, offer volunteers meaningful

activities in the organization, ensure help and support, not miss scheduled meetings with volunteers, and help reflect on the volunteers' experiences.

Keywords

volunteers, mentoring

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Social Work and Global Sustainable Development Goals through the lenses of Social Work Students in Australia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – Comparative Research Project

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The Research Project “Social Work and Global Sustainable Development Goals” represents an attempt to interconnect the science and profession of social work with current global development directions. The Project was directed towards the research on opinions of future social workers (current students) in two different socio-economically developed societies, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Australia. The focus of this research were the opinions and positions/attitudes amongst future social workers about strategic directions of societies’ global developments defined by the Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2015-2030. The methodological basis of the project consists of the preparation and implementation of the research, statistical and theoretical data analysis and interpretation of results.

This was an empirical research study making use of a questionnaire. The online Survey has been specifically designed by the researcher for the purpose of this project. 160 students of Social Work from University in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar (three largest cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Sydney and Melbourne (Australia) were participating in this research. The Research Questions were: To what extent are the students of social work familiar with the Global Sustainable Development Goals? What are the opinions and attitudes of students of social work regarding the Global Sustainable Development Goals? To what extent are the students of social work prepared to act in accordance with the Global Sustainable Development Goals when analysing professional practice? Are there any differences between the students’ opinions regarding Global Sustainable Development Goals? How do students’ attitudes differ taking into account their country of origin and social locations.

All participants who provide consent to participate in the research study will be directed via link to an anonymous online survey. This link will take participants to the webpage specially designed and administrated under the webpage of the University of Banja Luka (Faculty of Political Science). Quantitative data has been analyzed via SPSS version 25. A few steps prior to the analysis were conducted: Data cleaning was carried out to ensure that it is appropriate for further analysis; Basic descriptive statistics has been carried out in order to examine the averages for the main variables; Inferential statistics has been used to draw conclusions about observed differences between groups in this study.

There are many differences between Australia and Bosnia and Herzegovina when it comes to social and economy characteristics, therefore, hard to compare. However, the question of perception of the future society development by those ones that would take over the “helm” of social development in their communities, represents the area of common interest. Comparative research on values, opinions, perceptions and attitudes of students of social work at the above-mentioned universities provided valuable answers on how much are the Global Sustainable Development Goals accepted amongst young generations, and how much are they prepared to contribute to their implementation in their own communities.

Keywords

social work, global sustainable development goals, social work students, comparative research, education

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Empathy of social workers and caregivers who provide services to elderlies

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Pedagogical University of Krakow, Krakow, Poland

Olena Kovalenko

Author of Symposium Oral Presentation n.

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Positive emotional relationships with those people who are nearby, especially in times of crisis, is the important mean of personality development in old age. Among the people are family and those who provide various services. Social workers and caregivers provide social services to the elderly. Empathy as the ability to understand relationships, feelings, mental states of others is the condition of such positive emotional relationships. Therefore, it is important to research specifics of social workers` and caregivers` empathy.

An initial study was conducted. The study analyzed 125 persons who work in Ukraine (Poltava and Lviv regions) as a social worker or a caregiver and provide social services to elderly people. V.V. Boyko's questionnaire “Diagnosis of the level of empathic abilities” has been used for the research. The questionnaire gives an idea of the structural components of empathy and makes it possible to identify the leading channel of empathy (rational, emotional, intuitive), attitudes that promote or inhibit empathy, penetrability of empathy and identification of empathy.

It has been found that a 28.0% of participants has a very low level of empathy, 60.8% – a below average level of empathy, 11.2% – aa average level of empathy. It means that researched social workers and caregivers are not sufficiently able to understand the emotions, thoughts, experiences, problems of elderly wards. This complicates their communication, which negatively affects the well-being of the elderly. Emotional channel of empathy is the leading in the participants: emotional-rational – the t-value is 3.0276, the p-value is .001364 (the result is significant at $p < .05$); emotional-intuitive – the t-value is 3.61686, the p-value is .000182 (the result is significant at $p < .05$). It means that researched social workers and caregivers get to know the elderlies better emotionally through feelings and emotions. It is more difficult for them to direct their attention, perception and thinking to the essence of an elderly person, to predict his or her behavior. The most difficult for the researched social workers

and caregivers is to put themselves in the place of the elderly: identification-attitudes – the t-value is 3.7297, the p-value is .00012 (the result is significant at $p < .05$), identification- penetrability – the t-value is 3.02429, the p-value is .001383 (the result is significant at $p < .05$). But they understand emotions and thoughts of elderly because there are no obstacles from their attitudes and they try to create an atmosphere of openness, trustworthiness, and sincerity in relations with the elderly.

We see prospects for further research in the study of psychological features and social conditions that affect the manifestation of empathy of social workers and caregivers. It is appropriate to compare the features of empathy of such workers in Poland and Ukraine.

Keywords

empathy, social worker, elderly people, relationships, caregiver

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Who are the adolescents in care at Italian addiction services? Implication for social workers from a quantitative study.

Sonia Scalvini

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: WHO (2020) estimates that about 35 million people worldwide have drug-related disorders in a context where substance use has become a more accepted and recreational phenomenon (Parker & Aldridge 1998). Further, UN (2018) highlighted the more vulnerability and exposition of the teenager and young people to drug addiction because of their curiosity to try new things, their lifestyles, and the pressure of the peer group. In Italy, adolescent with substance abuse problems that goes to the specific social services are rising as well as the number of people accessing services at an early age (Department for Anti-Drug Policies 2019; 2010). Hence, it's crucial to deepen our understanding of the characteristics of adolescents and young adults with substance abuse problems in care at addiction services, and to explore how Italian Social Services respond to their needs through the practices, the helping relationship and the interventions that are implemented in their help pathways. This work is part of a wider doctoral research project conducted according to the participatory research approach in collaboration with some social workers employed in public addiction services and involved as co-researchers in a steering group. The main purpose of the doctoral research project is to explore and describe social workers practices with teenager and young adults with addiction problems and their help relationships. Preliminary action of the research project aims to describe the young service users (under25) who were in care in the public addiction services in the Veneto region over the last 5 years (2017-2021).

Methods: Data on 6.189 young service users (under 25) in care from year 2017 to 2021 – out of which 2.603 in the 2021 – were collected through a secondary analysis (Bryman, 2012) of administrative data available from addiction services databased used in Veneto Region. The analysis was carried out using SPSS software. The variables identified are related to three macro-areas: 1 - socio-anagraphic data (e.g. age; gender; citizenship; marital status; educational and employment status); 2- information on the care admission (e.g. start and end date of intake);

source of referral; reason for discharge); 3- information on addiction (substances of abuse, primary and secondary; substitution treatment; method of drug-taking).

Findings: Initial analysis confirm the gender composition found in other statistics with a male predominance of almost 80%. There are mainly young people of Italian citizenship, with a low level of education, who live with their family. There are also adolescents in care with an age between 10 and 14. The main sources of referral are spontaneous referral, from the family and from justice agencies. A polysubstance use emerges with prevalence of cannabis, heroin, cocaine, and alcohol.

Conclusions: At the conference, the first results of the analysis of the data available in the database will be presented, which are the outcome of a participatory shared reflection and discussion within the steering group and that allow interesting considerations for service providers and practitioners in their work and helping relationship with adolescents with substance abuse problems.

Keywords

Drug abuse, Adolescence, Social services, Quantitative research, Participatory research

690

Care decisions for older couples living with dementia -managing diverging stances in needs assessment meetings

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This presentation examines how social workers in needs assessment meetings balance divergent stances in older couples living with dementia who are applying for services from elder care. The Swedish Social Services Act (SFS, 2001:453) stipulates an individual perspective with self-determination, rather than a perspective rooted in relationships. Sweden also differs from many other countries in regard to autonomy for persons with dementia diagnoses. In practice, this means that relatives or a proxy lacks formal rights to intrude on the persons with dementia's right to self-determination in decisions about care services. However, at the same time social services shall offer support to family members who care for a close relative. In the study we benefit from conversation analytic methodology when analysing 18 needs assessment meetings with couples from four municipalities in Sweden. The findings suggest that social workers accomplish persuasion for elder care services through these four conversational practices: 'providing information about the offer', 'mitigating the offer', 'positive framing of the offer' and 'laying down conditions for the offer'. Also, local alliances with the partner of the person with dementia were demonstrated throughout. The analysis shows that persons with dementia provide resistance to the offered services, but there are no examples of a person with dementia influencing the outcome in terms of offered services. The results raise questions about the effectiveness of persuasion in needs assessment meetings. The findings also add to the critical debate on how social workers may be constrained by institutional logics and where relational competence is needed to balance and coordinate decision-making when assessing the needs of older couples living with dementia.

Keywords

Needs assessment meetings, Dementia, Couples, Conversation analysis, Persuasion

692

Constructions of parenting on insecure grounds: reflecting on the views of parents and social workers

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

Parenting has been the object of an extensive popular as well as scientific production and there has been a growing number of ‘would be authorities’ setting standards, giving instructions, identifying mistakes. While there are strong criticisms against the ideology which has been often identified as ‘intensive parenting’, it has nonetheless influenced institutions as well as professionals. In this landscape the voice of those with parenting responsibilities, particularly when living through challenging conditions, has seldom been systematically explored. What is particularly rarely explored is parents’ knowledge and experience in child rearing in challenging circumstances. This, though, is a very relevant knowledge for social workers whose task is to intervene in partnership with mothers and fathers in difficult circumstances. Our Symposium aims at sharing new knowledge on this, and on how social work professional practices connect to self-representations of parents. It presents the main outcomes from an Italian research project which explored how parents as well as social workers represent tasks and challenges of parenthood in unstable circumstances in contemporary society. It yielded the identification not only of the main problems perceived, but also of the positive strategies that people concoct to face those problems; this allows to identify lines of intervention that buttress and not hinder parental efforts and struggles to keep up with the demands of their role and with social pressures. The research adopted a participatory qualitative strategy inspired by grounded theory and was carried on through the exploration of specific types of parental circumstances identified as meaningful for social work through a preliminary study: Parents leaving in poverty and precarious financial situation; Parents with forced migration background; Parents belonging to sexual and gender minorities (LGBT); Parents facing high conflict divorces. In all we interviewed 180 parents and 85 social workers across Italy. All data were codified by two members of the team and then discussed with the whole group. We also organized more than 20 meetings with experts and parents’ associations.

We intend to focus here on four concepts which emerged as relevant in the grounded theory analysis, and that cut across all fields. The first one consists of facing stereotypes and normative standards while living in turmoil or experiencing new ways of doing family. In a sense this goes with a second concept connected to the idea of recognition which appears as a crucial resource very much in demand for those who feel in charge of child rearing in challenging circumstances. And of course, recognition is based on understanding what parenting means, which here emerges as positioning and re-positioning as parents in the context of dealing with all sorts of issues and problems, which is the concern of the third presentation. The fourth presentation is related to social work practice

with parents. It focusses on recognizing intersectionality and diversity connected to the meaning and experiences of anti-oppressive practice. The resulting picture provides the bases for a theoretical-methodological framework within which to reflexively develop interpretation and action of professional social work with parents moving over “uncertain ground”.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Approaching parenting practices: Stereotypical visions and understanding of diversity

This contribution aims to critically analyze stereotypes and ideological meanings of parenting and family life, focusing on references and adherences to normative standards and stereotypical ideas about what constitutes good parenthood and family life in parent’s self-representations and accounts of parenting. The presentation highlights the role and effects of parental stereotypes on constructions of parenthood in challenging circumstances, showing how parents refer, relate and (re-)position themselves in relation to stereotypical views and prescriptions. Grounded in the accounts of parents’ experiencing different challenges and situations of uncertainties, the contribution also highlights whether and how normative views about parenting and family life impact on the interaction with professionals in social, education and health care services and, particularly, whether social workers are seen as counteracting or rather perpetuating stereotypes and normative ideas about good and healthy parenthood.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

The power of recognition: learning from the experience of social workers and parents struggling with challenging circumstances

Our presentation will focus on the processes of recognition and misrecognition (Honneth, 2007) involved in the experience of parents struggling with uncertain circumstances and social workers interacting with them. The concept of recognition emerged as a core category from a grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2017) carried out to explore the perspective of parents on what “doing family” (Morgan, 2007) means, when facing conditions of disadvantage. Honneth suggested that three spheres of recognition are required to lay the foundation for a positive relation-to-self: (a) exchanging of affection in relationships of love, so as the person can be recognized for her own unique material and emotional needs, (b) granting and upholding legal rights, and (c) appreciating and valuing a person’s capabilities and contribution to the community. Our findings will highlight: 1) the modes of recognition and misrecognition that parents experience in the three spheres, and how they impact on parenting; 2) how social workers interact in such processes, and how they represent their role in tackling forms of misrecognition.

Our presentation will show how the hybridization of concepts drawn from recognition theory and the knowledge emerged from the experience of parents and social workers can be used to indicate a possible path to guide research and professionals’ critical reflections on processes underlying forms of injustice and oppression, as well as possibilities to overcome them.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

The parents' perspective: re-positioning in the family, between social pressures, challenges, transitions and the search for new equilibriums

Understanding parents’ way of interpreting their role, defining and addressing parental tasks, while experiencing complex life situations is an important basis to create a relationship based on recognition. One of the central issues that emerged in the data analysis concerns the challenge of parents under conditions of uncertainty in re-

constructing their role by negotiating a definition of their parental tasks and duties in their life circumstances while at the same time coming to terms with the social pressures, stereotypes, myths, and standards as illustrated in the first presentation. In this regard we have particularly made reference to social positioning theory (Harré, Lagenhove 1999), which suggests looking at how roles are constructed in everyday interactions among various actors. Unlike the concept of role however, the concept of positioning is dynamic and implies a constant redefinition of positions understood as the set of rights and duties of the person in relation to others, defining therefore what the person feels entitled and duty-bound to do. This concept seems useful to focus on how parents themselves in uncertain and complex contexts conceptualize their efforts to raise their children, how they redefine tasks such as 'being there', understanding and listening, being a guide, setting rules, protecting. Understanding the lay pedagogy of parents and the strategies to face uncertainty and instability allows us a deeper grasp of possible gaps between parents and practitioners views on parenting.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

Anti-oppressive practices in the experience of social workers intervening with and for parents

Working with and for parents in difficult circumstances is a challenge for social workers on three fronts: professional knowledge and competence, tension between professional and institutional core mandates and organisational practice.

Although the principles of social work - particularly respecting diversity, upholding and promoting human rights and challenging oppression – are universally embedded in national and international codes of ethics the problematic issue of how these principles are then operationalised in social workers' practice remains. The challenge is how professional awareness and autonomy can contribute to the promotion of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices to prevent "excluding" actions.

Unconscious bias can influence professionals' decision-making; the lack of reflexivity in and on practice, and of proper professional and organisational supervision, can lead to acting and promoting oppressive practice. This presentation, using the lens of anti-oppressive practice, focusses on the experience of social workers working with parents. It discusses oppressive and anti-oppressive practice as it emerges from the experience of social workers (practice in action), and how these experiences alert to the systemic level (organisational practice). Finally, some implications are drawn for professional and organisational practice.

Keywords

child and family social work, researching parenting practices, intensive parenting, recognition, anti-oppressive practice.

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A Method Worth Telling? Exploring the potential of Story Completion through a study on Discriminatory Abuse

Karl Mason

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Story Completion is an emerging qualitative method, but there is limited engagement with this narrative approach in social work research. This presentation draws on a story completion study on social work practice with discriminatory abuse in adult safeguarding in England as part of a larger project to clarify the concept and understand practice responses and low reporting in this area.

Method: The study was designed in order to understand practice responses to discriminatory abuse in safeguarding adults. Self-report methods such as interviews and focus groups were rejected because official statistics suggest that discriminatory abuse is under-reported by social work practitioners. Instead, story completion methods were used to elicit short story responses from 57 social work participants. Each participant was asked to imagine a social work visit to someone experiencing discriminatory abuse and to finish the story based on one of three story stems. Each of the three stories stems dealt with different characteristics (race, gender identity and mental ill-health), enabling comparative analysis and to see if discrimination targeted at different characteristics might elicit different responses. The story completion exercise was followed by focus group discussion to understand the experience of using the method and writing the stories.

Findings: Analysis of the stories produced insights into practice with discriminatory abuse across the three stories stems, highlighting common practice responses. Practitioners identified issues relating to knowledge (lack of personal experience and institutional resources), skills (empathy, communication, rapport and trust), values (own biases and societal prejudice) and organisational issues (supervision, staff networks and obstacles to support). The study also highlighted comparisons between how each story stem was responded to. Whilst the gender identity story stem led to stories of self-doubt and anxiety about a lack of knowledge or fear of offence, the mental health story stem was responded to in a more task-oriented way. The story stem looking at race elicited some responses that acknowledged experiences of racism, but in general there were fewer ideas about how to effectively respond and more limited reflection on how this might impact on the person. The focus groups helped to validate and contextualise the data gathered from the stories.

Conclusions and implications: Story completion methods have significant methodological potential in social work research. Using this method to understand approaches to discriminatory abuse produced data that self-report is unlikely to have yielded. The approach has advantages in relation to researching sensitive topics, especially where participants may not feel experienced enough to self-report. The approach is also highly amenable to comparative analysis. Although some stories were less rich than others, the addition of a focus group helped to draw out any reasons for this. The stories identified that significant work is required to support practitioners to respond to effectively to discriminatory abuse and take sufficient account of people's protected characteristics when working in this area.

Conference aims and themes: The presentation responds to conference themes 5 (theorising social work research), 6 (connecting social work research and practice) and 7 (methodological development and innovation)

Keywords

Story Completion, Discriminatory Abuse, Safeguarding Adults, Social Workers

Care leavers involved in social work training: the impact on professionals' practice

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

In the last decade, actively involving service users has become part and parcel of social work practice, though only recently has attention been paid to adopting the same approach for social work education (Driessens et al., 2016). Indeed, research on Service User Involvement (SUI) in social work education is increasing, but it tends to focus on evaluating training itself – in particular participation techniques – rather than on the actual outcome of such training activities (Huges, 2017).

In the intent to address this gap, we decided to investigate the impact of a long-life training for social work practitioners where care leavers, who are “experts by experience”, have been involved as teachers.

The training was co-designed with care leavers by also taking into account the results of a focus group run among practitioners to grasp their expectations about the training they were about to attend.

The training sessions were held in three Italian regions, with the support of CNOAS. Six months after the end of the program, social workers completed a questionnaire, which provided interesting insights and demonstrated how this experimentation held great potential for creating spaces for dialogue and raising awareness between professionals and young people (Fargion, Mauri, Rosignoli, 2021). To better understand its long-term impact, we decided to conduct an evaluation one year after the completion of the training.

The method used combined semi-structured interviews with an online questionnaire. All the attendees of the training (N=40) and three regional head of the care leavers network who supervised the project were asked to participate in the long-term evaluation. The former group, who had a response rate of 29, was asked to fill in a questionnaire, while the latter (comprising two people) was interviewed.

The questionnaire encompasses three sections, each collecting information on: respondents' demographic profile; their evaluation on the impact of the training received; example of how knowledge acquired during the training was applied in everyday practice. Interviews explored the process concerning training development and assessed the elements facilitating the success of the project.

Inspired by the Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), data was analyzed by assigning "labels" to the main concepts that emerged, tracing the common elements between them, and identifying categories.

Findings show that social workers perceived training as impactful and relevant for their working practice even in the long run. In particular, they evaluate the most being familiar with users' experience and perspectives, which came in hand during tense moments in practitioner-user relationship. Results on regional coordinators highlight as crucial elements for the success of the experience the training received to teach in the program, life-story structuring, association support, and informal atmosphere.

In particular, what emerges seems to corroborate Banks' argument (2016) on "everyday ethics" – with practitioners identifying Banks' characteristics of ethics work as main improvements generated by the program. Moreover, this study underlines the consolidation of soft skills – e.g., critical thinking, creativity, and empathetic communication – which are crucial for a profession facing a complex and dynamic context but are often neglected in managerialist approach to social work.

Keywords

User participation, Continuing professional development, Social work education, Ethics work, Care leavers

702

Acts of everyday resistance in the welfare state – parents' reactions to the child welfare services' exercise of power

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

Social workers in the child welfare services (CWS) carry out demanding work, since they investigate whether children are living at risk, and they in parallel strive for good cooperation with the families. The welfare state's governance is a well-established area of research, and although resistance is a common reaction to the exercise of power, theory of resistance is underdeveloped. In social work practice, there is always a risk of individualizing resistance and explaining resistance as a part of the service recipients' problematic behavior. More knowledge about resistance, and how it is intertwined with power that has good intentions, like in the CWS, is needed. Everyday resistance (ER) is a concept that coins individual and subtle forms of resistance in relation to power but has yet been little theorized in a welfare state context (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2020; Sørensen et al., 2020). Thus, this study aims to empirically and theoretically explore the social phenomenon of ER as it appears in a Norwegian child welfare context.

What repertoire of resistance do parents from different class backgrounds use in contact with the CWS and how can the resistance be understood in relation to the child welfare service's exercise of power?

Methods:

This study is part of the "Child Welfare and Inequality" project (Norway). The empirical basis for the current study is qualitative interviews with 37 parents (from different class backgrounds) in contact with the CWS, and qualitative interviews with 21 caseworkers in contact with these parents. They were asked about the family's challenges and the contact with the CWS, but resistance was not part of the study design. The phenomenon emerged through abductive analysis, where reading research from different fields was essential to discover these

practices in the material. The acts of resistance were categorized by common characteristics of how the practice opposes power.

Findings:

The parents use a vast repertoire of resistance; avoidance practices (most used), involvement of persons outside the CWS, constructive resistance, and objection. Parents with a middle-class background that oppose the CWS, tend to use more resistance practices than parents from lower classes, and these acts are mainly open and visible. Parents from lower classes seem more likely to act in a subtle and hidden manner. Exploring ER empirically in the CWS shows that the concept of ER must include visible practices in addition to subtle ones.

Conclusions:

ER is a fruitful concept for studying resistance in social work, as it sees power and resistance intertwined, and thus counters an understanding of resistance that tends to blame the client. Class differences in acts of resistance may be understood considering former research that suggests that middle-class parents feel more entitled than parents from lower classes when meeting welfare services. Awareness about resistance as inevitable in the CWS can contribute to a more reflexive practice where the power of the child welfare workers gets more visible to themselves. Further research should investigate the connection between resistance and empowerment, the consequences of ER, as well as children's resistance.

Keywords

Child welfare, Parents, Inequality, Everyday resistance

704

From post-pandemic to 'post-human'? Re-examining the relational ethics of professional distance, judgement and eco-social justice in a changing world

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

This symposium explores the ethical challenges facing the relationships at the core of the social work profession in contexts of political, economic and social turbulence and change. Wars, natural disasters, authoritarian governments and economic crises are perennial features of life in different parts of the world at different times. However, the global experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the widespread and growing visibility of the

impact of climate change, provide a shared stimulus for taking stock of the role of social work as a self-styled 'human rights and social justice profession' with a focus on human relationships.

Presenters are members of the ESWRA special interest group, the Social Work Ethics Research Group (SWERG). We will draw on research conducted with the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) during 2022, based on data from social workers' recorded deliberations in six international webinars on the theme of 'Beyond the pandemic: The role of social work ethics and values in co-building a new eco-social world'. The research aimed to identify ethical aspects of learning from working during the pandemic and consider the implications for social work ethics and values in the context of other crises, such as those caused by climate change.

Taking social workers' reflections in the webinars as a starting point, the papers in this symposium develop the ideas and issues further by exploring where the profession might or should go in the future and the implications for professional ethics and values. Starting from the everyday ethical issues relating to the impact of digital working on human relationships and self-care, and the tensions between using professional judgement and following rules, the papers move to rethinking social work roles with communities and the prospects for a macro-level paradigm shift to extend the traditional social work values based on social justice and the importance of human relationships to embrace eco-social justice and consider the unsettling implications of a 'post-human' ethics.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Digital working and the ethics of remote human relationships

Severe restrictions on human contact at key periods during the pandemic often meant replacing in-person visits with digital communication. This enabled inclusion of people who might otherwise have been cut off from social work support, and in some cases stimulated more frequent communication and may have strengthened the relationships between social workers and people using services. Increased availability and competence in the use of digital communication also meant that family, community and peer support groups could be established in situations where none existed before – including international networks. On the other hand, many people without access to digital devices, along with those who felt uncomfortable with this mode of communication or chose to avoid it, were effectively excluded. Social workers were also concerned about online privacy and confidentiality, especially in households where violence, abuse or conflict were present; and about the quality of remote relationships.

In this presentation we explore the ethical implications of digital working, its impact on the quality of human relationships and the role of the social worker. We will draw on the observations and reflections of social workers participating in the global webinars from the perspectives of different geographies (rural/urban; majority/minority world) and job roles (from hospital social work to neighbourhood-based child welfare). We consider the potential for digital working and the issues in deciding when/how to use it, raising the question: How can digital practice be inclusive and fair, and balanced with in-person working?

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Reclaiming professional ethical judgement and challenging bureaucracy in pandemic conditions and beyond

The pandemic brought needs and situations requiring immediate responses in uncertain contexts. Social work was caught between two realities: one that was highly regulatory and restrictive, and another with no guidelines/protocols. On the one hand, there were new rules restricting human contact that bound and hindered social workers' relationships, justified by the need to orient collective reactions to the pandemic and protect public health. These rules were often not clearly understood and sometimes resulted in unjust treatment, causing distress to social workers and people needing services. On the other hand, there was also a decline in bureaucracy

caused by the inapplicability of many existing rules and procedures to times of crisis. In these situations, practitioners had to make their own interpretations and autonomous decisions and adapt to ongoing changes.

This presentation discusses how social workers played a crucial role in filling the gaps, adapting and working beyond and outside regulations and legal frameworks, finding creative solutions to meet the real and immediate needs of service users, and making decisions requiring multi-layered and labour-intensive moral reasoning and relationship-building. The presentation seeks answers to questions about the place of discretion and creativity in social work practice now the emergency is over, and how social workers and other professionals can restore forms of trust between citizens and welfare systems in the context of what we might regard as a 'new eco-social world'.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Expanding the community-based role for ethical social work post-pandemic

This presentation focuses on the intersection between the concepts and practices of 'community', 'social work leadership' and 'ethics'. Specifically, it looks at the ethical dimensions of relationship-based practice and the positionality of social workers through and beyond the pandemic.

Using a reflective framework it draws on the analysis of rich narratives, gathered from social workers in six webinars held in different regions around the world in 2022. We explore the ways social workers represented different aspects of 'community', using adaptive leadership skills to respond to the initial crisis, consistent with a holistic focus on building and sustaining relational networks to support people within their changing environments. We analyse the visibility of social workers and their practice in and between different communities across different contexts, focusing on the continuum of the positionality of social workers within the conceptual framework of systems leadership and a community-based ethics of care. We give examples of creative problem solving by social workers, working to uphold human rights, social justice and social action, reflecting on the place of ethical leadership in promoting social inclusion and recovery from the impact of the pandemic. In taking key messages from the research, we present the emergence of new ways of working, the implications for ethical practice, power and empowerment and suggest how this might be applied to the education of the next generation of social workers.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

Lessons from the pandemic: Towards eco-social justice and post-human ethics?

This presentation considers the importance of human relationships in social work practice, and the implications of going beyond the human for a profession that is inherently focused on the social. We draw on global webinar conversations with social workers, which explored applying learning about ethics and values during the pandemic to practising in a 'new eco-social world'. Participants were asked to share examples of social and environmental transformation in the context of the overall research aim of exploring the contribution of social work ethics and values towards sustainability and justice for people and planet. While participants were keen to share practical and ethical challenges encountered during the pandemic, it was more difficult to discuss their actual/potential roles in environmentally transformative practice. Reasons may include the continuing impact of the pandemic and practitioners' experience of moral distress, in addition to social work's traditional focus on social justice and human rights.

In this presentation we discuss examples of environmentally transformative practice shared by participants. We then develop some of the issues arising in the webinars, building on the African philosophy of 'ubuntu' ('I am because you are') raised in the Africa regional webinar and extending the value of social justice to embrace ecological justice (eco-social justice). We consider what it means for social work to engage with a holistic paradigm that locates humans as part of the ecological world and, more controversially, attributes rights to non-human entities (post-human ethics).

Keywords

ethics, social work, pandemic, eco-social, human relationships

705

“How” we do social work instead of “what” we do?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This presentation uses results from a qualitative multimethod study as a starting point to focus on professional knowledge and identity with regard to social work practice. The illustrative case examines how Norwegian social workers at municipal social services offices experience and explain social work as professional knowledge and theory regarding the NAV-reform, merged the state employment and social insurance offices with parts of municipal social services. I will discuss how social workers in municipal social services offices explain social work as professional knowledge and theory and examine their experiences with working in this multiprofessional setting. The study includes participant observations and semistructured interviews conducted with social workers at a NAV office, analysis of relevant articles and discussions in the profession's journal, and observations from relevant conferences (2005-2015). The study found that social workers articulate their professional ethical perspectives as social work while defining themselves as “us” distinct from their “new” colleagues. Paradoxically, they find themselves facing challenges related to theoretically articulating social work. This presentation will discuss how social workers not necessarily focus on what they do as social workers but on how they do it. One can argue that they tone down the theoretical aspects of the profession by saying that others can do social work just as well and that practicing social work requires no special knowledge beyond caring about the clients' welfare. In referring to the ethical principles on which social work is based, it is worth mentioning that they as social workers are worried about their municipal social services clients. Because of increased workloads and efficiency requirements, they encounter challenges in terms of the ways in which they are expected to help clients, such as follow-up work for people with complex needs. The social workers express that “we” were traditionally “there for our clients”. This may reveal a strong collective identity based on their professional ethics and principles of social work. However, in de-emphasizing the theoretical in favour of the principles and practical benefits of their profession, I propose the professional roles of social workers as pragmatic and nonprotectionist professionals (PPPs). More specifically, they become pragmatic in their efforts to safeguard the best interests of their clients while being nonprotective of their professional knowledge in claiming that everyone can practice social work if what one does is “good”. It is interesting that they are not trying to operationalize their professional identity more closely by increasingly clarifying what social work as theoretical knowledge “is”, toning down social work as a theoretical knowledge. What they do as social workers is thus rendered invisible, which may contribute not only to a weakening of their professional knowledge but also to social work becoming an invisible trade. One possible consequence of this is that the social workers' expert knowledge related to social work becomes degraded with regard to ordinary and everyday knowledge.

The presentation will build on the following article: Anita Røysum (2017) ‘How’ we do social work, not ‘what’ we do, *Nordic Social Work Research*, 7:2, 141-154, DOI: 10.1080/2156857X.2017.1284150

Keywords

theory and practice, social work, professional identity, ethics, everyday knowledge

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Social work practice with families living with domestic violence and abuse in Ireland during the Covid-19 pandemic: Challenges and opportunities.

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Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose: On the 12th of March 2020, the Irish government announced the closure of schools and all non-essential services in an effort to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Further lockdown measures called for people to remain at home and avoid contact with anyone outside of their immediate household. Whilst lockdown and quarantine were considered essential to suppress the virus, it was quickly realised that for both adult and child victims of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) who were trapped with perpetrators, home might be a dangerous place. Paradoxically, at a time of additional need, health and social services, including social work services, were scaled down, challenging professionals to complete accurate risk assessments with reduced access to families. This study sought to capture a picture of the nature and extent of DVA in families on social work caseloads during the Covid-19 lockdown and the challenges and opportunities for social work practice with families experiencing DVA during this pandemic period.

Methods: 120 participants sampled from the membership of the Irish Association of Social Workers completed an online mixed-methods survey instrument which comprised of open and closed questions. The data collection took place between 1 September to 12 November 2020. The participants represented all areas of social work practice.

Findings: A mixed-methods analysis of the data identified that participating social workers perceived that there had been an increase in DVA for families on their caseloads compared to pre-pandemic levels, as well as an increase of other complex issues such as addiction and mental health. With public health measures unintentionally forming barriers to social work practice, by limiting core practices such as home visits and face-to-face meetings, there were restricted opportunities to observe family dynamics. Additionally, essential services and supports for families and children were suspended, further restricting protective interactions and children's access to safe spaces and trusted adults. These impediments to established social work practice techniques led to adaptations and innovations to practice. Reduced face-to-face contact resulted in increased alternative methods of communication and enhanced risk assessments tools. Social workers described their increased empathy and sensitivity towards the nuances of controlling and abusive behaviours. Although the use of new technology and virtual spaces were shown to have potential for practice, it was also identified that practice guidelines and protocols were needed.

Conclusions and implications: Social workers in Ireland, as in other contexts globally, were shown to be innovative and adaptive in the face of unprecedented crisis which created many barriers to established social work practice patterns and techniques. These barriers to social work practice highlighted a number of areas of potential

development, particularly in the context of practicing in new and unfamiliar spaces, where professionals were challenged to find new ways of working with victims of DVA and their families throughout the crisis.

Keywords

Social work practice, Domestic violence, Covid-19, Challenges, Opportunities

707

Well-being of Lithuanian older adults after nursing home relocation: implications for social work practice and education

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background. Relocation to a nursing home is one of the most challenging transitions in older age, as many unknowns, such as new people, altered physical surroundings, and unfamiliar social demands affect the well-being of new residents (Aminzadeh et al., 2009; Riedl, Mantovan, & Them, 2013; Theurer, et al., 2015). On the other hand, relocation, just like other transitions, is likely to offer new positive opportunities, such as decreasing their sense of loneliness and ensuring a supportive environment (Ellis, 2010; Elledge-Volker, 2011; Lee, Simpson & Froggat, 2013). Knowledge about older people's nursing home relocation decision-making and outcomes can inform the social work practice and social policy to better address their needs, and reduce the relocation stress. Thus, the aim of the research was to explore the nursing home relocation experiences of Lithuanian older people focusing on the circumstances of nursing home relocation decision-making, the outcomes of the relocation, and the role of social workers in fostering the environment that promotes the well-being of new residents.

Methods. 18 semi-structured interviews with nursing home-dwelling older adults were collected from 2017 to 2019. The results were interpreted through the lenses of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). The theory posits that a person cannot achieve a sense of well-being if their social environment does not provide opportunities to satisfy three basic and universal social needs: the need for competence (the ability to control the outcome and experience mastery), the need for relatedness (a sense of belonging and connectedness with others), and a need for autonomy (ability to control one's life and be able to influence decisions). Nursing homes traditionally are considered examples of restrictive social environments, thus considering the relocation experience in the context of this theory may yield a better understanding of the older person's well-being after such move.

Findings. A combination of various factors, such as insufficient support with daily living activities, disabling physical environment, a sense of vulnerability and relationships within the family come into play when older adults consider nursing home relocation. In the context of these factors, older adults' autonomy in the relocation decision-making process varied. Among the advantages of living in a nursing home, older adults mentioned various opportunities provided for them after relocation, such as higher accessibility to a variety of social services, increased mobility as the built environment of the nursing home was better adapted to their needs, more frequent social interactions, and increased opportunities to engage in meaningful leisure activities.

Conclusions and implications. The results of the study revealed that relocation decision was always unexpected, influenced by intertwined personal and environmental factors, and characterized by varying degrees of older people's autonomy. However, in addition to many unique challenges, the relocation experience also had positive outcomes. Despite the prevailing negative image, it appears that nursing homes may have the potential to foster an environment that satisfies residents' needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness, thus promoting their well-being. Implications for the social work practice, research and education will be discussed further during the presentation.

Keywords

long term care, nursing home relocation, self-determination, well-being

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Mechanisms enabling effects of social work with adults - critical realism in practice research in Finland

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Although trustful, long-term human relationships are regarded as the core of successful social work practice, a lack of sufficient time for focused relationship-based case work, high caseloads, as well as frequent staff turnover are reported in most fields of social work in Finland. Not only do service users suffer from these circumstances, but also the work well-being of social workers is low, and professional ambitions for practice improvements are hardly reflected. However, in our two-year practice research project covering social work with adults in two counties in Finland, we could also observe contrasting examples of municipal agencies, where social workers have high work satisfaction, are highly engaged in practice research collaboration, and involve service users in the development of practice improvements. Our research question focuses on this phenomenon, and we ask what could explain such a significant positive divergence.

In this paper, we will investigate the generative mechanisms that enable adult social work to achieve its professional goals in Finland. Through this, we aim to develop a model of required standards for effective social work practice with adults. The presentation will discuss the theoretical and methodological conclusions of a two-year practice research project in social work with adults (2020–2022), funded by the new program of the National Research Funding of Social Work and Social Services in Finland.

Theoretically, the study was driven by critical realism and CAIMeR-theory, seeking references to enabling mechanisms in adult social work. Empirical research gathered data from the two years' research collaboration with practitioners, documentation of eight joint workshops, as well as two focus group interviews. Applying the CAIMeR-theory, documents and transcripts from interviews were thematically analysed to understand the co-effect of the factors of Context, Actors and Interventions activating the Mechanisms that enable (or hinder) the desirable Results.

It was noticed that at the micro-level of relation-based practice, the most important mechanism was social workers' self-conceptualisation that they could enable positive changes in the clients' situations based on their holistic knowledge of the clients' resources and environment. At the meso-level of teams, a stable and development-friendly work community with multi-professional resources, non-hierarchical and supportive team spirit are highlighted, where the professionals feel autonomy in how they conduct their work. As an example, a certain number of monthly work hours are made free to work in the local community instead of office work. At the macro-level of local policymaking and society, appreciation of adult social work as a valued and active agency with a clear political voice in the region, municipalities, and in the systems of social and health care services was an important generative mechanism.

The mechanisms identified in the practice research of positive cases provide a clear contrast to the mainstream of current social work. The results indicate that identifying generative supportive mechanisms could strengthen the impact of adult social work in the interdisciplinary community in the welfare services.

Keywords

adult social work, social workers, social worker teams, integrated services, CAIMer -theory

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“I realised it was not normal”- Care leavers as co-researchers in investigating the emersion of maltreatment in the family

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Research investigating the quality of child protection systems (CPS) is increasing, often engaging service users. Most research focuses on the ways CPS functions while less explored is the opinion of individuals regarding the core of CPS. Namely the decisions vis-à-vis state interventions in families' private lives. To start filling this gap, we carried out a pilot study in collaboration with a care-leaver association, to test the feasibility of broader research on this sensitive topic. This paper will refer about the involvement of care-leavers as co-researchers, its ethical attention, and provide some results of the study.

The research group was composed of three academic researchers and three care leavers who jointly defined the research design and tools. The following research questions were considered: what does it mean that a child suffers in his/her own family and how is this sufferance manifested?, How did that CPS come into their life? What gives the state the right to intervene in families' lives?

Care leavers tested the research design and conducted nine semi-structured interviews with other care leavers. The interviews were transcribed and analysed jointly during a residential workshop. The group also discussed methodological aspects concerning the co-construction of the research

One of the most interesting results of the pilot study highlighted as central the process through which children become aware that what they experienced “was not normal”. This awareness appears triggered by comparisons with external social contexts, namely school; moreover, the process of disclosing information and seeking help appears highly influenced by the societal reactions and support encountered. In this light, the intervention of the state (for children experiencing care) is seen as part of this delicate process and is represented as a resource when acting as an external gaze that can drive towards new balances, even through an initial rupture of the existing ones.

In the presentation we will briefly present these results and describe the process of involving care leavers, and discuss the values (and limits) of collaboratively investigating such CPS core themes, thus contributing to knowledge co-creation informing further research.

This knowledge provides important insights both to professionals involved in CPS, especially concerning their understanding of the lives of children who experience maltreatment and to governments regarding dilemmas vis-à-vis interventions in such families’ private lives.

Keywords

child protection systems, participatory approach, careleavers, co-creation of knowledge, child's view

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Human Rights teaching in Social Work Education: Experiences and research outcomes across Europe.

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

Social work educators are globally aware of social work’s ethical mandate to engage with human rights in all aspects of the profession, including social work training. An emphasis on the human rights foundations and principles of social work has been, for decades, at the core of social work’s global definitions, ethical standards, policy documents, and theoretical pieces of work. A common theme across these relates to human rights’ potential for promoting shared understandings and international collaborations facing social injustice and global challenges to the profession, including the influence of oppressive ideologies such as uncontrolled neoliberalism or political and other extremisms. In this vein, the global standards for social work education (IFSW and IASSW 2020) require social work education to prepare students to apply human rights frameworks to their understanding of social issues. However, when facing the commitment to teach about human rights to social work students, social work educators are largely unaware of how the same task is being approached by other courses and educators throughout the world. Moreover, due to their complexity and large scope, human rights are often perceived as an

overwhelming topic, difficult to translate into specific teaching activities meaningful for social work students (Martínez, 2017).

Despite local differences and the importance of contextualisation, there is however a wealth of good teaching experiences on social work and human rights across Europe which social work educators teaching human rights could get inspired and benefit from, but this is largely unexplored by social work research. Given all this, this symposium aims to gather and disseminate research on human rights teaching in social work education in four European countries: Lithuania, Poland, Spain and England setting the ground for further international experience sharing, discussion and research collaboration on the topic and offering a contribution in line with the conference theme two "Social work research, policy, practice or education across boundaries".

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Lithuania: Teaching human rights and social work. Vilnius University experience

This presentation introduces and outlines outcomes of the Vilnius University Human Rights in Social Work subject (taught since 2008). Adjusted versions of this course are delivered to undergraduate students of Social Policy, Sociology and Criminology. The pedagogical approach addresses: 1) The context of Lithuania as a post-totalitarian society, which is characterised by weakened social ties, high levels of stigma, exclusion and segregation-based approaches towards vulnerable populations. 2) An analysis of the national and international human rights discourses in social work. It provides a broader understanding of human rights instruments and social work's commitment to equality and social justice, respect for cultural diversity and dignity of the individual. 3) The global agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which "provides social workers with the opportunity to work collaboratively, inclusively, and strategically with the global community to address a comprehensive range of human rights issues" (Sousa-Meixell, Kim & Silmere, 2021). 4) Case analysis: human rights violation cases are analysed throughout the course.

The course applies a cross-cutting collaborative approach, and involves close collaboration with human rights NGOs, including disability rights, children rights, climate justice, and SDGs. Thus, it provides a critical human rights lens to critically evaluate social welfare and social services systems with respect to human rights issues, and it allows the students to communicate and collaborate with concrete organizations, social movements, civil, professional and political organizations, interest groups and representatives of government structures when solving human rights problems of vulnerable social groups.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Poland: Teaching human rights in social work through critical thinking. A case study on knowledge practices.

The study to be presented explores how critical thinking can be practiced and taught in the training of social work student based on a human rights approach. It investigates the nature and possible developments of critical thinking in an educational environment, asking which learning practices can be described as 'critical thinking' since this is not well defined or understood in an academic context or, particularly, in human rights education of students of social work. The qualitative study was based on 22 'critical reflection' essays written by final year postgraduate students in social work who were part of the course Human Rights and Social Justice. The course was based on the human rights' approach to social work, aimed at raising critical awareness of this area and enhancing reflective and critical practice habits by developing critical thinking strategies. Students were tasked with commenting on 'critical incidents' using critical reflection to create new professional understanding based on critical analysis of incidents during their work placement training or professional practice as social workers. Students' reflective writing showed a capability for recontextualizing, generalising and assessing the meanings connected to the incident through weakening semantic gravity. The study proved that mastering 'semantic gravity', the ability to manage knowledge, which is to be decontextualised, transferred and recontextualised, may improve critical thinking skills. The analysis demonstrates how movements in semantic gravity in students' writing assignment provide conditions for cumulative knowledge building.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Spain: Human Rights teaching initiatives developed at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Castilla-La Mancha

According to the Global definition of Social Work (Melbourne 2014), the principles of Human Rights and Social Justice should inspire social work, both as a profession and as an academic discipline. However, the fact of the matter is that human rights tend to be, in practice, absent in the contents taught by lecturers and learned by students at Faculties in Spain and this has a substantive impact on how present and future practitioners deal with the dignity of citizens. In this presentation we will introduce and reflect on the outcomes of several human rights teaching initiatives developed at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, some of which were highly innovative and became very popular in the Spanish context when they were first put in practice (such as The annual week on Human Rights and Social Work and the Annual prize on Human Rights and Arts), some others are less visible and take more time but aim at generating a sustainable and durable awareness amongst the academic community along the four years of the degree studies.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

England: Human Rights and Social Work MA at the University of Essex

The University of Essex in England developed a new social work master's program with the specific intention for it to have a human rights focus. This was the first social work degree in England with such specific focus on human rights. In collaboration with the university's Human Rights Centre law lecturer colleagues, a curriculum was developed to fully incorporate human rights in social work. Informed by the British Association of Social Workers Social Work & Human Rights practice guide (Harms-Smith et al., 2019), of which one presenter was co-author, a course aim from the outset was to establish human rights social work practice being linked with a dedicated human rights-based research dissertation module. This presentation shares findings for the three first cohorts of the masters, addressing curriculum development, student feedback collection and human rights focused research outputs. We explore the implications of social work courses diversifying to having a unique focus, working collaboratively cross university and our plans for engaging in international collaborations for teaching human rights in social work from the 2022/23 cycle. We will close by sharing student feedback, lecturer experience and why we believe human rights social work education is core to social work education curricula.

Keywords

human rights, social work education, Lithuania, Poland, England, Spain

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Challenges of Accountability: The Case of Post-Soviet Estonian Rural Local Governments

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Accountability in social work is carried out in two dimensions, in the interaction between professionalism and social work practice. Following the European tradition, accountable practice must be based on laws, local resources, and the assessment of the needy without forgetting the goals and values of social work. A macro-meso-level approach of accountability in administrative social work is to be conducted by the professional legitimately and firsthand, according to the order of public organization.

The aim of this research is to explore administrative social work accountability in Estonian rural local governments. The utilized methodology has been the collective case study (Mills 2010; Punch 2009). I followed the information-oriented selection: the cases of maximum variation by size and location (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1996). Triangulation has been used as a procedure for acquiring data. Further analysis was conducted by using a taxonomic approach (Ragin 2011).

Table 1. The dual accountability in the local government

In Estonia, the lack of national regulation with an insufficient understanding of social work has affected the local governments' ability to choose the best of the available opinions. An agreement has been missing as to how the local government shares responsibility with the State and the families. In the current situation, the responsibilities of each of the parties are not specified. The situation is unclear- who is actually the client of the rural local government? The local-centered approach makes the local government's social work practice politically loaded. In the future, however, the model of an independent professional social worker and of the recipient being the most important participant of the service provider system should prevail.

The position of social worker is ambivalent and without professional power; 3) The structure of administration involves non-professionals who are professionals in another field, or non-educated members; 4) The decision-making process regarding the clients is distributed among different levels; 5) The biggest challenge impacting the cases is the decision-making at the client level being highly politicized. Moreover, I have discovered that transparency, more specifically the rate of transparency in the social services, pointed out big differences in the social service practice (Raudava 2015, 2017).

Keywords: Estonia, accountability; rural local government, social work practice.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Keywords

Estonia, accountability, social work 'professionalism, practice

735

Insights into the articulation between the needs of homeless persons and the offer of emergency shelters in Switzerland

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

« No rough sleepers in Europe and certainly not in winter!”, nobody would contest this moral imperative. However, despite housing being a basic human need a right, the implementation of this imperative remains complicated.

In Switzerland, some people do not benefit from emergency shelters, either because the number of places is insufficient or because access may be particularly difficult for them. This situation is all the more astonishing as the social protection system in Switzerland is presented as strong and efficient. While the government is committed to finding solutions for Swiss citizens as well as foreign nationals, provided they have a valid residence permit, undocumented people or people with precarious residence permits represent a challenge. Considered ineligible for social welfare benefits, they tend to be excluded from emergency shelters, many of them have to resort to rough sleeping even in winter.

Existing homelessness studies have shown that certain groups of people, such as women and migrant people, do not use existing services, in particular because they do not feel safe enough in these places. In this context, it seems important to include the issue of non-take up of social rights in order to understand how and why the services offered do not always correspond to the needs of potential recipients.

In this context ridden by dilemmas and political challenges, a Swiss cantonal authority mandated an evaluation research on the articulation between the institutional offer and the needs of homeless people based on their personal profile and trajectories.

The conception of the research draws on theoretical insights from “a theory of fields” by Fligstein & McAdam (2012) providing conceptual tools for institutional analysis nested in political and economic orders relating to social actors and their rationales, constituting strategic action fields.

Our contribution will present preliminary results of this research conducted between autumn 2022 and spring 2023 and it relates to the conference theme on connecting social work research and practice, as the aim of the research is to find a better articulation between offer and needs.

The study adopted a mixed methods design including: A documentary analysis to understand the diverse institutional arrangements with respect to homelessness in various cantons. An Analysis of original data collected by questionnaires among beneficiaries of emergency shelters concerning their profiles, homelessness trajectories and needs. A qualitative investigation including semi-structured interviews with homeless persons and diverse actors related to the public and civil society support measures as well as focus group interviews with social workers at the shelters.

The results of this research aim to inform social policy and social work practice, first on the needs of the homeless, their profiles and homelessness trajectories as well as the reasons for non-take up of rights; Second to recommend more inclusive alternatives to the current offer in such a way that it becomes accessible to all those in need, irrespective of residency status. The research project thus may contribute to create a differential approach and a stronger base for collaboration across actors to advance on the goal of eliminating homelessness.

Keywords

Housing, Emergency Shelter, Homelessness, Switzerland , Mixed method

Family reunification in the lives of unaccompanied refugee children: significance, complexity and the role of social work.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose:

International research points to the detrimental impact of family separation on refugee populations (e.g. Choumanivong et al. 2014; Gambaro et al., 2018). In addition, 'family connectedness' is viewed as a key source of resilience for refugee children and young people, and therefore the 'vulnerability' of refugee children is considered to be increased when they are 'unaccompanied' (Ní Raghallaigh, 2018; Pieloch et al., 2016). While family reunification is seen as crucial for successful integration, very few studies have focused on the reality of family reunification for refugees. This paper draws on a study that sought to address that gap in the Irish context. The research explored the challenges faced before, during, and following family reunification, along with the support needs of family members who are reunited with one another.

Methods:

The research was qualitative in nature and involved purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with refugee sponsors, reunited family members, and a range of professional stakeholders (including social workers), with 39 participants taking part in total. Data was analysed thematically, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach.

Findings:

The findings discussed here focus in particular on unaccompanied refugee children. They highlight the importance attached to family reunification for this cohort, whilst also highlighting the multiple challenges and difficulties that young people face. These include challenges navigating family reunification processes, and the uncertainty faced as regards their family member's applications. In addition, the findings point to the initial joy of being reunited followed by very significant challenges as family relationships are re-established and renegotiated in a new context. In the absence of sufficient other support, unaccompanied minors act as *de facto* resettlement workers for their family members.

Conclusions and implications:

The paper points to the current and potential role of social workers in this context. It concludes that social work's commitment to systemic approaches, to human rights, and to social justice, as well as the significance attached by social workers to human relationships, mean that the profession can play a significant role in this sphere. Social workers have the potential to enhance and sustain the social inclusion of refugee young people and their family members and to challenge the oppressive policies and procedures that are in place. The paper also highlights the need for additional international research on refugee family reunification, including longitudinal studies.

Keywords

Refugees, Unaccompanied minors, Family reunification, Asylum seekers, Social Inclusion

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Narratives of parenthood and childhood among refugee families residing in collective reception centers: On declining parental agency and institutionalized forms of parentification.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

From 2015 onwards, Europe has been confronted with increasing numbers of refugees, due to wars in the Middle East and persecutions of people by authoritarian states. During this period, the amount of families with children who fled their home country increased from less than 10% in 2013, to 22% in 2016 (Hedebrand et al., 2016). Currently, about one third of the asylum seekers living in Belgian collective reception centres are families with children. Although reception centres in Belgium (as elsewhere in Europe) aren't equipped to host families with children, families nevertheless remain an extensive period of time in these collective centers where they lack autonomy, privacy, certainty and often even a sense of security.

We explore how refugee family dynamics are impacted by the life in such collective centers, which are sometimes referred to as 'total institutions' (Goffman, 1961). How do parents experience and practice their parental roles and responsibilities when faced with cumulating stressors upon their arrival, whilst living in a context that limits parental agency and autonomy? How do children experience their childhood, now that a private family 'home' is reduced to one room and a lot of their childhood is located in shared superdiverse spaces? How does the relationship to their parents change as they tend to learn the language faster and access society first through school? And what support do families receive from reception staff, that equally struggle to practice social work in circumstances that severely compromise the full realization of family life?

We draw from 123 in-depth interviews with parents (58), children (38) and social workers (38) in 9 collective reception centers in Flanders and Wallonia conducted as part of a larger AMIF project. In addition to the status loss already experienced upon leaving their homes and jobs, parents testify to the decline of their parental agency when not being to cook for their family or orient their children in the 'outside world' after arrival. At the same time, parents narrate taking up more responsibilities than ever before, and they experiment with 'new' parenting roles and practices because of the complex living situation. Furthermore, both social workers and family members are concerned with institutionalized forms of parentification as children take on a role as translator, navigational assistant or even mediator in conflicts. Even more complex parentification situations arise when the family's legal status depends on the child because an asylum application is filed under his/her name.

The findings are discussed in light of the existing literature on refugee families' wellbeing and coping (Weine, 2008; 2011), refugee childhood (Rizkalla et al., 2020) and parentification (Titzmann, 2012). Our findings call for social workers and policy makers to consciously reconsider reception and asylum policies and practices with a view to safeguarding children's and families' human rights.

Keywords

refugees, family dynamics, parenting, childhood, parentification

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Social work in the pandemic emergency: how it activates individual and collective forms of resilience.

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LUMSA Università, Rome, Italy

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose. Literature has already investigated the role of social work as a means to access resources and/or services and as a rebalancing factor in uncertain contexts: social work overcomes the standardized schemes of classical welfare, and it appears able to design new strategies of reassurance and adaptation (Castels 2003, Beck & Bauman 1999, 2006, Sennett 2004). This study aims to push forward the research boundaries focusing on: a) the social work ability as a whole system, as organizations (public and private) and as individuals to cope with the emergency both in the period of maximum alert and post-alert; b) how this system has been able to adapt and manage uncertainty.

Methodology. From this perspective, an empirical comparative study started in Italy and Spain (July 2020) aiming to analyse how and to what extent the Covid-19 pandemic impacted social and health services at local level, in terms of capacity (system, organisations and individuals) and reflexivity (how to re-organise social work). A quantitative survey, involving 274 social workers in Italy, was conducted between July and October 2020. Three dimensions have been investigated: changes in the organization of services in terms of method and practice; work experience during the critical phase of the Covid-19 pandemic; finally, changes in social needs and new strategies to cope with. Then, an explorative workshop, involving 18 social workers from different sectors and different organisations, and from three Italian regions (Lazio, Puglia, Sicilia) was conducted in June 2021: it was preparatory to the 12 focus group interviews scheduled in November 2022 – January 2023.

Findings. According to the preliminary results of the Italian quantitative survey, during the health emergency, social work played a key role in the activation of individual and collective forms of resilience (Mangone, Zyuzev 2020), both supporting public policies to minimize the effects generated by this pandemic and stimulating, as the economist Giovannini argues, the “transformative resilience” of the socio-economic system in a new scenario of “reconstituted normality” (ASviS, 2020).

Conclusion. Thus, social work has shown a capacity for organizational resilience, triggering individual and collective coping processes even in innovative forms that have to become shared good practices so as to develop adequate systemic services able to meet emerging needs, and above all, to create new professional and organizational cultures (Marzulli & Moscatelli 2017).

Keywords

social workers, emergency services, social policy, mixed-method research, focus groups

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“You get stuck in it” – young people’s stories of trying to quit non-medical use of tramadol.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Department of Social work, Lund University, Sweden

Aims: Non-medical prescription opioid use among young people has become a great concern in many countries, including Sweden, where tramadol is the drug that clearly dominates. This study aims to examine key components in young people’s stories of trying to quit drugs, focusing on nonmedical use of tramadol. Methods: Repeated qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 young people in the age 19-24 with experiences of problems with tramadol. In the analysis, the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness from self-determination theory (SDT) were used. Results: Three themes emerged from the young people’s stories: (1) Quitting initiated from the adult world, (2) To be willing but incapable, (3) Between ambivalence and determination. These themes demonstrate conflicting feelings about the drug use and a process of quitting that has largely been externally imposed, but also experiences of an incapability to quit. However, an increased autonomous will and ability to abstain from drugs has gradually emerged, where trusting relationships with professionals, family and friends have played an important role. Conclusions: The process of trying to quit non-medical use of tramadol can be challenging and involves a complex interaction between willingness and capability, where external influence can be facilitating or impeding. This study speaks for the importance of taking into account the young people’s own perspectives in treatment efforts, where trust is a key component.

Keywords

Non-medical prescription opioid use, young people, Recovery, Drug treatment, Self-determination theory

Co-creation of Community-Based Embodied Knowledge via Interactive Theatre - Examining Socioculturally Rooted Gender Beliefs and Norms

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background/purpose: Using interactive theatre, this study examined the gender beliefs and norms expressed by South Asian community members when intervening in a theatrical enactment scene depicting a husband's controlling behavior toward his wife. This project was part of an ongoing larger university-community partnership bridging social work research and practice and aimed at developing socioculturally responsive intimate partner violence prevention programs.

The use of interactive theatre has been increasingly recognized as an effective method for co-creating knowledge; its use in research ranges from formative/exploratory investigation, education and training of project staff and community members at large, program evaluation, and formulation of community-generated prevention strategies.

Methods: At an event in a local South Asian community, trained peer educators performed a skit where the husband insists that the wife should stay home to take care of their children and tries to prevent her from attending a work meeting; over the duration of the short skit, the voices of the two actors become increasingly strident, and the skit ends as the husband makes a gesture to physically strike his wife. The same skit was performed again applying the methods of Forum Theatre (Boal). The audience were then invited to intervene in the scene as bystanders, such as friends or family, which was videorecorded. Of the 55 individuals captured by the video camera, 23 tried some sort of intervention as bystanders. Using a ground theory approach, supplemented by visual analysis techniques, we conducted inductive coding to analyze community members' responses to an enacted theatrical performance.

Findings: Community members' actions reflected the complexity of varying and shifting gender norms and beliefs about gender roles and relations. Although many confronted the husband, most of them (inadvertently or not) reinforced the centrality of women as caregivers of children in the family. Most community members chose to intervene by interacting with the couple together, interpreting the enacted scene as a conflict to be resolved between the two parties. This approach highlighted interveners' valuing of the conjugal unit, possibly linked to the strong sociocultural significance of the family unit in this community. Community members' actions concerning childcare also reflected both egalitarian and patriarchal values about gender roles and gender norms in the family. On the other hand, some community members' actions reflected a perception that the conflict was a reflection of a gendered power differential between the husband and wife.

Conclusions and Implications: Methodologically, use of interactive theatre and analysis of enacted actions could serve as effective methods for examining embodied knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes shaped by sociocultural and structural arrangements in their particular community, which can be seen as analogues to habitus per Bourdieu. The complexity of gender norms and values reflected in community members' actions calls for sociocultural tailoring; future social work research and prevention programs must attend to the rich, within-group variations in community members' attitudes and beliefs.

Theoretical References

Boal, A. (1979). Theater of the oppressed. Theatre Communications Group.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge University Press.

Keywords

Community-based participatory action research, Arts-based approach, Gender-based violence, Qualitative analysis, Socioculturally responsive research and practice

750

Social Work between public and non-profit in Italy: outsourcing or subcontracting?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This contribution represents one of the specific focus within the national research, carried out by Roma Tre University and National Foundation of Social Workers (FNAS), with the aim of investigating the situation of Social Work in non-profit organisations (NPOs), which in recent decades have become an important employment area for social workers, through the outsourcing of services by the Public Administrations (PA).

In addition to the classic model of outsourcing (the PA outsources a whole service to an NPO), in recent years has been developing in Italy a different model (similar to subcontracting, typical of private companies). In this new model, the PA essentially acquires professionals who depend on the NPO but work directly for the contracting PA. This contribution compares the characteristics of the Social Work in both models.

The web survey was addressed to the universe of Social Workers who work or have recently worked in an NPO; it used a quantitative methodology, through a specific structured questionnaire, composed of a total of about 40 questions. The questionnaire was available online from 21/12/2020 to 10/2/2021, it was advertised through several channels (e-mails, websites, social networks) and obtained over 4400 valid responses. This contribution analyses the responses of over 2600 respondents, currently employed in NPOs.

The comparison between the two sub-samples shows some differences regarding the characteristics of the NPOs involved, the working features and the sense of belonging of the Social Workers to their employer. In the first case, subcontracting almost exclusively concerns social cooperatives, mostly medium/large, which mainly employ only Social Workers; whereas in classic outsourcing there is a greater variety of NPOs (social cooperatives, voluntary organisations, foundations) and of professionals (Social Workers, Psychologists, Educators and others).

Regarding professionals, in the model of subcontracting outsourcing work mostly younger and/or at the beginning career Social Workers; and they show a lower sense of belonging to the NPO, seen to a greater extent as a "compulsory transition" towards public employment and overall less protective for the workers/professionals involved.

What emerged can be useful in terms of deepening the phenomenon - and therefore to reflective formation - and in the perspective of the political role of the Social Work, with the aim of recognizing the different models and identify their strengths and their critical elements that can have important repercussions not only for involved Social Workers but also for the people they care.

Keywords

Social Work, Non-profit Organisations, Public Administrations, Outsourcing, Subcontracting

751

Local governance models: the influence of human relationships in the “life cycle” of the social policies

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

As a current societal challenge, the concept of governance has been discussed both in academia and in the field of social policies. It is a current and transversal theme, with evidence of its application at global, European, national, regional and local levels, as well as its adoption in multiple sectors of activity.

The aim is to analyse, discuss and reflect on the processes of local governance in the design, implementation and evaluation of social programmes or policies, based on the analysis of the changes that have occurred in Portuguese society in the last 30 years and their repercussions on the lives of people, organisations and territories.

In this sense, it focuses attention on public policies with social purposes and based on governance models (embodied in policies, programmes, measures or projects), i.e., those whose substance (purpose, objectives, instruments) and essence (their process, the way they are carried out) aims to guarantee and promote social rights, social welfare in society (cf. Pereirinha, 2008), and whose design, implementation and evaluation presuppose the involvement of public, private and civil society actors (Araújo & Rodrigues, 2017; Birkland, 2015; Knill & Tosun, 2012; Knoepfel et al, 2014; Larrue et al., 2007; Lipsky, 1980, 2010a; Marques, 2016; Rietbergen-McCracken & Narayan-Parker, 1998; Rodrigues & Carreiras, 2017).

The theoretical referential points to the existence of different levels of power, legitimacy and "urgency" (Mitchell et al., 1997), of relationships "in a network of influences, (...) [with] direct relationships with one another" (Rowley, 1997: 890) and repercussions on strategies and forms of participation, as well as on the degrees of involvement of the different actors (Rietbergen-McCracken & Narayan-Parker, 1998). Therefore, the research aimed to

understand the type of relationship established, the type of involvement and the participation strategies of the different actors, to understand the influence of human relationships in the life cycle of social policies, i.e. whether the way in which the different actors interrelate in the different stages of the life cycle of social policies influences how these policies are designed, implemented and evaluated.

Through the analysis of an example of a policy measure (the Local Social Intervention Network / Social Assistance and Support Service), the application of questionnaire surveys (to professionals from 74 different municipalities), the carrying out of 6 case studies and 3 focus groups with privileged actors, it was possible to define axes of analysis which enable us to understand the dynamics of governance and to classify characteristics which enabled the constitution of governance models adopted in the territories.

The research made it possible to identify virtualities and limitations of the adoption of territorially based governance models, greatly influenced by the history and characteristics of interinstitutional relations in the territories, as well as by their degree of openness to the operationalisation of governance dynamics. However, despite the theoretical recognition of the relevance of evaluation, a culture of compulsory compliance with evaluation practices prevails, when imposed, without ownership of its results or the adoption of measures under the recommendations.

Keywords

Local governance, Social policies , Stakeholders, Participation, Relationships

752

Exploring "sine die" foster care: a qualitative-quantitative study on Italian social work practice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In Italy "sine die" foster care is a practice that consists in the permanence of children with foster families until they reach the age of majority. This practice is not regulated by Italian legislation that, on the contrary, establishes that foster care is a temporary placement allowed to four years maximum. As a consequence of this situation "sine die" foster care seems to be invisible in social work research. In fact, there are not available quantitative and qualitative data which allow to define this phenomenon considered on rise by Italian professionals and to define other procedures to protect children.

A qualitative-quantitative study was carried out in the field of Practice research. Through the analysis of the elements characterising "sine die" foster care placements carried out in the province of Padua and listening to the voice of the practitioners in the same area, the objective of the study is to gain knowledge of this practice with particular attention to its function of protecting the minors involved.

The first research step of the study consisted in a documentary analysis of social folders related to 71 foster care placements that was extended beyond 4 years, from 2016 to 2021. The data collected are related to socio-anagraphic information both of children and their birth families and to information about their pathways in foster care. In the second step was realised a focus group with professionals employed in a foster care service that allowed to deepen understanding practices, limits, and strengths.

Results reveal the presence of two type of “sine die” foster care: on the one hand some long term foster care seem to ensure children wellbeing thanks to the presence of some aspects such as the collaboration between foster family and birth family, the sense of belonging of children in both families and the positive relationship between foster family, birth family and social services; on the other hand some long term foster care do not ensure children wellbeing because of the lack of project planning, the poor help process realized by professionals and services and because of the prognosis related to parental skills which is not consistent with the situation or not updated.

In conclusion, results highlight that nowadays the “sine die” foster care only partially ensures the best interest of children; and it needs a reflection from professionals to build different practices to protect those children that live in a semi-permanent neglect condition. For this reason, professionals are hopeful for a future change of the legislation which could include other legal institutes such as the one of open adoption.

Keywords

Foster Care, Long Term Care, Child Protection, Social Work Practice, Practice Research

755

Development and psychometric evaluation of a social workers professional competencies scale (SWPCS): a sequential exploratory mixed-method study

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Although increased attention has focused on developing various definitions and conceptualizations of professional competence, there is still a lack of adequate reliable and valid measures. Moreover, this topic is highly dependent on national context in which social work operates. It is worth noting that the incentive for this research came from the professional community. The present study aimed to fill in this scientific and practical gap by developing and evaluating the psychometric properties of a Social Workers Professional Competencies Scale (SWPC).

Method: A sequential exploratory design was used to develop and validate a new SWPC instrument. Mixed methods data was collected on draft items for the SWPC instrument across eight key domains of competencies that were conceptualised based on an extensive literature review: (process competencies, professional behavior, theory integration and professional judgement, ethical behavior, community development, cultural competence, leadership, structural social work). The research was conducted on sample of social workers employed in Social

Welfare Centres in Croatia that is kind of a 'backbone' of social welfare system and social work as a profession. The study consisted of several stages that had been implemented sequentially: item identification, item selection, and validation. Social workers have been involved at every stage of the development of the PCSW to ensure that the final instrument captures their perspectives and assessments. The first stage involved a systematic review and 10 focus groups with social workers (n=78) to identify and select instrument items within 8 main domains of professional competencies. In the quantitative (psychometric evaluation) phase, face, content, construct, convergent, and discriminant validity and reliability of the scale were tested. Quantitative data was collected through two phases: first they were collected through pilot survey (n=115) and then in second phase through the main survey on sample of social workers employed in Social Welfare Centres (n=905).

Results: In this study, 8 factors were extracted from items through exploratory factor analysis: (1) process competencies, (2) professional behavior, (3) theory integration and professional judgement, (4) ethical behavior, (5) community development, (6) cultural competence, (7) leadership, and (8) structural social work. The developed SWPC instrument had high internal consistencies and it confirmed in this study as reliable and valid self-assessment instrument. Results also confirmed relevance of all eight examined domains of professional competencies.

Conclusions: The SWPC instrument can facilitate the evaluation of factors associated with social workers professional development and organizational behaviors. The instruments also have the potential to assist graduate training programs in monitoring the development of their students' competencies across the course of their training. Further studies are needed to assess the psychometric properties of SWPC in different cultures and work contexts of social workers. On a broader scale, this research design can provide a 'know-how' for construction and validation of research instruments. Sequential exploratory mixed-method study was in great extent participatory and it allowed the development of a new research area in Croatia with numerous scientific and practical implications.

Keywords

Professional competence, Sequential exploratory mixed-method study, Psychometric evaluation, Social workers, Croatia

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Promoting sustainable well-being through nature-based interventions for young people in precarious situations

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The multiple global crises, like, climate change, the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent Russia's invasion of Ukraine, are exacerbating precariousness among young people and disproportionately affecting their well-

being. The need for resilient and sustainable societies in which young people can live a good and meaningful life cannot be overstated. My doctoral research examines the potential of nature-based solutions to promote sustainable well-being among young people in precarious situations. In a systematic literature review, we explored how nature-based interventions promote sustainable well-being for young people in precarious situations. A literature search generated 1,753 results, from which 50 peer-reviewed articles were selected for analysis. Young people in precarious situations (i) had underlying mental health and behavioral problems, (ii) faced challenges with education or employment, (iii) were not in education or employment. The most common intervention was wilderness therapy, followed by animal-assisted interventions, outdoor adventure interventions, care farming, horticultural interventions, environmental conservation, surfing therapy, and sustainable construction. The reviewed literature indicates that nature-based interventions promote sustainable well-being by helping to address the well-being challenges facing young people and providing them with opportunities to meaningfully participate in society. We further used the Having-Doing-Loving-Being model of sustainable well-being to interpret well-being outcomes, concluding that nature-based interventions enhance young people's relationship with society and nature. Implications for social work include transitioning from well-being to sustainable well-being, utilizing nature-based interventions to address mental health and behavioral problems, and advocacy for nature-based activities as alternative avenues for meaningful participation.

Keywords

Nature-based interventions, young people, precarious situations, social work, sustainable well-being

758

The use of independent experts in child welfare service care orders

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose

Every year, the Norwegian child welfare service (CWS) places approximately 1250 children and adolescents in care. When the CWS consider a care order, an independent expert is often engaged to inform the decision. Independent experts in Norway are most commonly psychologists, usually employed under a broad mandate to assess parenting capacity. Independent experts thus play a crucial role in care order decision-making processes, and their reports can be decisive for whether vulnerable children at risk get the most appropriate help. However, there has been specific criticism regarding the strong weight given in court to evidence from independent experts and regarding the qualifications of independent experts (Bala et al., 2017; Melinder et al., 2021). More knowledge of the role of experts in child welfare care assessments is needed.

The present study explores how independent experts in Norway understand and define their role and contribution in child protection care proceedings, focusing especially on how they describe their contributions in terms of their

expertise as psychologists. We aim to analyse how psychological experts negotiate and discuss professional boundaries in relation to social workers in these cases. The study's objective is linked to the central conference theme on how social work practice and policy take responsibility towards children's and young people's well-being. Further, the study is especially linked to sub-theme 1: Social work practice across professional boundaries and 2: Challenges and opportunities for social work practice and policy in the contemporary contexts, using the child welfare context as a case in point.

Methods

Semi-structured individual interviews with 12 independent experts (all of them are psychologists) were carried out between May 2021 to January 2022. We used purposive sampling according to the following inclusion criteria. Independent experts with:

A thematic analysis inspired by Braun & Clark (2006) is used to identify key themes in the data material.

Preliminary findings and implications

From the experts' accounts, we identify two major kinds of contributions that they link to their role and contributions: 1. Their independence from CWS enables them to make more unbiased assessments contrary to the CWS social workers, who they often find caught up in narratives about and relationships with the families. 2. Their expertise assists CWS with a deeper psychological and a more holistic understanding of the case. By that, they contribute to monitoring and securing the quality of CWS' assessments.

The preliminary findings stimulate debates about what the relevant competencies in child protection assessments are, as well as debates about power dynamics between the different professions involved in care order decision-making.

Keywords

child protection, child needs assessment, care orders, independent experts, professional expertise

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Social work and political conflict: Reflections on three European case studies

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

It is only in the last few decades that social work educators, researchers and practitioners have begun to explore how the profession is affected by political conflicts, and whether it can meaningfully intervene in the lives of

victims and survivors in these circumstances. In recent years these relationships have greater resonance with the effects of the many conflicts that have impacted upon European societies. These range from the traumatic effects on millions of refugees and those seeking asylum because of wars in the middle east, Africa and other regions of the world. In the last year European politicians, civic leaders and health and social care professionals are struggling to meet the needs of populations fleeing from the conflict in Ukraine (Ioakimidis & Maglajlic, 2022).

This symposium seeks to discuss these issues using a three-case study approach, incorporating the examples of Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cyprus. Contributors will use the explanatory frameworks identified in two publications in particular: Duffy, J., Campbell, J., & Tosone, C. (Eds.). (2019). *International perspectives on social work and political conflict*. Routledge, and Campbell, J., Ioakimidis, V., & Maglajlic, R. A. (2019). *Social work for critical peace: A comparative approach to understanding social work and political conflict*. *European Journal of Social Work*, 22(6), 1073-1084. The arguments used in these publications suggest that there are several themes which can be used to explain the relationships between social work and political conflict, which can be sometimes used to compare experiences. These include:

- Histories of conflicts which often have their roots in colonial and neo-colonial processes
- These histories have created the contexts for social and economic divisions, expressed in inequalities and including religious and cultural 'othering'
- Social work agencies have adapted apolitical stances as a way of delivering services to divided communities
- Social workers have tended to adopt neutral roles to avoid risk and danger in the workforce and with clients
- Until recently issues of trauma experienced by clients and social workers have been generally not well understood or dealt with
- There is growing interest in exploring how social workers can challenge these issues in social work education, practice and research
- This implies the need to build alliances with victims and survivor of political conflict

The symposium will be used to explore whether these explanatory themes have resonance with the experiences of the audience and how new alliances can be built within social work constituencies in Europe and the wider world.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

This presentation will provide a brief contextual introduction to the political conflict, to include historical, economic, religious and cultural factors which shape the way in which social work services developed, with a particular focus on the 50 year period of the current 'Troubles' (1969-present). It is argued that the way in which social work services were delivered can be roughly characterised by three periods: the first between 1969 and 1972 when the local parliament was unable to manage the political conflict and the breakdown of civil society and law; the second period (1971-1998) when the politics and the conflict were managed by the Westminster government; and the third, present period which started with the 1998 Belfast Agreement and various attempts to build peace. The presentation will then focus on a range of historical, legacy issues which have impacted on social work practice (Campbell et al, 2021) and social work education (Duffy et al, 2012). These factors help explain earlier practitioner interventions which although competent and value-based, but were essentially apolitical, mostly on grounds of safety and the management of risk. With peace-building, however, new opportunities for more progressive forms of social work education have been possible, which can lead to new forms of alliances with victims and survivors. These possibilities suggest types of practice that are more community based and which attend to the politics of the conflict.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

As in other regions that have long standing experiences of political conflict, social work in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been shaped by a range of complex factors, many associated with the period following the war in Yugoslavia (Maglajlic and Stubbs, 2018). The presentation will offer a brief overview of the context of social welfare and the impact of political conflict on the reform processes, individual and community needs. It will then focus on two issues: the long-term reform of social welfare and its impact on social work practice; and then highlight latest research on the experiential knowledge of distress caused by political conflict and its implications for community mental health care. The second issue will draw upon the findings of the study 'Madness after the war', funded by the British Academy and co-produced with a mental health survivor researcher (Maglajlic, 2021).

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Social work practice and training in the context of political and ethnic conflict has seen renewed interest among scholars. Recent research has tried to shift focus away from simplistic interpretations of social work as an unshakably 'benevolent' profession. An emphasis on social work's colonial legacies and the structural causes of political violence provides us with important new directions on how to rethink and reshape social work education and practice in these contexts.

Cyprus presents a very interesting, yet under-explored, case study as it remains an island de facto divided, along ethnic lines. The division has resulted in the physical and political separation of the two most populous ethnic communities (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots). United Nations (UN)-sponsored peace talks have gained momentum in recent years. This presentation, based on a recent research project (Ioakimidis et al, 2021) offers the first systematic exploration of the views of social work students across both sides of the divide. Through a mixed-method approach, practitioners, educators and students were able to express their thoughts and beliefs on 'the other' and on social work in the post-conflict realities. The study confirms the contradictory nature of social work education in Cyprus challenges the futility of nationalism and argues for the importance of bi-communal social work partnerships.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

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Keywords

Social work, Political conflict, Trauma, Community development, Mental health

764

Developments of the future workshop as a participatory methodology to include service users in practice research

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In the Social Work Practice Research there has been an awareness of the involvement of service users that need to be more included in the research methods. Various stakeholders contribute to knowledge production with the ambition of bringing research closer to practice or vice versa. While this is an interesting development, there is still a need to develop hands-on methods which can ensure the inclusion of service users in practice research. I argue that “future workshops” (Jungk and Müllert 1987) with the right measures and openness is an appropriate method to involve marginalised groups and collectively benefit from practice research by:

As an empirical example, I use my ongoing PhD-project concerning how service users and practitioners experience opportunities to involve families in digital technologies in the child welfare system where future workshops, interviews and observations are being used as methods. The project is inspired by practice research (Uggerhøj 2011). In the field of child welfare services, there are challenges in involving vulnerable children and parents.

While there in practice research is a common understanding of collaboration consists of dialogue, negotiations, and compromises, it is still uncertain how all stakeholders can contribute to positioning as subjects rather than being just objects.

Keywords

Practice Research, co-production, collaboration, families , vulnerable children

773

Social housing: the participatory Tuendelee’s model

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Fondazione Tuendeleo Onlus was founded in 2003 as a place to support vulnerable motherhood. Through its social housing projects, it provides housing solutions in the area of Melzo (Province of Milan, Italy) to accommodate women and mothers in difficulty or entire families in need.

The Tuendeleo model aims at responding to the contemporary challenge of increasing need in the absence of resources by "tailoring" the foundation's projects to the specific needs of cases. Specifically, in addition to the goals of the Individualized Educational Project defined with the social service, all the resources that the individual and his/her referral network possess are identified. In this way our work can be "through and toward human relationships" from which it is indispensable. The project is structured with the guests, with the network of professional services and with the informal relationships of reference, in an "attempt to make realized possible relationships, not to mechanically create or reconstruct them" (Folgheraiter, 1998). This method requires flexibility, abstention from judgment and the ability to seize opportunities that arise in times of difficulty.

The Tuendeleo method will be presented through two case studies. The first case presents the story of Amina, who was placed in housing with her 5-month-old son. An accident at work of the partner and father of the child, which seemed to be a moment of maximum criticality, was an opportunity to redesign the pathway and include the father in the project. This made it possible to work on the couple, shared parenting and allow the mother to activate all her resources. This helped to shorten the project and evaluation time.

The second case study concerns Manuela, a 37-year-old woman, with a decree from the Family Court, placed in housing with the presence of her two children and grandmother. The working method involved preliminary interviews with the mother and grandparents to understand their project idea and family network, analysis of past interventions of social service, and structuring a project for the entire household. Through these two cases, the Tuendeleo Foundation's hospitality process is then presented, which involves several steps, with the aim of structuring a participatory and inclusive pathway of the different personal, family and legal instances and needs related to the household. It is an approach based on the person who becomes an active part of the network and its well-being (Folgheraiter, 2017) and collaborates with local agencies and operators through the creation of human relationships.

In conclusion, the structuring of the project thus becomes a practical opportunity to put the family network at the center and to promote participatory, modifiable in itinere and autonomy-centered programming. The advantages observed concern a lower expenditure of economic resources, and time, and greater participation and awareness of those involved.

Keywords

Participation, Flexible working, Empowerment, Social work education, Innovation

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Describing Social Work Assessment and Measuring Wellbeing Outcomes

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

Background: This symposium illuminates the experiences gained from a large hospital based social work study referred to as Sostyö-Terva (2021). Project funding was provided by the Finnish government, as part of an initiative to promote social work research nationally. It represents a practice research study, involving innovative methodologies for measuring the effectiveness of health social work psychosocial assessment in facilitating patient wellbeing. The study was conducted in Finland across six university teaching hospitals, with senior academics, practitioner researchers and over 120 social workers.

In Finland, as in other European countries, there is an expectation to evidence the effectiveness of health social work in promoting integrated health and social care and social wellbeing. The ability to deliver evidence-based practice is paramount for ensuring the employment of social worker but more importantly addressing the wholistic needs of patients. Globally, health and social care systems face challenges such as the decentralization and fragmentation of services, spiraling service costs, inequitable access to services for people with special needs, variable quality and efficiency of services and limited primary health care and social wellbeing provision. Health Social Work is positioned to play a critical role in the delivery of sustainable health and social wellbeing however the global challenge is the ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions for improving social wellbeing outcomes for patients, their families and communities. This symposium aims to address two key issues facing social work researchers, namely the applicability of models and partnership in practice research that will deliver the evidence required and the appropriateness of methodologies that effectively capture the essence of social work intervention.

Methods: The symposium is introduced with a description of the Sostyö-Terva study, and expands the experiences and findings gained, to create a more generalized discussion on the state of European health social work research. The rationale for Sostyö-Terva involved the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of social work assessment in providing integrated service paths that link hospital and health services to social care. Examples of how a mixed methodology including both descriptive and quasi-experimental research, describes what social do in practice and captures patient outcomes is provided.

Findings: The first paper, outlines the Sostyö-Terve research rationale, design and findings, giving practical examples, of tools and outcomes, to inform research. The concept of effectiveness research is defined and demonstrated. The second paper reinforces the importance of models of practice research, academic/practice partnerships and the co-production of research with major stakeholders, so as to overcome the practice/academic divide and build research capacity amongst practitioners. The third paper discusses existing methods to evaluate interventions and assessment and acknowledges the challenge involved in developing social work sensitive measurement tools.

Conclusion: This symposium is designed to engage active involvement from community, health and hospital social workers, social work academics and managers, currently involved in or planning to undertake research. The symposium is summarized with a discussion on the transformative nature of research in a global setting and explores futuristic directions in research theory and pedagogy.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

Sostoyö-Terva: An Effectiveness Study on Social Work Interventions in Health

Background: Sostoyö-Terva is a unique Finnish government funded study, involving practice research and a mixed methodology to measure the effectiveness of health social work. The current challenge for Social Work is to demonstrate how interventions contribute to improved social outcomes for patients and families.

Method: Utilizing descriptive and quasi-experimental research methods the study analyses a national audit of hospital social workers daily activities to provide the first Finnish profile of hospital Social Work (N=367). In a second phase, a quasi-experimental methodology measured patient (N=255) social wellbeing outcomes, namely quality of life, capacities, life satisfaction and access to services. Measurement occurred at the time of the initial social work psychosocial assessment and again after 3 months. The intervention study involved 3 Finnish university teaching hospitals and the clinical practice fields of somatic diseases, cancer, psychiatry, and children (and their families). Measurement scores were compared with a matched comparative group (N=255) not referred to social work services.

Findings: Results provide the first ever national Finnish profile of the complexity and diversity of hospital social work and provide evidence as to the role social work within a health system. Wellbeing outcomes for patients receiving intervention and those patients not receiving social work services demonstrate the effectiveness of social work assessment in maintaining or improving patients' wellbeing.

Conclusion: This first national study on Finnish hospital practice highlights the opportunities and a practical limitation of undertaking a quasi-experimental design study in a clinical setting.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Co-production in Practice Research: Academic and Practitioners Partnerships

Background: Social work is both a profession and an academic profession. The strength of combining both practice and research in practice research is self-evident (Uggerhøj, 2011). However Social work academics have colonized the production of practice knowledge and ideas, neglecting the experiences and wisdom of practitioners. Alternatively, practitioners have avoided the research agenda, because of busy workloads and the lack of capacity for research activity. The co-production of research based on successful academic practitioners' partnerships and health social work is proven to be a fertile ground for co-produced research. Practice research involves transformative emphasis on relational based work (Lorenz 2002).

Method: Sostyo-Terva (2022) offers a case study of a partnership between academics, practitioner researchers, lead social workers and over 120 social workers across Finnish university hospitals, in a quasi-experimental study on the effectiveness of social work. Practitioners actively co-produced the aims and objects of the study, the research design, and delivered the study.

Findings: The practice partnership offered mutual and reciprocal learning opportunities for academics, practitioners and social work managers. Practitioners' researchers experienced a transition from the life world of practice to the theory life of academia. While academics experienced the practical challenges of undertaking research in a practice setting. Social work managers were challenged to promote research in a busy and chaotic health system.

Conclusion: The paper concludes by theorizing the experiences of practice research from the perspectives the stakeholders involved and the need to build research capacity in practice.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Methodological Innovations in Practice Research

Background: Social Work lacks effective tools for the measurement of clinical interventions and outcomes with clients. In health care social workers strive to provide evidence as to the effectiveness of intervention, alongside health professional colleagues. The complexity of social problems and the need to tailored social work interventions to meet individual need, makes the use of standardized measurement tools even more challenging.

Method: Sostyo-Terve (2022) tested a range of tools designed to measure how routine psychosocial assessment impacts on the quality of life of recipient patients. The study tools selected by the Social Work practitioners for measuring the impact of assessment and intervention included the Quality of Life (EUROHIS-QOL 8-item index, 2012), Capability Scale (Anand, 2009) Life Satisfaction Survey (Kainulainen, 2015), Service Usage Audit (Promeq, 2019) and the SWAN (2015)

Findings: The availability of valid and reliable measurement tools, accepted for used by social worker practitioners is limited. Despite the range of standardized health and wellbeing tools available, few Finnish hospital social workers use measurements and assessment tools systematically. Standardized tools available are not always sensitive to changes resulting from social work interventions, nor suitable for use with small sized samples

Conclusion: Important questions are raised as to how social workers can access, select and modify measurement and assessment tools, sensitive enough to capture the impact of Social Work assessment on patient outcomes. The study suggests that there existing tools that offer practical options for practice researchers in the future.

Keywords

practice research, effectiveness studies, methodology , theorizing , capacity building

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Ethical issues in digital social work: a qualitative study in Italy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose

Although currently there is no uniform theoretical framework that could help understand the phenomenon of the digital transformation of social work (Steiner, 2020), international literature (Chan & Holosko, 2016; Lòpez Peláez et al., 2018) has been describing for years how professional practices of social workers are influenced by the use of technologies for the most disparate activities. The use of technological devices brings with it important possibilities for change and numerous challenges, in particular from an ethical point of view, for example with respect to guaranteeing privacy and confidentiality, or maintaining professional boundaries with clients (Barsky, 2017; Reamer, 2013).

The research aims to investigate the ethical implications related to the use of ICT in social work and what could be the coping strategies, from the point of view of social workers. In a context of digital transformation, it seems essential to identify the ethical challenges that professionals need to face.

Methods

The research uses a qualitative method, using semi-structured interviews (N=29) and focus groups (N=2) with 33 social workers working in social services in Northern Italy. Social workers were selected from different employment areas and were of different ages. One focus group was conducted with six social workers engaged in field work with an average age of 31 years old, while the other was conducted with the ethics commission of the Social Workers Association of the Region, composed by retired social workers and managers with an average age equal to 55 years old. In both focus groups, the technique of vignettes (Jenkins et al., 2010) was used to explore the points of view of the social workers through hypothetical situations.

Findings

The prevailing finding is that most ethical issues are experienced by the social workers as dilemmatic and remain unanswered, despite age differences. However, it should be noted that, for social workers with more experience, it is generally considered unprofessional to use ICT with service users.

The main themes that emerged concern:

Risk of discrimination: while for some people remote help can have beneficial effects, for others it can represent a great difficulty. Social workers need to ask themselves how and with whom to promote online practices in fieldwork and how to protect people from the risk of digital discrimination.

Online professionalism: social workers question themselves and identify what kind of behaviors can be considered professional online, both in remote help paths and in the representation of oneself online, for example using social media.

Respect for privacy and confidentiality: another concern is about ensuring respect for privacy in online counseling, while using videocall apps from settings that differ from office. Social workers identify strategies to avoid issues.

Conclusions

Digital social work still needs further studies and a shared system of thoughts and values within the professional practice. In the absence of regulations or guidelines, social workers find themselves displaced in the digital world: supervision, training and support of professionals emerge as necessary. It may also be useful to introduce the theme of digital social work in university curricula.

Keywords

Ethics, Digital social work, ICT, Values, Online professionalism

Stories 'from below' - Silenced or forgotten voices and counter-narratives of social work histories

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Proposal type

Symposium

Abstract

This panel will address the issue of (politics of) historiography in social work research. This is not only relevant for each explicitly historical research, but will also have an impact on social work theories, method(ological) approaches, and perspectives of professional politics and practices. It is especially relevant for each idea of radical and critical social work in theory and praxis, because here it comes to the question of allowed and suppressed memories of social work, especially considering the experiences of those who had or have to suffer from marginalization and exclusion, from oppression and punishment, from stigmatization and 'normalization' - from each form of treatment that includes violent practises, be it in material or immaterial, or symbolical ways. Moreover, doing historical research, writing, telling about or educating by certain historical narratives is not only a powerful praxis but can also have a violent (e.g. silencing, and thus vulnerating) impact.

Social movements (like feminist, working class, black power, anti-colonial movements ...) have played a crucial role in opening up hegemonic narratives of (not only) social work histories to other points of view and a whole range of other historical experiences (and actors resp. Actor groups). At the same time, developing counter-narratives can also lead to omissions of other experiences, or to a kind of heroic, idealizing approach that has to be critically reflected.

There has been (and still is) a whole network of diverse grassroots initiatives, like 'history factories', archives and libraries, or online platforms trying to create critical counter-narratives to the histories told 'from above'. Within – 'or against' – the field of social work there has been, and still is, a variety of self-organized initiatives (e. g. organized by those with experience of institutional care or mental health institutions) that take over the power to define their own situations, experience, suffering, and also empowerment, themselves.

The panel will present and discuss diverse research projects (including archival material) that shed light on the power dimension of historiography in a manifold way, reflecting methodological questions (e. g. related to oral histories, issues of memory referring to very difficult / traumatizing subjects ...), as well as issues of historiography (f.e. politics of canonization and representation).

The single papers look into the histories of

- early social work as developed and brought forward by women's movements in different countries around the turn to the 20th century, while showing also its inherent colonial traces and racist facets;
- processes of social transformations in the 1970ies and 1980ies reconstructed by interviews with actors of change in residential childcare in Switzerland;

- socialist and post-socialist periods in the memories of Slovenian social workers.

- radical and politically informed social work from the early 20th century in the UK, revealing other strands of social work traditions that could help to reframe the social work of today.

Symposium Oral Presentation #1

“As you fasten your eyes on me [...], you are truly beholding a rare, rare bird” – Mary Church Terrell, Black Feminism and Counter-Narratives in the Discourse of early Social Work in Germany

The history of social work in Germany is closely linked to the white, middle-class women's movement. Those we honour today as pioneers of social work were often active also on the international stage. Among them Alice Salomon, founder of numerous social work practice and academic institutions in Germany. Salomon was also active in the International Council of Women and co-organised the International Women's Congress in Berlin in 1904. To this event, Salomon invited the founder of the US Association of Colored Women, Mary Church Terrell, as a speaker. Salomon's invitation reveals her white, colonial gaze firmly entrenched in the movement at her time. Nevertheless, Church Terrell travelled to the congress as the only attendant of Color and gave a most impressive lecture on „The progress of colored women“, thus changing the discursive space of the predominantly white movement. She consciously took up racist and exoticising addressings and transformed them into counter-narratives, thus, sharply exposing the interdependences between racism and white feminism.

In our talk, we will look at this event mirrored by a series of archived documents. We will ask, which voices have been lost in the German-speaking world and are not remembered collectively. Using the example of Mary Church Terrell, we will also point to the pioneering role of Black feminists in the development of emancipatory social work.

Symposium Oral Presentation #2

Stories from 'in-between'. Interviews with actors of change in residential childcare

The proposed contribution reflects methodological issues around interviews with contemporary witnesses, active in the transformation-processes in residential childcare in the 1970s and 1980s, a time frame of relevant social transformations. Therefore, the following question will be put up for discussion: Can interviews open up new knowledge about social transformation, allowing a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of processes on a smaller scale, not considered in dominant narratives? Analyzing the interviews, we can already see that the results reveal non-simultaneous processes and segmented developments challenging hegemonial narratives of progress and modernization.

In our research project "Educational Spaces" we conduct over all in all 30 interviews with contemporary actors at different levels and in different contexts of society, politics, and science. The interviewees are 'somehow' located 'in between'. Methodologically the Interviews are situated in the interface between qualitative expert interviews and oral history interviews. Analyzing the retrospective constructions by contemporary witnesses, we refer to the memory-theoretical perspective elaborated by Aleida Assmann (2018) or Dorothee Wierling (2009), being aware to critically reflect on the specific temporality of knowledge about past processes reconstructed in the light of contemporary discourses.

In our presentation we provide an insight into preliminary results as well as the process of analyzing 10 interviews conducted with actors of change in the City of Zürich.

Symposium Oral Presentation #3

Professional Oral Histories from Socialism and Post-Socialist Period in the memory of Slovenian Social Workers

Socialist social work was, so to say, 'ahistorical and self-sufficient'. Personal memory had no place in public remembrance and little was known about those who practiced social work in Slovenia. A canonized memory of social work prevailed. Therefore, we researched professional oral histories of today's retired social workers: how did they come in the profession, their professional career, and how was their work influenced by politics during the state socialist period and during the post-socialist transition? Methodologically, the research relied on a thematic analysis of the oral histories and included 20 interviews with retired social workers, lasting between 3 and 8 hours. All interviewees initially attended a two-year school of social work in Ljubljana and later completed a four-year program. All were recognized in their profession, either because of their formal leadership role within central social welfare institutions or due to their contribution to a specific area of social work. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed a strong identification with the profession and its high social status compared to today; many areas of social work did not develop until the 1990s and some were left out entirely. Dramatic changes occurred after 1991 with emerging poverty, migration, and increasing social inequalities, to which were added the deteriorating media image of social work after 2010 and the increasing impoverishment of the social care sector in the country. Doing memory work is important for the profession.

Symposium Oral Presentation #4

What is the 'good life'? Remembering and exploring the history of political social work in the UK.

Social work in the UK has become an activity focused on technical skills, risk assessment and resource allocation. We are looking into history to remember a more radical and politically informed social work practice that looks beyond technical competence, and asked questions that were both political and philosophical, such as what is a 'good life' and how do we obtain it as social workers for our service users?

The social, political and economic narrative in the UK is centred on maintaining the status quo, the message being: 'there is no alternative'. This dominant narrative, also around social work in the UK, will be challenged using the former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee as a point of historical enquiry. Clement Attlee [1883-1967] was a key reforming figure of the UK post war welfare state and the first and only social worker to hold high office in the UK. His seminal book "The Social Worker" (1920) offers a timeless insight into alternative visions for social work, and a deeply politicised alternative role for social workers. The fragmented and reformed social work that we see in the UK, still maintains values and ethics that are aligned to wider narratives around social justice. "The Social Worker" offers a lens to reframe social work in a more political way - because now more than ever we need the message that another world and another social work is possible.

Keywords

historiography, radical social work, social justice, oral history, collective memory

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'Voiceless' and 'Vulnerable': Challenging How Disabled Children and Young People Were Portrayed and Treated During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the UK and the Co-creation of an Inclusive Future.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Evidence is now emerging on the impact of both the COVID-19 virus and governmental policy decisions during the pandemic which affected the lives of children across the world. Both the immediate, and longer-term impacts of this global, unprecedented event, are starting to be examined and appreciated. Disabled children and young people, however, have been afforded little attention in these debates. Yet as a group, disabled children and young people's education, health, well-being and life chances have been disproportionately impacted by; the virus itself, repeated lock-downs, and efforts to address the impact. Such neglect of focus on this group, and barriers to inclusion and provision in society are not necessarily new. Disabled children and young people are often denied their rights to provision, protection and participation.

Methods: This paper, co-led and co-written by a UK-based group of Disabled Young Researchers – the RIP:STARS - draws upon our rights-focused research and lived experience. The paper is written as a collaboration between all of the RIP:STARS and our academic allies. We work and write as one team, and we do not differentiate our roles into academics and young people; we are all RIP:STARS. During the pandemic, through a process of small and whole group reflections over many weeks, via online meetings and when allowed, face-to-face sessions, we shared ideas and collectively decided on what should be included in this paper. We do not privilege academic voice over the importance of lived experience.

Findings: We argue that disabled children's experiences and voices have not been heard during the pandemic, and subsequently as the world seemingly moves on. In addition, we have also been categorised and portrayed as 'the vulnerable' during pandemic responses, without consideration of what that label might mean for the identity of a disabled child or young person and how it might influence disablist attitudes. Drawing also upon our own pre-pandemic national qualitative research study on holistic rights-focused support for disabled children and young people, we demonstrate that disabled children and young people should be part of all policy and practice plans for recovery post pandemic. Far from being 'voiceless' and 'vulnerable' disabled children and young people have much to contribute and can support the development of a more inclusive, rights-based post Covid-19 world.

Implications: Through working in partnership with disabled young people where they are supported to understand their rights, share their experiences and define what support they need, this paper will illustrate how co-creation of knowledge can inform, and influence social work practice and policy in a post-pandemic world.

Keywords

Children, Disability , Human Rights , User-Led Research, Inclusion

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Research Circle as strategy for developing knowledge and improving practice for children's participation in child welfare services.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss how research circle, as collaborative strategy, may contribute to improve practice about children's participation in Child Welfare Service (CWS).

The paper is based on empirical material from the action research project Research circle on children's participation in CWS. Six social workers from three CWS in Norway and two researchers from Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) participated. The project lasted for 1 1/2 year. The project is associated to the research group FORS involving researchers from HVL and Oslo Metropolitan University.

Research circle is a model for research based on collaboration between practice fields and academic institutions, of which the object is to improve practice and develop knowledge through critical reflection on practical experiences considering theoretical perspectives.

The overarching research question is: How can research circle contribute to improve practice about children's participation in CWS?

The findings show that the social workers experienced changes in knowledge and attitudes towards children's participation and felt empowered to promote children's participation within their local CWS and towards collaborative partners. They reported that their local action-projects had been successful and led to new practices that directly will improve children's participation. Concretely the changes include a room being set aside for interviews with children, creation of an 'interview kit' for off-site meetings with children, establishing the method of Narrative Letters, and improved procedures for children's participation. focused process and the work that was undertaken in the research circle.

According to the participating social workers, the increased focus on, and knowledge about, children's participation was related to several contributing factors in the research circle project; the meeting with each other, having time to discuss and reflect on their practices, and acquiring theoretical perspectives to elucidate alternative ways of understanding and acting. They also meant that this form of work engendered enthusiasm and provided a sense of ownership which represented a commitment that provided structure to the undertaking. Maintaining a focus on the same topic over a prolonged period provided an opportunity for in-depth engagement, and the long project period allowed new practices to be established in parallel with the project work.

I conclude that the structure of the research circle, provides a strategy for cooperation between CWS and academia that enables new understanding that may conceive better practices for children's participation.

Keywords

children's participation, research circle, action research, knowledge development, critical reflection

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Practice Research on Effectiveness

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Lynette Joubert
Symposium Convenor
no

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: Sostoyö-Terva is a unique Finnish practice research study involving a mixed methodology for measuring the effectiveness of social work. The study aims to current to demonstrate how social work interventions contribute to improved social outcomes for patients and families.

Method: This intervention study uses a quasi-experimental design to measure patient outcomes (N=255) from routine psychosocial assessment in light of dimensions of social wellbeingsuch as quality of life, capacities, life satisfaction and access to services. The measurement occurs at the time of the initial social work psychosocial assessment and again after 3 months. The study involved 3 Finnish university teaching hospitals and the clinical practice fields of somatic diseases, cancer, psychiatry, and children (and their families). Measurement scores were compares with a matched comparative group who were not referred to social work services (N=255).

Findings: Results provide the first ever national Finnish profile of the complexity and diversity of hospital social work and provide evidence as to the role social work within a dynamic health and social care system. Wellbeing outcomes for patients receiving intervention and those patients not receiving social work services demonstrate the effectiveness of the social work psychosocial assessment in maintaining or improving patients' wellbeing.

Conclusion: This first national study on Finnish hospital practice highlights the opportunities and a practical limitation us of undertaking a quasi-experimental design study in a practice health setting. It also promotes the importance developing social work research education for graduates. It promotes the authors commitment to transformative research.

Keywords

quasi-experimental design, practice research, measurement, pychosocial assessment , education

790

Participation through Relationships? The potential of professional relationships to facilitate the participation of children in residential childcare.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Objectives

The planned lecture provides insights into barriers and facilitators for the participation of children and young people in residential childcare based on the project "Participation in Residential Childcare" funded by German Research Association (DFG). The focus is on how relationships between professionals and children enable or impede the participation of children and young people in their daily lives. It is also discussed how the relationships between peers and between minors and professionals are embedded in an organizational subculture. The planned lecture ends with a critical reflection on strategies to implement children's rights in alternative care and participation models that are discussed in the professional discourse.

Methods

The objective of the research project is to investigate the participation dynamics of and opportunities to complain about young people in different residential care facilities in several regions within Germany. Hence, participation processes, young people filing complaints and underlying power structures in living groups were analyzed. The sample includes 27 cases in four different federal states in Germany (in total 106 professionals, including 28 senior managers and 169 children and young people were interviewed). Every case includes group discussions with young people, staff members, and expert interviews with the senior managers. All interviews and group discussions were analyzed using the documentary method (Bohnsack 2014). The results include the complete analysis of the collected data.

Results

The planned lecture presents the results on how professionals in participatory facilities in residential group care enable children's participation by building trusting relationships. These results will be contrasted with facilities where professionals focus on the exercise of daily routines and structures, participation is enabled exclusively by procedures, e.g., group evenings, children's and youth parliaments etc. Furthermore, the reconstructed subcultures of participatory and routine-oriented facilities are presented. These subcultures (cf. Fine 1996) include professionals' collectively shared meanings and understandings of what a professional relationship is, what meaningful participation is and how best to support children and young people in alternative care. These subcultures also include power dynamics that influence relationships between children and professionals and children's opportunities for voice. Finally, two aspects will be critically reflected upon. One is the strategy for implementing and securing children's rights in alternative care through organizational processes and procedures, which stands in stark contrast to the findings of this study. Secondly, participation models will be critically reflected on the extent to which they reflect the informal processes of participation and relationship building.

Keywords

social worker-service user relationships, participation, residential childcare, children's rights, organizational culture

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Families and Young people on the Edge: Research Engagement with Excluded Communities -Building Trust and Managing Conflict

Lucille Allain, Helen Hingley-Jones

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Introduction/background

Co-produced research and research partnerships with local services are employed to respond to challenges in communities, with the aim of evaluating existing services and informing development of new ones. In order to do this kind of research, qualitative methodologies which seek to explore the experiences of excluded communities are key to social work and social science research and are often described as 'practice-near' (Froggett and Briggs 2009). In this presentation we discuss experiences of two research studies based in inner-city areas: one engages with families and young people using a family intervention and the other black/mixed heritage young people who are part of a study regarding diversion from custody (Gleeson, H, et al forthcoming).

Entering the research field in both cases presented challenges related to sensitivities and distress experienced by participants (Silverio et al 2022). Case studies are presented demonstrating how the researchers responded to risk and unwitting involvement with young people in conflict, in prison and family bereavement. These research projects focused on one inner-city London borough with high levels of child poverty and some areas of deprivation.

Methods

Both studies involved qualitative research methodologies using semi-structured interviews and data provided by the local authority. This presentation uses a case study approach to share our experiences and knowledge from undertaking 'practice near' research.

Conclusion/Implications

Interaction and planning research with excluded families and their children and young black/mixed heritage people who have been involved in the criminal justice system requires new approaches to sampling and research strategies. Understanding deprived communities, 'post code' divisions and territories means that plans have to be built around this (Bernard 2022). Highlighted is the vital importance of local agencies providing accurate information about the families and young people that the researchers are asked to contact, to ensure respect and research ethics are upheld and no trauma is caused. Planning and building trust are key and ensuring time is given for respectful engagement and ensuring agencies are ready for ongoing support and follow up as needed. The presenters will explore how these methodological considerations can be taken forwards.

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Keywords

parents and young people, youth justice, excluded communities, black and mixed heritage young people, research methodology

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The development of moralizing discourse in social work in socialist Slovenia between the 1960s and 1980s

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work as it developed in Slovenia in the 1960s was designed as the implementation of state social policy. Although there was a two-year school of social work, in practice social workers were often left to their own moral judgment when working with single mothers, as there were no professional ethical standards coupled with poor theoretical knowledge. Following the end of World War II, the Yugoslav authorities equalized the rights of children born within and without wedlock; since 1975, non-married partnerships were made equal with married partners. In addition, a number of laws and social policies were enacted to improve the situation of single mothers. Therefore, what I wish to clarify is: in what ways, and to what extent, did the moral discourse on single mothers in social work deviate from explicit socialist ideals?

This paper is based on the examination of 12 diploma works written by social work students during the years between the 1960s and 1990s on the topic of single mothers in order to shed light on the relevant social work principles that the professors bestowed upon their students; the state social policies on which social workers based their work; and the practice of social workers employed in social welfare.

The analysis shows that the moral discourse of social workers has changed significantly during the three decades. Contrary to expectations, their stance was markedly less moralizing in the 1960s than during the 1990s. Early in this period, social workers concerned themselves with poor economic conditions of single mothers and criticized the society that failed to provide for them, so they often resorted to placing the children in foster care. During the 1970s, as the economic situation improved, the moralizing intensified considerably. Social workers were emphasizing the importance of a two-parent family (father and mother) and focused on the shortcomings of what they called "incomplete families." By the 1980s, the dominant discourse in social work was based on the notion that for "normal development", a child both a father and a mother. In this sense, the discourse of social work contrasted sharply with the explicit ideology of the socialist regime which did not interfere in private decisions but sought to improve the situation of single mothers objectively, materially and legally.

The reasons for the aggravation of moral discourse among social workers can be attributed to larger factors. Social work education lasted only two years throughout socialism, social workers did not develop ethical and reflective practice, and the psychologization of parenting that emerged in the 1980s only intensified moral discourse as social workers focused on the traditional idea of the family. However, despite the increase in moral discourse among social workers, more and more women opted for single parenting when it finally became part of the family norm in the post-socialist era.

Keywords

morale, social work education, social work history, ethics, single parent families

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The challenges and opportunities of participation: care experienced people's involvement in social work practice and policy developments

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The idea that children and young people should be involved in practice and policy developments concerning them has been formally accepted for over 30 years by local, national and international social work organisations. However, in the last decade, a number of national UK policy initiatives focusing on children's social care have either not involved care experienced people at all, or where they have, have received criticism for their lack of inclusivity. Little is currently known about the extent and effectiveness of the involvement of children and young people in care in local practice and policy developments in the UK.

The current exploratory study was designed to develop a better understanding of the challenges involved when including the perspectives of care experienced people in policy and practice developments, and the ways that these challenges may be overcome. It used semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of care experienced adults who have been involved in attempts to influence practice and policy in respect of children in state care and care leavers. The study gained their views on the challenges and possibilities of care experienced people's greater involvement in future practice and policy development. The interview data were analysed thematically.

This paper provides a thematic analysis of interview data focusing on three of the central challenges identified around the 'participation agenda' in respect of care experienced people. These are categorised as: (1) tensions between the promotion of the voices of those with lived experience with other considerations in practice and policy development for children in care; (2) challenges in involving an accurate diversity of care experienced people; (3) organisational openness to care experienced people's views which challenge extant policy and thinking.

Three ways for organisations to meet these challenges will be considered in conclusion. These are for organisations: to think about the different constituencies of care experienced people who need to be represented at the outset; to provide appropriate recognition of participation; and to be more open, and explicit, about the limitations and gaps in any participation initiatives they initiate.

Keywords

care experienced people, local government policy, government policy, user participation, user views

'It is difficult to change social work practice'. Strategies of encounter between policy, practice, and research. The case of the P.I.P.P.I. Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization in Italy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The presentation will discuss the main issues raised during the 10-year journey of the P.I.P.P.I. (Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization), an innovative intervention strategy implemented in Italy to reduce child neglect and prevent the placement out-of-home of children 0-14 y.o.. The programme is inspired by the resilience of Pippi Longstocking, a metaphor of the children's strength and resilience in facing challenges and difficulties. P.I.P.P.I. results from a longstanding collaboration between the Laboratory of Research and Intervention on Family Education of the University of Padova and the Italian Ministry of Welfare.

The programme, which is organized in a biannual path involving 10-20 families in each local authority, was piloted in 10 major Italian cities from 2011 to 2013. Several steps of scaling-up followed, so that today, P.I.P.P.I. is recognised as an 'Essential Level of Social Benefits'. All the 465 Italian social territories are involved and funded by the Italian plan for the Next Generation EU, the EU recovery instrument developed to help facing the economic and social damage due to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the years, attention has been paid to the gap between the program innovations, deriving from research evidence, and the adoption of these effective interventions into practice.

The implementation science highlights the use of implementation strategies for bridging that gap. Those strategies are intended as "Systematic processes and practices intended to facilitate the adoption of a specified practice innovation into usual care in order to address gaps in services or in quality of care". The P.I.P.P.I. uses 3 main implementation strategies that will be presented and discussed:

1 - crossing research, practice and local and national policy. With P.I.P.P.I. for the first time, the University, the Ministry of Welfare, the Regions and the Municipalities put themselves at the service of the same common good, with the wider and long-running programme in the history of Italian social policies. Strategies of collaboration at the macro and meso levels will be shown.

2 - a methodology of co-research during the action. The P.I.P.P.I. has widespread the Italian adaptation of the Common Assessment Framework, intended as a research tool during social intervention. Families and practitioners are intended here as co-researcher that act upon research methods. This is meant not as an opportunity for a diagnosis, but as a basis for the dialogue among all the participants, through a reflective thinking that calls for shared strategies to assure the access to opportunities, resources, and respect of the child's rights.

3 - training, P.I.P.P.I. propose a model of initial and continuous training, valorising the opportunities of online training (asynchronous and synchronous) and in presence activities, aiming at supporting the exchange of practices

between different territories and at fostering inventions and adaptations of the programme itself through discussion between participants and with the researchers.

Some insights from each strategy will help in discussing how the P.I.P.P.I. tries to fill the above mentioned gap between research and practice.

Keywords

child neglect, social exclusion, common assessment framework, reflective practice, family centered approach

803

The "Ser Màs" social work podcast. Considerations from a qualitative study with master students at the Catholic University in Italy.

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Catholic University of Milan, Milano, Italy

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work has a complex and changing nature (Parton, 2000). The professional practice of the social worker requires the development of a specialized set of skills, and this means that, to become a practitioner, a great wealth of knowledge, skills and abilities is required, both human and technical (Trevithick, 2005). Because of the complexity at the basis of the profession, Social Work Education (SWE) is generally understood as a macro-area that includes within it multiple and interrelated professional functions that aim to train experienced and competent social workers.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, considering the numerous restrictions, digital social work (Lopez Pelàez and Marcuello-Servòs, 2020) has become the main tool that has allowed the continuity of learning-teaching processes.

Digital social work involves the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which has been accepted as an accelerator and promoter of teaching and learning (Benedict, Balogun, Wilfred and Ukpere, 2014).

Considering this pandemic context, six PhD students and social workers have promoted the launch of a Podcast ("Ser Màs") which aims to stimulate critical and reflective reasoning around themes, ethical dilemmas and concrete cases related to Social Work. The intentions that favored the birth of the Podcast also refer to the belief that SWE cannot be separated from the development and solicitation of critical thinking of future social workers (Thompson, 2006).

The Podcast in SWE is an alternative tool for students and trainers to animate reflection and discussion on principles and values related to the training of future social workers and their future professional practice (Fox et al., 2022).

It is from these assumptions that the research aims to explore the experiences of the master's degree students at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan and Brescia, after having listened to the Podcast "Ser Màs".

The research has exploratory goals according to a non-standard methodology.

After a first proposal to all students of the master's degree of both universities, the availability to participate in the research will be collected. It is required that the selected students listen, within a month, to the episodes of the Podcast "Ser Màs" and then participate in a focus group session. Considering a sample of 20 students, 4 focus groups of 5 students each will be carried out. A thematic analysis will then be developed following the text transcripts of the four focus group sessions.

The initial hypothesis that prompted the development of this research path is that using a digital tool, such as that of the "Ser Màs" Podcast, Social Work students can perceive, or not, an increase in their educational and professional motivation and recognize in the tool an innovation with respect to the promotion of debate and professional reflections. In addition, it is assumed that the students involved can consider it as a useful moment in their training and professional path and that, therefore, Podcast can be considered as a new form of dissemination and promotion of the values of the profession.

Keywords

Social work education, Digital social work, ICT, Podcast, Qualitative research

807

Social work education – between academic freedom and politics?

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

The aim of this paper is to explore challenges and opportunities for social work education in contemporary contexts. Social work is to a large extent dependent on the formation of social policy and the laws and regulations developed to guide and control society and its citizens. This is recently analyzed by Erlien (2016) who builds his arguments on the political discourse embedded in public papers and law development, as well as regulations and guidance for education since the 1950s. His conclusion is that historically, governmental departments didn't execute direct control in the shaping of educational plans in Norway. However, there has been a tendency to formulate the plans in accordance to current social policy.

How does this relate to academic freedom? One aspect of academic freedom is the freedom of teachers to teach without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure. The Norwegian act relating to universities and university colleges states that universities or university colleges may not be instructed regarding the academic content of their teaching. However, there is a rising concern that there has

been a growing governmental control in the shaping of social work through educational plans. This can to a great extent be linked to the fact that from 1964 the concept of social work became gradually more indispensable in policy language related to the formation of the social service administration (Erlie, 2016). This can be seen as a result of a shift in political semantics, from humanistic social care to activating social services. Øverlid (2007; 2018) discusses how political control of social workers discretion has grown stronger the last decades. This can be rooted in the notion that social workers traditionally are seen as a threat to welfare politics. This kind of politics is a legitimate child of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism has consolidated its position as a dominant ideology in the western world, and Brockmann & Garrett (2022) show that social workers' worldview is also influenced by this. They have launched a model with characteristics of the two paradigms of social work which they call a Traditional Institutional Social Work Order (TISWO), and a Neoliberal Institutional Social Work Order (NISWO). Our discussions are inspired by these two paradigms.

Method:

Document analysis of governmental and local plans for social work education.

Findings:

Preliminary findings show that there has been a growing governmental control in the shaping of social work e.g., through educational plans. Political control of the educational curriculums is rooted in what seems to be a desire to control social work practice. One finding is that a paramount need in the welfare system is the need for social control, thus the desire to control social workers. Our thesis is that exertion of this control starts already in the educational system.

Conclusions and implications:

This is a work in progress, and at the conference we will present our conclusions and implications they have for social work education, and how this can affect how relational work is taught in education.

Keywords

Social work education, Academic freedom, Social work politics, Social control, Neoliberalism

809

"Successful Studying" in Social Work - Results of a Research Project

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

The introductory phase of studies is considered to be particularly sensitive to drop-out. Students, who often come into contact with the academic system for the first time, are unsettled by abstract texts and theories, and the academic habitus is initially foreign to them. All students have to struggle with these adjustment difficulties, but they are particularly pronounced among students who do not come from an academic home. These students of the so-called "first generation" study particularly often at universities of applied sciences and are disproportionately represented in social work degree programmes, so that the thesis suggests that the study entry phase is particularly significant for social work degree programmes. The research project "Successful Studying in Social Work" focuses on this introductory phase. It is based on one of the largest research projects in Germany on successful study (Bosse et al. 2019), in which around 4,500 students were surveyed, so that a research design and large comparative data set are available. The quantitatively oriented research is based on a heuristic in which the "ability to study" moderated by various influencing variables is central to successful studying. In this concept, three dimensions of influencing factors have a decisive impact on study ability: the individual, social and institutional dimension. The authors operationalise these dimensions through individual competence components (such as the students' self-assessment), individual study prerequisites (such as prior knowledge) and social characteristics of the life situation. The institutional context includes, for example, study entry offers and the type of university. The questionnaire developed by Bosse et al. on the basis of the concept of "study ability" was also used, with slight modifications, in the project "Successful Studying in Social Work". Around 400 students studying social work in their first semester were surveyed. These students came from three different types of higher education institutions: A public dual university and a public and private university that offers social work as a full- and part-time programme without dual partners. In our presentation, we will outline the main findings and describe with which prerequisites social work students start their studies, what goal they pursue with their studies, what challenges they see in their studies, and what higher education institutions can do to support them in coping with these tasks. We will also look at differences between the individual types of higher education institutions and identify differences to students in other degree programmes.

Literature

Bosse, Elke et al. (2019): Gelingendes Studieren in der Studieneingangsphase. Ergebnisse und Anregungen für die Praxis aus der Begleitforschung zum Qualitätspakt Lehre im Projekt StuFHe. Online: <https://www.oa.uni-hamburg.de/elke-bosse-stufhe-2019/elke-bosse-stufhe-2019.pdf>

Keywords

Social Work students, introductory phase, quantitative research, ability to study, privat/public universities.

810

What is the experience of the expert-by-experience? Some notes on the concepts "experience" and "experiential knowledge".

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

When service users are involved in participatory practice research (PPR), they contribute as “experts by experience”. However, practice researchers are often challenged by other disciplines/researchers and policy makers when it comes to questions about the validation of “experiential knowledge”. To carry out high quality PPR and to better communicate with significant stakeholders, the field needs enhanced epistemological and conceptual discussions on what is meant by experience and experiential knowledge.

The presentation will provide an overview of the origin and unfolding of the concept “experiential knowledge”, and how it may serve as a bridge between research and service users. The concept’s intellectual (cultural anthropology) and epistemological roots will be presented: The anthropological defining quest is to represent lives and experiences of others. There is no way of experiencing the world that is «valid», true or correct – ethnographies are about multiple interpretations. Heidegger and Husserl focused the ordinary, everyday lived experience and processes involving how phenomena unfold in time. Focusing experience is about heightening awareness and insight, and therefore has the potential for being transformative. These conceptual roots will then be contextualized within social work and PPR, whereas the presentation will underscore how lived experience is about more than «individual problems», it may also be about universal experiences (marginalisation, employment, loss of relations, loss of a home).

Implications:

Enhanced knowledge on the concept “experience” and “experiential knowledge” has implications for strengthening the quality of PPR, including how researchers interact and acknowledge service users as co-producers of knowledge.

Keywords

Experiential knowledge, Expert-by-experience, Service user involvement, Cultural anthropology, Epistemology

811

From safe to brave spaces

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

During an Interreg project we had the opportunity to observe and install safe spaces for young people in vulnerable situations in different contexts: education, youth work and prevention. These spaces were organised to: 'stimulate and organise open dialogues with young people, where delicate topics are tackled and positive expression is supported. Young people will learn to share grievances with other youngsters and educators (internal

dimension - safe). In combination, we support the public expression of their grievances (external dimension-brave)' (orpheusproject.eu).

The aim was to examine how safe spaces work, whether prevention work is possible in those safe spaces and what preconditions are important to consider before installing and supervising safe and brave spaces.

We researched the concept of safe space in literature and practice through field visits, observations, focus groups and interviews in 4 pilot areas: France, the UK, The Netherlands and Belgium.

The undertheorised and overused concept of safe space confronted us with many dilemmas, opportunities, pitfalls and discussions. This concept is 'borrowed' from different areas and uses a different vocabulary than traditional social work (The Routledge Handbook of Social Work Practice Research, 2020)

Safe spaces are considered as being very important for people who share characteristics, experiences or grievances. These groups of people can meet each other free from pressures they experience elsewhere. Exchanging and exploring their experiences are therefore very important on a personal level. But these safe spaces also raise important questions. Are they not in danger of becoming islands of like-minded people? Or a form of folding back on one's own group and cultivating resentment, withdrawing from the public debate and public space, and remain stuck in the role of victim? If these people demand changes in the society to have a better position, then going public with their grievances and demands is key issue.

In other words: the power of a safe spaces has many sides. Doors may sometime remain closed, but this is not always the case. In several cases we observed safe spaces opening up, and looking for ways to speak out, to express and take action. spaces can also function as a springboard where young people learn to and evolve to standing up for themselves and their peers, build more self-confidence and draw the courage to ... jump. In these cases, safe space becomes brave spaces. Changes won't happen in the safe space but might well be in the confrontation, be it dialogue of dissensus with the unsafe environment. In this way allowing discomfort, embracing dissensus, taking risks, seem essential and might be closer to the core mission and traditions of social work.

During this workshop we present a short overview of social work literature on safe and brave spaces, look into some seminal articles and compare them with our observation and case studies on the use of safe spaces in youth work, looking at good practices.

We focus on the tendency to move from 'safe to braver to brave spaces' and how social workers can support young people in these spaces.

Keywords

youth work, prevention work, politicization, brave spaces, safe spaces

812

The frail older people in transition to non self-sufficiency. Life experiences and directions for personal social services.

Clara Bertoglio

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Proposal type

Poster

Abstract

Background and purpose

Frailty and aging in place represent pivotal themes with regards to the research on aging, aging policies, and care of older people. In the current context of progressive aging of the population, the concept of frailty becomes of crucial importance as it allows to identify the elderly whose health is at risk and who might develop a condition of insufficient self-sufficiency.

The aging in place experience is the preferred political strategy used by governments to reduce financial pressure on their welfare systems and it also represents the favourite aging option for older persons who prefer remaining at home as much as possible. Understanding how to adequately support frail elderly at home is therefore a very important question.

The present research aims at understanding the reasons that lead frail elderly people to turn to home care services late in a municipality in the Lombardy region, in northern Italy.

The research questions were formulated as follows: 1) Are there frail seniors who do not turn to home services? 2) Why do frail seniors turn to home services late? The multidimensional paradigm of frailty (Gobbens, 2010) and the Relational Social Work approach (Folgheraiter, 2011) underpin the present research.

Methods

The present research has been developed in two phases. In the first phase a preliminary survey has been carried out to identify among frail elderly people residents at home those who not receiving home care services through the administration of a questionnaire. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with frail older persons (16), informal caregivers (9), dyads of frail older person-informal caregivers (7) to understand why frail elderly people turn to home care services late.

Findings

The analysis of the data showed that frail older people were unaware that they were frail. The frail older people expressed different needs such as maintaining good health, receiving support in daily activities, having social connections and sufficient economic resources. However, the resilience and resources showed by the research participants demonstrated that would be unfairly reductive to consider them only as frail. Finally, the results highlighted that planning their own future represented a critical issue for frail older people.

Conclusion and implications

The results of the research highlighted the need to: structure specific care interventions for frail elderly people; support and encourage care by the community; support the elderly and caregivers in the transition from frailty to non self-sufficiency also by supporting the planning of their future.

Keywords

aging in place, frail older people, informal caregiver, home care, community care

Building knowledge, strength and relationships to combat violence in long-term residential institutions

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Crime against people with disabilities is often invisible as criminal offences are not reported or investigated. There are several reasons why people with disabilities are not able or willing to report crime. Physical, attitudinal, institutional, cultural, and legal barriers and social exclusion, combined with systematic violations of procedural rights, the right to legal capacity and the right to testify, leave persons with disabilities with almost no opportunity to be heard. As a result, people with disabilities access to justice is limited and disempowering. Facing many barriers victims with disabilities are also more often than not excluded from criminal justice proceedings, as they are believed to be unreliable sources of information and a burden to the justice process rather than essential participants. Because of the lack of empathy, knowledge or sensitivity of professionals' crimes against persons with disabilities may remain unidentified as crimes in the first place. Especially in residential institutions for people with disabilities abuse, violence, theft and other crimes are often minimized or swept under the rug. Most cases do not even reach the competent authorities as the situation concerning a crime will be dealt with behind closed doors within the institutions. People with disabilities living in institutions are insufficiently informed about their rights and have serious difficulties in exercising them.

In this paper, we will present the research methodology and results of the »Voices for Justice: Communicating with Victims of Crime with Disability« project and activities of direct work with users and employees in one Slovenian residential institution for people with psychosocial disabilities. The Voices for Justice project was implemented between the years 2020 and 2022 and focused on research into how people with disabilities access justice and how their rights are upheld in practice across the European Union and on creating practical tools for people with disabilities who are victims of crime, to help ensure that they can participate actively in criminal justice processes. Through research, a crucial problem of crime and violence in institutions in Slovenia was revealed. Accordingly, we directed energy into researching this topic, and above all, we took several steps to initiate the necessary changes. In our presentation, we will show how we used research findings and mandate from the project to launch activities to address and report violence and to improve information and communication for people with psychosocial disabilities who are living in long-term institutions. We will show our activities to transform relationships between users and employees of one Slovenian residential institution to reduce violence and find ways of working without coercion.

Keywords

disability rights, victim's rights, violence, action research, deinstitutionalisation

817

A vindication of the practitioner-academic: the novel contribution of “insider” social work research in England

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Practitioner-academics are becoming established in an increasing range of English health settings, including nursing and allied health professionals (Ferguson et al., 2021; Newington et al., 2022; Olive et al., 2022; Sanders et al., 2022; Westwood et al., 2018). However, they remain rare in English social work practice outside of qualifying or post-qualifying student research projects (Mitchell et al., 2010). This is despite growing evidence that research active organisations improve service quality and outputs (Shaw and Lunt, 2018). As early career practitioner-academics, we present a case for the positive contribution of practitioner-academic research, via two small research projects we completed with social workers in our own practice settings. New funding streams have become available in England, via the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), which support the development of social work practitioner-academics. Our two NIHR-funded projects illustrate the benefits of practitioner-academics in the knowledge production process, developing swift rapport with participants, facilitating the production of rich and reliable data, improving access to hard-to-reach research areas, and providing an alternative approach to researcher positionality and ethics in sensitive research.

Keywords

insider research, practitioner-academic, sensitive topics, practitioner research

818

Working with queer refugees in queer utopia: Social worker’s experiences.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

People who flee persecution because of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression (Sogie) constitute a vulnerable group of refugees. Research highlights that migration and sexuality intersect to create multiple intersecting relations of power, including social status regarding 'race,' class, gender, geopolitical location, and citizenship (Luibhéid, 2014; Ehrkamp, 2017; Wright, 2018; Llewellyn, 2020). The majority of Sogie refugees tend to be deported and their sense of connection and belonging to each new migration location is fraught with complex attachments and relationships in conflicting social, cultural, and political discourses which characterize everyday social and digital and transnational spaces they are in, such as the LGBTQ+ and ethnic communities, community of social services (Murray, 2014). In the presentation I discuss preliminary research findings on experiences of social workers in Iceland of working with Sogie refugees based on semi structured interviews. This research is part of a larger project on lived experiences of Sogie refugees in Iceland, exploring their inclusion and exclusion. The project aim is to generate knowledge on the social experiences of reception, integration, and deportation of Sogie refugees in Iceland and a transnational context, with a focus on Italy and Greece, countries Iceland commonly deports Sogie refugees to. The project compares findings with consisting research findings in the Netherlands, as both countries are often characterized as "queer utopias" and guided by six research questions. The research question informing the research of which the findings presented here are a part of is: What are the experiences of professionals and NGOs in roles of reception and settlement support of supporting Sogie refugees? The project in whole uses mixed qualitative methods, including interviews, ethnography, and observation and includes participants such as twenty Sogie refugees in Iceland, five deported to Greece and Italy and fifteen professionals in reception and integration. The findings presented in this presentation relate to analysis of interview data. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically. The analysis explored themes and patterns in the experiences of social workers regarding building relationships with Sogie refugees, their knowledge and awareness of gender and sexual identities and issues facing Sogie refugees, challenges faced in practice involving resources and policy. The findings show that social workers experiences are quite mixed and shaped by number of factors, such as their own knowledge of sexual and gender diversity, professional training, professional ideologies, and identities along with policy and services informing their practice and roles. In the presentation I discuss and reflect on the implications that the findings may have for social work practice with Sogie refugees and for policy development.

Keywords

Sogie refugees, Migration, Gender and sexual identities, Social work practice, Policy

821

Embodied working relationships in home care services

Helle Cathrine Hansen

Norwegian Social Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

Helle Cathrine Hansen

Symposium Convenor

no

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

Relational work is considered fundamental for providing professional care in welfare services. Nevertheless, care work is often performed in the squeeze between demand and resources, in settings where time is scarce and there is little room left for relational work in the form of engaging in conversations with service users. This paper explores how service users and care workers in home care services for elderly develop working relationships in interactions at the borders of bodies and between words, actions and socio-material settings. The research question is: How do service users and care workers develop purposeful and working relationships in their interactions? What role does the body play as a site for caring and working relationships to develop?

Methods:

The study is based on fieldwork from two municipal home care services in Norway and Denmark, with observations of home care workers visiting service users. The field work took place over a period of six months from September 2019 to February 2020 and include 31 days of observations of service visits. Data consist of fieldnotes and transcripts from interviews with service users and care workers. The analysis is based on Gubrium and Holstein's (1997) strategy of interpretive practice.

Findings:

The findings demonstrate how service users put their bodies at disposition for the care work and how the bodily interaction between care workers and service users form the working relationships in various ways. When the body is met and understood by the care worker as a site for care and collaboration, reciprocal and working relationships may develop. In this way the body becomes the site for reciprocal and trusting relationships. However, a more instrumental approach and response to a fragile body may result in resistance and misrecognition. In this way, the body may become a site for mistrusting and non-collaborative relationships.

Implications:

The study demonstrates that it is important for care workers to be aware of the fragile body as a site for relational work and building of working relationships, and further suggests that the embodied relation building should be acknowledged as a competency in care work.

Keywords

Working relationships, Home care services, Embodied practice, Professional competency, Care Workers

823

'Relational autonomy': A useful concept for understanding expertise development and decision making in social work?

Joanna Rawles

Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In this presentation I will explore the feminist theoretical concept of relational autonomy (Mackenzie&Stoljar 2000). Drawing on findings from two research projects with social work students, I will suggest why relational autonomy could provide us a helpful opportunity to understand how the challenge of social work expertise development and decision making can be enhanced through interdependence rather than independence.

Feminist critique has characterised the entire concept of autonomy as flawed (O'Shea 2012) due to it being individualistic, rationalistic and having an implied rejection of any form of dependency (Conly 2012). Nedelsky (1989 p12), however, took a revisionist feminist approach to autonomy proposing that "relatedness" should not be seen as "the antithesis of autonomy, but a literal precondition of autonomy, and interdependence a constant component of autonomy". In other words, we become autonomous and maintain autonomy through relationships with others. With the idea of collectivism rather than individual liberalism as a foundation for autonomy it becomes positioned as a "vital" concept for feminist understandings of "oppression, subjection and agency" (Mackenzie&Stoljar 2000 p3)

The importance of conceptualising autonomy as relational was evident in two research project I carried out with graduating social work students that I will outline in the presentation. These were hermeneutical phenomenological studies into how students began to develop their expertise in social work professional judgement and decision making. Using critical incidents of learning, within an appreciative inquiry frame (Cooperrider&Srivastva 1987), I explored how students begin to develop this expertise and what enables them to do so. The overall finding from both studies indicates that when students' autonomy is supported (Reeve 1998) they thrive and develop whereas when their autonomy is stifled or thwarted their development is impeded. Their professional development was enhanced through holding responsibility, being facilitated and challenged to develop their professional voice and by drawing on their agency as learners. A key component of the findings was that interaction and relationship with others was a crucial enabler of expertise development particularly in relation to professional judgement and decision making.

In conclusion, I will explain the implication is that social work learners need to enhance and realise their autonomy to develop but that unless we understand autonomy as being relational, we are missing an opportunity in constructing social work education and social worker support in practice in such a way that ensures expertise is developed and sustained.

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Keywords

Relational autonomy, Expertise development, Professional Judgement, Social Work learning, Social Work students

Promoting Social Tolerance in Social Work Students: A Study on the Influence of Anonymity and Identifiability in a Digital Setting during a Dilemma Discussion

Stefanie Witter, Dagmar Unz
FHWS, Würzburg, Germany

Stefanie Witter
Symposium Convenor
no

Author of Symposium Oral Presentation n.

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Tolerance is an indispensable requirement for our democracy, which is why education as the most effective tool against intolerance must be fostered (UN 1995). A method of civic education for building increased tolerance towards other perspectives is dilemma discussion (Lind 2019; Kohlberg 1981; Kopp 2017). However, there are only a few empirical studies on the effectiveness such methods in general or on framework conditions that limit or promote effectiveness (Uhl et al. 2004). In this context, not least because of the developments during the Corona pandemic (Waldmann, 2020), the question arises as to what role factors of anonymity and (non-)identifiability in digital settings have for the formation of tolerance. Existing research within the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation (SIDE) indicates that in an online communication, factors of deindividuation (anonymity and identifiability) as well as the salient identity (feeling as a member of a group (social identity) or as an individual person (personal identity)) influence the behaviour of individuals (Döring 2016; Spears et al. 1990; Spears and Postmes 2015).

Therefore, in the context of training social work students, the question arises of how de-individuation and salience of identity influence the formation of tolerance in a digital dilemma discussion. Based on the SIDE paradigm, a study was conducted in which social work students (n = 60; 2nd bachelor semester) discussed a social dilemma. As independent variables were varied: Identifiability vs. Anonymity (cameras were switched on/off and names were identifiable/anonymized) and salience of personal identity vs group identity (participants were told that the focus lies on individual/group behaviour and students were addressed as individuals/group). As dependent variable tolerance was measured in the pre-test and post-test design (measured with a pre-study developed questionnaire based on existing questionnaires by Lind 1980 and Hjerm et al. 2019). In order to select the dilemma to be discussed, a preliminary study was conducted in which various dilemmas were given and tested for suitability.

Overall, the results show: Tolerance grows being in an identifiable setting, while it decreases in anonymous settings. Tolerance could be fostered by the dilemma discussion rather in a setting that stresses the salience of social identity than in a setting that stresses personal identity. This indicates best effects for the social-identifiable groups. Additionally, there was an (unexpected) effect of the individual pre-opinion towards the dilemma: The effectiveness of the method varied depending on how the participants have decided on the dilemma.

For further studies and practical implementations, it is therefore important to consider not only what implications these results have for the concrete design of digital settings in civic education, but also what implications arise from the fact that obviously the individual pre-positioning within the dilemma plays a role.

Keywords

social skills training, digital education, social work students, dilemma discussion, tolerance

833

Evaluating the Experiences of Social Work Graduates Over Time: Findings from an Exit Survey of Final Year Students

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

There are many reasons people feel motivated to train as social workers. A study involving 240 social work students across Ireland (McCartan et al., 2020) reported that 86.3% were motivated by 'wanting to help people' with 66.4% wanting to 'overcome oppression'. Hackett et al. (2003) found that social work university students in four European countries felt committed or politically motivated. Ferguson et al. (2018) found students wanted to promote social justice. Others suggest that career motivation is influenced by life experience, family background, personal needs, and beliefs (Stevens et al., 2012; Wilson and McCrystal, 2007). Since the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed its profound impact in terms of education, politics, society, the environment, the economy and the health and social care sector. Prior to this, UK health and social care professionals were categorised as a high-risk group for developing mental health related problems (McFadden et al., 2021a). Therefore, as the pandemic developed, this has increased the job demands, burnout and stressors of the health and social care profession (McFadden et al, 2021b).

According to the Draft Social Work Workforce Review (Northern Ireland, 2021) there have been 260 commissioned places for social work training in Northern Ireland for just under 10 years. However, the supply of suitably qualified social workers has reduced, and the demand for social workers has increased, with many social workers choosing employment via recruitment agencies, at the cost of permanent posts across the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.

Messages from the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026 (published in 2018) acknowledge recruitment difficulties and the need for flexible working patterns. Regional recruitment into social work posts across Northern Ireland has been challenging for the past number of years. This has resulted in increased expenditure on agency staff, causing additional pressure on the Health and Social Care budget, has created instability for teams and has a demoralising impact on the permanent workforce. Factual information is needed from student social workers, preparing to graduate and in the early stages of their social work career, regarding basic demographic data, levels of motivation to practice social work, and preferences or specific needs regarding employment. Given the concerns regarding well-being and resilience within the profession, further information is needed to capture changes in the early stages of a social worker's career.

This paper will outline the findings of the first phase of a longitudinal study aimed at improving understanding of how the circumstances of student social workers change in the first 18 months after graduation. The paper

presents findings from Time 1 (immediately prior to graduation) and presents data on satisfaction with social work training, motivation, well-being, resilience and employment preferences.

Keywords

Social work education, Student social workers, wellbeing, teaching, practice placement

834

The Potential of Virtual Reality to Reduce Stigmata Towards People with Schizophrenia: Effects on Empathy, Attitudes, and Behaviour

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In Europe, mental illness affects about 25% of the population every year (WHO Europe, 2015). Mental illness is associated with occupational disability and long periods of absence from work (Jacobi et al., 2015; Rabe-Menssen et al., 2021). Furthermore, people with mental illness are exposed to stigmatisation, by the general population but also by (health) professionals (van Dorn et al., 2005; Vistorte et al., 2018). These stigmatisations are associated with social and personal disadvantages for those affected - including inadequate treatment (Gaebel et al., 2004; Vistorte et al., 2018).

Studies have shown that direct or (media-) mediated contact interventions and educational programmes are effective methods to reduce stigmatising attitudes and the desire for social distance (Amsalem et al., 2021, Brown, 2020, Koike et al., 2018; Maunder & White, 2019; Mehta et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2018; Rodriguez-Rivas et al., 2021; Yamaguchi et al., 2013). A more recent intervention approach attempts to make the reality of patients' lives tangible through virtual reality simulation (Banakou et al., 2016; Herrera et al., 2018). The research available so far indicates that simulations of hallucinations experienced in schizophrenia can positively influence the development of empathy and attitudes towards schizophrenia patients, but simulations have a heterogeneous influence on the desire for social distance and on helping behaviour. The design of the simulation (Banakou & Slater, 2014; Kalyanaraman et al., 2010; Norman et al., 2017; Tassinari et al., 2021) and the emotions triggered by the simulation (Diemer et al., 2015) seem to play a moderating role. It seems plausible that the feeling of loss of control experienced by schizophrenia patients, especially at the beginning of the illness (Cahdwick, 2002; de Vries et al., 2013), is also experienced in VR and can be associated with strong emotions (Gregg & Tarrier, 2007). The currently available studies have some methodological gaps; for example, attitudes toward people with schizophrenia are mainly collected through explicit measurement methods, implicit measurement methods are hardly used.

To fill existing research gaps, in an experimental control group design, participants experience visual and auditory hallucinations using an augmented reality (AR) simulation. The experimental group is given opportunities for increased controllability (e.g., the ability to stop the simulation). The control group experiences the same AR simulation as the experimental group but without these additional options for increased controllability. As

dependent variables the following are measured: desire for social distance, willingness to help, implicit and explicit attitudes, and empathy. Participants are prospective social work professionals.

It is hypothesized that in the pre-test-post-test comparison, AR simulation will generally (in both experimental and control group) improve empathy towards the stigmatised group. In addition, it is assumed that in the experimental group the desire for social distance is reduced, the willingness to help increases and the attitude towards affected persons becomes more positive.

The results are discussed in terms of their implications for practical applications, including work with relatives and the training of (prospective) professionals.

Keywords

schizophrenia, stigma, digital technology, audio visual media, empathy

841

Stories from ‘in-between’. Interviews with actors of change in residential childcare

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The proposed contribution reflects methodological issues around interviews with contemporary witnesses, active in transformation-processes of residential childcare in the 1970s and 1980s, a time frame of relevant social transformations. Therefore, the following question will be put up for discussion: Can interviews open up new knowledge about social transformation, allowing a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of processes on a smaller scale, not considered in dominant narratives? Analyzing the interviews, we can already see that the results reveal non-simultaneous processes and segmented developments challenging hegemonial narratives of progress and modernization.

In our research project “Educational Spaces” * we conduct over all 30 interviews with contemporary actors at different levels and in different contexts of society, politics, and science. Methodological the interviews are situated in the interface between qualitative expert interviews (Bogner et al 2008) and oral history interviews. Analyzing the retrospective constructions by contemporary witnesses, we refer to the memory-theoretical perspective elaborated by Alaida Assman (2018) or Dorothee Wirling (2009), being aware to critically reflect on the specific temporality of knowledge about past processes reconstructed in the light of contemporary discourses.

In our presentation we provide an insight into preliminary results as well as the process of analyzing 10 interviews conducted with actors of change in the City of Zürich.

* Ralser, Michaela, Bereswill, Mechthild, Hauss, Gisela: "Negotiating Educational Spaces in residential Childcare 1970 – 1990. An Interdisciplinary Comparison of Transformation Processes in Austria, Germany and Switzerland." Founded by FWF, DFG, SNF (2021 – 2024). Scientific collaborators in Switzerland: Kevin Heiniger, Daniela Hörler. Link: www.changing-educational-spaces.net.

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Keywords

interviews contemporary witnesses, changing educational spaces , residential childcare , oral history , history of social work

844

When vulnerable groups cannot access social work without risk: Co-creating support for vulnerable groups through research, policy and practice.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

In 2020, when pictures circulated in the media in Switzerland of people standing in lines of several hundred meters to receive free food, the public reacted in shock and disbelief. In the cities of Geneva, Zurich, and Basel, poverty suddenly became publicly apparent, moving from marginal poverty to disqualifying poverty, a form of poverty that affects broad and heterogeneous populations (Paugam 2008). The Social Department of the City of Zurich mandated us to conduct a research on the multiple challenges that led to this visible need of obviously very diverse persons and groups. We presented on this research at the last ESWRA meeting in Amsterdam. Our presentation proposed here focuses on the follow-up activities that have taken place in close collaboration between the research group and the Social Department of the City of Zurich. With reference to our research, the head of the social department, at the same time acting as a city councilor in Zuerich, established a pilot project, Basic Economic Assistance, which is intended to benefit precisely those vulnerable groups who cannot seek official social work because of their residence status, which can be jeopardized by being on supplementary benefit, and who cannot be reached by private aid organizations. These include Sans-Papiers, Sex Workers and people with limited residents' rights. These three groups are excluded or restricted from receiving social assistance by legal frameworks. With the aim of strengthening the effectiveness of the Basic Economic Assistance, we were mandated with the formative accompanying evaluation. We worked closely with NGOs and the city of Zurich to gain

knowledge about the multiple problems and resources of the recipients, their fundamental distrust of government intervention and government assistance programs, the accessibility of the recipients, and the role of basic economic assistance in the city of Zurich's service landscape. For this purpose, quantitative data was collected and qualitative interviews were conducted (cf. Spradley). In the workshop we would like to discuss the findings of the collaborative knowledge building during the evaluation under the following perspectives: How can social work research make effective contributions to improving the lives of vulnerable people through cooperation with policy makers and decision makers in politics? How can we address great distrust towards governmental help or governmental contact points in vulnerable groups? What does close cooperation with policy makers imply regarding the role of researchers and in terms of content and strategy for social work research? How can and should vulnerable persons and groups be included in the collaboration?

Keywords

Poverty, Vulnerability, Co-Creation, Knowledge Building, Policy

846

Social Work Research Through and Towards Human Relationships with Manchester Youth Justice Service in England: Continuous Realist Evaluation of Big Data to Investigate What Works and For Whom in Reducing Recidivism

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and Purpose: This study uses 100% natural samples successively in each year, followed up in a further one year to investigate what works and for whom in reducing recidivism. The repeated evaluation analysis of big data directly helps the agencies to better target their interventions, promote equity and social justice, and to develop new strategies in the circumstances where the interventions are less successful. This paper demonstrates how partnerships can be built between evaluators, service providers and the service users to develop program and evaluation designs, to enhance the utility of evaluation in practice in a longitudinal study that includes regular analysis of data undertaken with the service providers.

Although factors such as sex, age, race, substance abuse, family structure and past criminal behavior play a significant role in juvenile delinquency (Ford, 2005), these don't tell the full story and researchers continue struggling to find effective means of intervening. Studies have shown that some form of early intervention across programs seemed to be the key to lowering recidivism (Sedlak & Bruce, 2010).

Methods: A 100% naturally occurring sample is selected of all service recipients in every two-year period, and then repeatedly followed through to the following one year, to investigate what proportions do not reoffend, and what factors are predictors of not reoffending following the first episode of the intervention. A quasi-experimental design is used, comparing recidivism amongst those receiving diverse programs. Data analysis methods include the

development of binary logistic regression models to investigate the factors that were predictors for reducing recidivism.

Results: MYJS service recipients (n = 2526) from four years were followed into the next one year. It was found that 62.7% of this cohort had not re-offended. When all the significant variables were entered in a binary logistic regression with youth reoffended or not as the dependent variable, it was found that males were four times more likely to reoffend than females. Those that did not complete the intervention program were almost 6 times more likely to reoffend, and those that did not engage with the Youth Justice Service were four times more likely to reoffend. Race and ethnicity were not predictors of offending, demonstrating that MYJS was also effective in promoting equity and social justice.

Implications: Conclusions and Implications

There is strong evidence from the study that the youth justice service's intervention helps to divert the youth from crime and to reduce recidivism, but more needs to be done to develop effective programs. The evaluation including entire populations directly helps the agencies to better target their interventions, to promote equity and social justice, and to develop new strategies in the circumstances where the interventions are less successful. This paper demonstrates how partnerships can be built between evaluators and service providers to develop program designs, evaluation designs and information designs to enhance the utility of evaluation in practice in a longitudinal study that includes regular analysis of data undertaken with the service providers.

Keywords

Realist Evaluation, Youth Justice, Equity, Social Justice, Big data

847

Three components of interprofessional collaboration to strengthen the parent-child relationship

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background

Healthy child development requires stable, caring, interactive relationships with adults. Sometimes parents need support to develop this relationship with their child(ren). Professionals from the medical as well as the social domain provide this care, but a cohesive approach is often lacking.

In the medium sized municipality Deventer (the Netherlands), each year (future) parents of 956 newborn children could benefit from support when it comes to developing their relationship. In a 4-year project we focus on improving this support by developing a cohesive approach that matches the possibilities and needs of

organizations. When it comes to interprofessional collaboration however, the definition and corresponding actions often remain unclear (Perreault & Careau, 2012). Precise operationalization might stimulate the formulation of concrete goals in this area. In the current project, we have operationalized interprofessional collaboration through three aspects:

1. General collaboration or exchange of knowledge and advice between professionals.
2. Shared responsibility within a case and collaboration and exchange of knowledge between professionals regarding this case.
3. Not being hindered by financial considerations in collaborating with other organizations.

The research question is: To what extent does interprofessional collaboration already exist within the support of parent-child relationships?

Methods

For a year, network discussions were held with professionals about the three aspects of interprofessional collaboration. Three focus groups were conducted (one at the national level and two at the municipal level) (N = 15). Respondents were professionals from the medical and social domain of the municipality of Deventer and professionals from the national medical, social and research domain.

Findings

The focus groups showed that the three components are not systematically developed and used by organizations. There are a few initiatives that meet the requirements of components 1 and 3, but component 2 is rarely implemented due to financial obstacles. One example of component 1, in Deventer, is that the exchange of knowledge between professionals and between professionals and parents takes place during consultation hours. Professionals are guests at locations of other organizations and answer questions from professionals or from parents. Another example of component 1 is training on the parent-child relationship which takes place in groups consisting of professionals from both the medical and social domain. Within component 3, medical birth care for pregnant women is a tailored support offer that continues until the child is 18 years old. However, there is no shared care with social workers.

Conclusions and implications

The three components provide an important impulse to achieve interprofessional collaboration in favor of good support to (future) parents in strengthening their parent-child relationship. Over the next three years, efforts will be made to elaborate the three components of interprofessional collaboration in Deventer. Existing interventions will be adjusted to stimulate collaboration, we will organize network meetings and work on a financial process description to develop high quality (financially) integrated care.

References

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Keywords

parent-child relations, pregnancy, care workers , multidisciplinary teams , disciplinary procedures

Who cares for social workers? Addressing social workers' mental health through mindfulness-based and neurofeedback-based interventions: a systematic literature review

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Engaging in human relationships with their clients puts social workers at high risk of secondary trauma, work-related stress, burnout, anxiety and depression. As a result, their mental wellbeing is negatively affected with possible negative consequences on their individual work with clients. Thus, meeting their re-balancing needs is necessary in order to be able to cope with job-related stressors, as well as to enhance their mental wellbeing and resilience capacities. Interventions aimed at reducing professional stress and burnout and at improving their wellbeing, coping and resilience encompass a variety of programs and activities. While mindfulness-based interventions have proved effective on different types of employees, neurofeedback was generally used to address clients' needs. The aim of the research is to evaluate the effects of interventions using mindfulness and neurofeedback on social workers' mental health, within research from the past five years.

A systematic literature review was employed on the Web of Science platform using relevant keywords related to mindfulness, neurofeedback and social workers. A total of 36 articles (ranging 2018 – 2022) were identified, but only 11 quantitative articles were eligible.

All the articles that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were referring to mindfulness and none of the papers were studying neurofeedback effects on social workers. Of the 11 eligible papers: 7 papers measured the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention, either employing experimental designs/randomized control trials (2 articles) or quasi-experimental designs (1 paper), or using exploratory methodologies, with no control group (4 papers); 4 eligible papers used survey methodology, measuring the correlation between mindfulness specific variables and other variables like job burnout.

The 3 articles that used experimental and quasi-experimental methodologies tested the effects of mindfulness interventions on psychological flexibility, self-compassion, depression, anxiety, stress, empathy, perspective taking, compassion, compassion satisfaction, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, self-efficacy related to the caring attitudes and behaviors of professionals in relation to clients, emotional regulation, resilience, quality of life and death attitudes.

The 4 papers that used exploratory methodologies identified that after the intervention, social workers had improved mindfulness, decreased burnout and perceived stress, increased cardiac vagal tone, competence, self-compassion and self-efficacy, psychological flexibility and compassion satisfaction, and evaluated more positively their quality of presence and the therapeutic relationship.

The 4 papers that employed survey methodology identified that mindfulness mitigated the effect of job demands on burnout and increased the effect of job resources on burnout.

Mindfulness has positive effects on social workers' state of mind, health and professional outcomes. However, the studies that allow to draw conclusions about causality and evaluate the impact of the mindfulness-intervention on social workers are scarce. Another understudied subject is the effect of the neurofeedback-based interventions on social workers.

There is a need to carry out research testing the effectiveness of both mindfulness and neurofeedback on social workers' mental wellbeing in order to support them better cope with professional stress and burnout, which in turn will improve their relationship with client and the quality of the services provided.

Keywords

mindfulness, neurofeedback, social workers, professional stress, mental wellbeing

850

Experts by Experience in the field of marginality: first stages of an action research for innovative teaching in the courses of Social Work Techniques

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background: The experts by experience (EbE), are subjects capable of re-reading the interventions of social services from a double perspective: as users of certain services; as profound connoisseurs of the problem addressed by the interventions and of what is needed to make a difference in a story similar to the one lived (McLaughlin, 2015). In international contexts, the involvement of users in the planning of services, in the education and training of students and professionals, is a consolidated practice (Videmšek, 2009). In the Italian reality, this model still appears residual: in the formative dimension, the experiences materialize in laboratory activities within some courses in social work that involve EbE, in order to encourage the possibility for students to experiment in activities with high interaction and low structure (Allegri et. al, 2015; Cabiati & Raineri, 2016; Cabiati, Landi & Pinto, 2021).

Methods: Through the action research methodology, we want to build a knowledge sharing path that involves social workers, EbE, students and professors of the Social Work Techniques courses of the University of Padua. There are 5 main project phases: a) identification by the social workers of adults with a multi-year history of taking charge, a good reflective capacity with respect to the problems experienced, a current stabilization of their life context b) collection of the life stories of the identified subjects, explaining the role of the EbE in the organizational process c) textual analysis of the collected materials d) creation of a training course on storytelling, intended for the interviewees e) structuring of training interventions by Ebe within the identified courses.

Findings: The action research, currently underway, was developed in the first three phases. a) The research was proposed through an online presentation to the social workers of the Municipality of Padua b) 20 subjects deemed suitable were identified, of which only 12 have concretely joined the interview (10 males, 2 females). c) It was possible, through the analysis of contents, to identify some moments that can be defined as turning points, which led to a substantial change in the life of the person. With regard to the proposal to become an Ebe, 4 motivational trajectories have been identified: atonement (motivation to "pay off" the sins of actions committed); compensation (motivation for "returning" what was given to me); redemption (motivation for "finding a different social role"); solidarity (motivation to "give voice" to those who have experienced the same situation).

Conclusions: In the current phase of the research, it is important to underline that the interviewees are people who have experienced problems of social marginality, living the interventions of social services mainly from a support and not a control point of view. The proposal to participate in a path to become an EbE is positively received, in the face of different reasons related to one's life history. The aim of the next steps is to set up an enlarged research group, made up of EbE, social workers, professors and students, in order to implement innovative teaching forms.

Keywords

Expert by Experience, Innovative teaching, Storytelling, User participation, Marginalized groups

854

“Seeing from the inside”: A discourse analysis of the concept of empathy in social work literature.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background/Purpose

Over the past several decades, social work scholars have begun paying increased attention to affective ways of knowing, and specifically the transformative potential of empathy, in building more socially just and relationally attuned social work practices. Across these literatures, the concept of empathy and the socio-political projects the concept has been harnessed to, have inscribed the capacity to “put oneself in the place of the other” as an invaluable moral and methodological resource for practitioners. The work of empathy resonates at different scales of practice, from the more intimate, relational spaces of clinical work to its transformative work at macro, geopolitical or cultural scales. Rather than following a trend in the research which focuses on the potentials of empathy for renewed social work practices, and how it can be enhanced, we stage a political intervention by asking another set of questions: What does the concept of empathy do in social work? What role(s) does it play, and what might be the political effects of such deployment?

Methods

We analysed the function of empathy in social work discourses through a close reading of 32 peer-reviewed articles published in social work journals. The articles were sampled to be representative of both individual and social approaches to empathy. We present here a critical discourse analysis of the particular ways in which empathy is positioned and deployed in the sampled literature.

Results

In our analysis, empathy is understood and measured as a “natural,” innate neurobiological capacity to relate to the human other. If properly harnessed, empathy boosts the worker’s ethical credibility, especially in work bridging the divides between assumed white, middle-class practitioners and their racialised and/or economically disenfranchised clients. As such, empathy is constructed not only as a useful instrument for exercising more precise forms of social control and management of targeted populations but a moral one as well. Social workers re-attunement to this innate humanist capacity, often obscured and discounted in capitalistic societies, is a necessary competency for a neoliberal professional subject.

Conclusion and Significance

Because empathetic engagement is formulated as a natural, and thus moral, action, and one that has been valorized as an unmediated connection offering a way out of the pathologizing tendencies of the field, it occludes structural power dynamics that always shape and mediate the practices of social work.

The concept of empathy has the potential to reinscribe a colonialist understanding of racialized and/or economically disenfranchised subjects as being more mired in their emotions (i.e., more animalistic) and therefore less capable of rational thinking (i.e., less human). To know the truth of the client, to be with them means meeting them in the affective register, while simultaneously also being able to exercise critical reflexive skills to distance from those realities in order to name and manage client behaviors. In other words, empathy can reauthorize the privilege(s) of the assumed worker as the all-knowing subject who now also has the capacity to harness the resources of emotional worlds to fulfill social work missions.

Keywords

Empathy, Discourse analysis, social control, colonialism, power

867

Accommodation types at admission and discharge for inpatients with housing needs on an Irish acute mental health unit.

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

Ireland's homeless crisis has persisted for more than a decade. The latest national homeless figures for August 2022, report a new record high of 10,805 and commentators believe the reality may be much worse than these official figures.

In a 2019 review of 35 European counties' homeless strategies, only one country produced figures specifically relating to discharge from psychiatric hospitals. Ireland's homeless strategies have been criticised for lack of focus on prevention and that the available data is inaccurate and unreliable. No data is routinely reported regarding discharge from acute mental health units to homeless services.

This presents a challenge for social work practice in the mental health services. How can we plan to address homeless and housing need on inpatient acute units if we do not know the extent of the need?

This study was designed to answer two questions.

What accommodation types were individuals with accommodation needs admitted from?

What accommodation types were these individuals discharged to?

Methods

The study chose a quantitative, repeated measures cross-sectional design. The study was approved by Tallaght and St James's Research Ethics Committee. A convenience sampling strategy was chosen.

As part of a larger study' data regarding pre and post admission accommodation, was collected weekly from March to November 2018 (eight months) from senior nursing staff on an acute mental health in Dublin.

The European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) framework was used to categorise the housing types and the data were analysed using SPSS.

Findings

The key findings were that 109 admissions with housing need were identified by senior nursing staff and 12% were readmissions. Females represented 39%. At admission, the highest accommodation type was parental home (n=25, 23%) and the highest conceptual category was 'insecure housing' (n=65, 60%). At discharge, the accommodation type most frequently used was homeless services (n=28, 26%). Admissions from rough sleepers or homeless services presented every 12 days, and discharges to homeless services occurred every nine days. A flow into homelessness was identified with a 'new' homeless discharge, that is, individuals who had now been admitted from a homeless hostel, being discharged to homeless hostels every 14 days.

Conclusions and implications

The ETHOS framework is a diverse and inclusive approach which leads to a more sophisticated view of the extent of homelessness and housing exclusion on our acute wards. While possibly reflecting the 150% increase in homeless in Ireland, between 2014 and 2019, this flow into homelessness points to a possible normalisation of

homeless discharge among city mental health acute units. It is important not to try to normalise discharging into homeless services, but to look at possible systems failures contributing to failed transitions from the acute wards. The ETHOS framework should be used regularly in acute wards to record and report homelessness and housing exclusion and in particular to report the numbers discharged to homeless services.

Keywords

acute mental health, hidden homelessness, homeless mentally ill, homelessness enumeration, housing needs

870

Understanding loneliness amongst older LGBTQ adults - an important issue for social work

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Loneliness amongst older adults are topics relevant for social work practice and research. Older adults can also have a belonging to other social categories. The focus of this paper is on older LGBTQ adults. The issue at stake is how this belonging affect feelings of loneliness. Older LGBTQ adults have a unique history compared to other older adults since the change towards LGBTQ right have improved most significantly during the recent decades. Thus, this group have a history of marginalisation and discrimination. Research has demonstrated that older LGBTQ adults have different social networks than other older adults, depending more on friends and “family of choice” rather than on biological family. Other differences are that they are single to a greater extent than other older adults as well as lacking children. The aim of this presentation is to discuss how older LGBTQ understand different kinds of loneliness in relation to being both LGBT and an older adult. In order to reach participants different strategies were used, such as approaching LGBTQ organization, specific organisations for LGBTQ seniors, a Pride-festival in Stockholm, organizations for senior citizens, snowball sampling, and a senior housing facility for older LGBTQ adults. A qualitative approach has been applied and 15 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with older adults (65+) self-identifying as LGBTQ. Thematic content analysis has been used, primarily focusing on the latent meaning in the material. Even though the main focus is on loneliness the presentation will also shed light on different social relationships since this is the other side of loneliness. To understand the meaning attributed to different social relationships Granovetter’s theoretical concept weak-ties and strong-ties has been applied. The findings suggest that interviewees talked about a feeling of loneliness in relation to being an older adult and/or being LGBTQ. Sometimes one category was more in focus and sometimes the other. It was also possible to discern that sometimes the belonging to both categories could reinforce feelings of loneliness but not always, as it was also possible to discern the opposite pattern. It was also made relevant that strong ties such as intimate relations had a high value for the participants. However, also weak ties, for example belonging to the LGBTQ community, were made significant and can be understood to mitigate the risk of loneliness. The findings contribute to the debate on social relationships for older LGBTQ adults especially on the importance of addressing the issue of different kinds of loneliness and how this affect later life. This will require an accepting social climate

and a more competent approach from social services were social workers lead efforts directed at improving service provision and care competencies for the older LGBTQ community.

Keywords

LGBTQ, older adults, loneliness, social network, social relationships

873

Child welfare decision-making in Scotland: the role of social workers in representing children in legal forums.

Carol Duncan

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background:

In Scotland, the Children's Hearings System is the main forum for child protection and youth justice decision-making. It is a non-court based tribunal system in which three lay volunteers meet with children, their families, social workers and other professionals before making legal decisions regarding the welfare of the children. Social workers play a key role in representing children's views through the reports and verbal updates they provide. While wider research on the Children's Hearings System has identified tensions in how social work expertise is viewed by panel members (Hill et al., 2017), in general little is known about how panel members make decisions and there has been no up-to-date study carried out with panel member decision-making as its sole focus. This study was undertaken to explore how panel members make sense of the information presented to them and what implications this may have for social work practice.

Methods:

Ethnographic research using observation and interview methods, involving a total of 56 Children's Hearings and 59 panel members, was undertaken to explore panel members' views on the decision-making process.

Findings:

Children and young people were present in only 30% of hearings. Panel members relied heavily on information about the child provided by social workers. Variation was reported in the quality of social work written assessments and with regard to professional trust in social workers, and this impacted on levels of trust in social work recommendations. Questions were also raised regarding how well social workers were seen by panel members as being able to 'objectively' obtain and represent the child's views, although there were exceptions. There is a gap between the importance placed by social workers on their relationships with children and young people and their ability to represent them, and how this role and relationship can be viewed by decision-makers.

Conclusions and Implications:

Findings have implications for social work practice and how children's views and wishes are communicated in decision-making forums. Ways in which social work communication and reporting can be improved to reduce issues of contested knowledge and expertise and to ensure children and young people's views are represented, will be discussed.

Keywords

Decision-making, Professional trust, Children's views, Care proceedings, Communication

875

Understanding care as a public issue: a social work perspective on caring neighborhoods

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This paper looks at how a social work perspective challenges the common discourse, practice and research on caring neighborhoods.

In Belgium Flanders we notice an emergent dynamic around 'caring neighborhoods', partly due to austerity measures and other recent 'participation' turns in politics in the field of care and welfare. There is a variety of practices with a common aim to bring care back into the community and on citizens to take up responsibility within the community.

From a governmental perspective, the concept of caring neighborhoods fits into the evolution towards 'socialization of care' (Vandeurzen, 2017), which aims at independent living and societal participation of people with long-term impairments. One of the pitfalls of this evolution, however, is the instrumentalization of informal care givers who carry a bigger weight and risk being overburdened (Bredewold et al, 2018; Roets et al, 2018). The tendency de-institutionalization of care exits all through western Europe (Tenhaeff, 2008). Underlying principles are decentralization, integration of care and welfare organizations, empowerment of clients, direct payment, emergence of civil society organizations and privatization, cost reduction.

We draw on the framework of Tronto (2013) to better understand the discourse and practice of caring neighborhoods. Tronto (2013) introduces the term 'caring deficit', referring to the incapacity of advanced, western countries to be able to find sufficient care workers to meet people's needs. Tronto connects this deficit to the 'democratic deficit', where governmental institutions are unable to reflect the real values and ideas of their citizens. It reflects an outdated dichotomy between the public and private space, with caring issues resorting in the private sphere only. Tronto argues for a broader definition of care that goes beyond medical care, to overcome the

dyad between caregiver and care receiver. She also questions who sits at the table and how care can be lifted from the private sphere back into the public.

We connect these last questions to the current work and politicization in social work (Van Bouchaute et al, 2022). We understand care as a public issue. This perspective challenges mainstream research on caring neighborhoods and results in different research questions. We look at 'the social' in care and question who 'sits at the table' when it comes to taking decisions about care.

In this paper, we present the results of two studies. First, there is a case study of fifteen caring neighborhoods in Flanders. Data were gathered through document analysis, in-depth interviews and focus groups with social workers as well as citizens. The second study is an ongoing action research in one specific neighborhood. Thematic analysis, using NVivo, allowed us to better understand the different discourses on care and how social worker reframe care as matter of public concern and debate rather than care and caring needs as a private problem.

Boone, K. et al (2022). *Publiek gaan! Politiserend handelen in sociaal werk*. Antwerpen, Garant.

Tenhaeff, C. (2008), *Vermaatschappelijking in internationaal perspectief*. Utrecht: Movisie.

Tronto, J. (2013), *Caring democracy. Markets, Equality and Justice*. New York: New York University Press.

Keywords

community health care, neighborhoods, human rights, social exclusion, social work approaches

876

Step by step: living in residential parent-child care institutions. A documentary research

Paola Limongelli

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, Italy

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Child protection can be promoted through different social interventions designed and approved by child protection services and courts. In Italy, residential parent-child care institutions represent an example of such interventions. Single parents and their children live with other parents and children in these facilities, where they receive daily support and help from professionals. Residential Parent-child care institutions are aimed at taking care of children and promoting adequate parental skills. Courts and child protection services decide to place parents and children in these institutions in situations of hardship and suffering caused by domestic violence, mothers' mental health problems, trafficking and sexual violence and immigration. Professionals support parents in taking care of their children. Moreover, they collect information useful for parenting skill assessments, although this task pertains to child protection services. However, despite the relevance of this social intervention, the placement process in residential parent-child care institutions is little documented.

This paper presents the findings of a research based on the reports and individualized educational plans drawn up by professionals of one Italian residential mother-child care institution. The research is aimed at understanding the phases of support and the social work tools to promote children's well-being and adequate parent skills. Documentary analysis is conducted on 28 reports and 28 individualized educational plans regarding 14 families hosted in the institution between 2015 – 2021.

The findings show that placements in residential mother-child care institutions are characterized by specific phases: welcoming, project design, monitoring and verification, and closing. Welcoming is a delicate phase for the mother, children, and educators. Social workers meet families to explain to them the institution's role and understand their needs. After a period of getting to know the mother and children, practitioners design individualized educational plans for each member of the family. Once this phase is completed, it is possible to start providing the necessary support. In the support phase, professionals monitor and check the individualized educational plans and update them if necessary. The project closing phase is conducted with the court's and social services' approval. The closing stage could foresee: (1) mothers and children going back to their homes or moving to a new home; (2) children being separated from their mothers; (3) continuation in other institutions. During these phases, the professionals constantly observe parenting skills. Performing this task helps provide adequate support to mothers and children and, at the same time, evaluate their needs and the risks to which they are subject. However, other tools are also used, such as individual interviews with mothers, team meetings, and meetings with social services to increase the positive effects of these particular social interventions.

Overall, the research shows that placements in residential parent-child care institutions can be challenging for practitioners and families. This research opens the way to a new reflection on the tasks and functions to be performed to provide adequate support to parents and children in residential care institutions.

Keywords

child protection, residential care institutions, mother-children, documentary analysis, social interventions

884

Evaluation of the study and diagnostic tools in the inclusion programmes of the regional social services.

Domingo Carbonero, Esther Raya Diez, Ana Belén Cuesta Ruiz-Clavijo
La Rioja University, Logroño, Spain

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose of the presentation

The diagnostic approach and its application in the field of social services have been studied by various authors, who have highlighted the relationship between the synthesis, interpretation, and conceptualization of social needs. In this regard, several authors have pointed to the need for a systematized tool that can be used to access

or provide benefits and services, as well as make professional decisions, while taking into account the “relational and cooperative dimension that the encounter between the professional and the service user in the framework of a supportive relationship implies”. In the diagnostic process, communication, information, and assessment techniques all come into play.

Background and purpose of the presentation

In Spain, Several regions have developed tools to perform diagnosis at the primary care levels of social intervention in the inclusion programs. The use of tools among Social Services and its application to social intervention by Social Workers increase the availability of information obtained and its use during social intervention. This study has been conducted in the framework of the agreement between the Department of Social Welfare at the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha and the University of La Rioja for the management of inclusion projects. The project was made possible through competitive annual calls. It is co-funded by the regional government and the EU European Social Fund.

The purposes of the presentation are:

- 1) To explain the differences and similarities in the existing assessment and diagnosis instruments in the main Spanish regions in relation to the measurement of social inclusion problems from social services.
- 2) To address useful practical experiences in the elaboration of social diagnosis based on social inclusion tools.

A summary of the main points of the presentation:

- 1) The use of diagnostic tools in the study of social exclusion. This section presents the importance of having diagnostic tools available, pointing out the need for a consensual approach to definitions and concepts related to diagnosis in the field of Social Work.
- 2) Differences and similarities in social diagnosis tools in Spain. The different tools used in Spain point out the different points of view regarding social diagnosis and the lack of consensual tools in this field.
- 3) Example of case resolution based on diagnostic tools. The presentation deals with the SiSo tool in Castilla La Mancha, as an example of good practice, addressing its presentation and its usefulness in the resolution of cases or the preparation of professional reports.
- 4) Examples of the degree of implementation in different existing regions. By way of summary, the degree of extension and coverage in the region of Castilla La Mancha is presented, with more than 20,000 diagnoses carried out.

How the presentation will address one or more of the conference's aims and themes. Two themes are listed:

Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy or further research.

The design and evaluation of primary care social services policies, such as the other systems protections such as housing or employment.

Keywords

evidence-based practice, needs assessment, diagnosis, Social Exclusion, Social programmes

Involvement of co-researchers in research - the significance of relationships in co-creation

Sofie Aggerbo Johansen

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

According to the United Nations Convention on Human Rights everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being. The convention also states that everyone has the right to a life without discrimination, which means that everyone is entitled not to receive worse treatment on the basis on e.g., gender, sexuality and/or race (United Nations, 1948). Yet there are still big differences in health among different population groups in Denmark (Johansen; Laursen, Juel, 2015; Slot, 2014). The social inequality in health is particularly visible among LGBT+ citizens with ethnic minority background due to their status as a double minority (Als Research, 2022).

My research project is about creating knowledge that can contribute to counteract inequality in health among LGBT+ citizens with ethnic minority background. The research project has a practice research approach where the research question, design, methods and analyzes are qualified in collaboration with practitioners and people with experiential knowledge as ethnic minority LGBT+ citizens.

In this paper, I will discuss whether involvement of co-researchers in research can strengthen the quality and relevance of a research project, and how the effect of this process may be affected by the relationship between co-researchers. I will discuss challenges and opportunities for practice research in social work when involving co-researchers and whether the involvement of co-researchers can contribute to strengthening the connection between research and practice in social work.

References:

Als Research (2022). *Nydanske LGBT+ personers levevilkår og støttebehov* [Living conditions and support needs among LGBT+ citizens with ethnic minority background]. Als Research.

Johansen, K. B. H.; Laursen, B. Juel, K. (2015). *LGBT-sundhed: Helbred og trivsel blandt lesbiske, bøsser, biseksuelle og transpersoner* [LGBT-health: Health and wellbeing among lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender people]. Statens Institut for Folkesundhed, Syddansk Universitet.

Slot, L. V. (2014). *Lige adgang til sundhed - en analyse af praktiserende lægers møde med patienter med etnisk minoritetsbaggrund* [Equal access to health - an analysis of doctors' encounters with patients from ethnic minority backgrounds]. Institut for menneskerettigheder.

United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Keywords

practice research, co-creation, ethnic minorities, LGBT+, mental health

889

Experiences and needs of relatives of people with dementia in institutional setting

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Faculty of Social Work, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

The ageing of the world's population is one of our greatest accomplishments, however, it which comes with certain challenges for today's society. This global demographic shift reflects in social work theory and practice. Despite the efforts to shift our focus towards the process of deinstitutionalisation, Slovenia still remains highly inclined to offer care for old people, especially old people with dementia, in an institutional setting. This may offer some benefits while also create some challenges for old people themselves and their relatives. These were further explored in our qualitative study. As part of a larger project carried out by the Faculty of social work, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, we conducted focus groups and interviews with people with dementia and their relatives. We aimed to address how relatives of old people with dementia experience the institutionalisation of an old person, while also examining the role of the social workers in practice and the possibility of co-creating new knowledge. Relatives often express their emotional experience following the admission, like the feelings of guilt and of uncertainty of how the old person with dementia will react to their visit in an institution. They are furthermore challenged by existential questions. They often mention receiving help and guidance by social workers before and after the admission of their relative with dementia. Dementia is a reality of many, while the proportion of older people is increasing. Relatives and their relationship with the person with dementia are recognised as the key component of a quality person-centred care. We therefore need to address these important and self-perceived challenges and experiences.

Keywords

older people, institutionalisation, relatives, social work research, gerontological social work

890

Digitalization and linguistic vulnerability in diverse societies: Perspectives from social work research and practice

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Being a non-native language speaker creates and reinforces vulnerability in a social service system already defined by different power hierarchies. Despite the fact that social work is essentially permeated by language, language divisions and multilingualism have not received much attention in social work research or practice. Rather than making the system linguistically more accessible, change has typically been expected from the service user. Meanwhile, it remains unexplored how linguistic inequality is linked to other social divides, such as ethnicity, class, gender, age, disability, and their intersections. During the pandemic such asymmetries have been further accentuated.

Through the conceptual lens of linguistic vulnerability, we examine challenges and opportunities of multilingualism in social work research and practice in a context of linguistic (in)justice (Piller 2016), defined by intersecting inequalities (Crenshaw 1990). We draw from the perspectives of four groups of non-native speaking service users: families with children, families with children with disabilities, young people and persons 65 and over.

Methodologically, the study has a strong basis in co-production. It uses data produced through co-creative workshops with social work practitioners, participatory observation of multilingual social service counselling encounters, and individual interviews (N ≈45) with service users, recognising the importance of the intersections of face-to-face, remote and digital social work, here conceptualised as blended social work (Granholtm 2016).

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241-1299.

Piller, Inger. (2016). *Linguistic diversity and social justice: An introduction to applied sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Granholtm, Camilla (2016). *Social work in digital transfer: Blending services for the next generation*. Helsinki: FSKC.

Keywords

Linguistic vulnerability, co-creation, migrancy, Social work practice, Intersectionality

894

The occupational stress of Romanian healthcare social workers: A qualitative analysis

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Background and purpose:

The centrality of human relationships in social work practice calls for safe work environments for social workers, which can foster lasting and co-created professional partnerships with service users, co-workers, and other professionals. Issues pertaining to the occupational stress and mental health of workers in the health sector, including health social workers, gained ground following the COVID-19 pandemic (European Commission, 2021). The unwanted effects of high-stress work environments on social workers are documented in an increasing body of research, in various settings. In Romania, the scientific evidence on this topic is still scarce, although it has drawn more attention from researchers in recent years (e.g., Dima et al., 2021; Trancă, 2021). To our knowledge, there are no Romanian studies focusing on the occupational stress of social workers employed in the healthcare system. Thus, the aim of this research was to identify the main sources of job stressors as well as the individual and organisational strategies for managing the occupational stress of Romanian health social workers, based on their perceptions.

Methods:

We drew data from a large mixed methods study (semi-structured interviews, N=110; online survey, N=1,052) where we examined the Romanian social work workforce, the last national survey of social workers available. Here we analyse the results of 20 semi-structured interviews with social workers employed in health care public institutions (n=12) and private organizations (n=8). Social workers in our sample worked with service users with various social (e.g., homelessness) and medical (e.g., chronic illnesses, drug addiction) conditions. Respondents' average age was 38 (25 to 54 years), 17 women and 3 men, the average work experience as social workers 9.5 years (1.5 to 15 years). Three members of our research team conducted the face-to-face interviews (average length 1 h), which were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The respondents were asked to detail the challenges regularly encountered at their workplaces and the level of on-the-job support received for tackling them. Two other team members coded and analysed the data.

Findings:

The job stressors identified fall into three main categories by sources: relationships dynamic (communication with patients and families, superiors, co-workers and other professionals), systemic limitations (oversized paperwork, large caseload, late hours, scarcity of local social services) and individual/psychological challenges (the emotional burden of complex cases, death of clients, delivering difficult diagnoses). States of powerlessness and frustration were frequently reported, pointing to risks of compassion fatigue or secondary traumatization. The constant need to balance systemic limitations with high quality services often leads to distress. Health social workers' coping strategies involve mainly personal self-care approaches, while internal organizational support relies mainly on informal channels and much less on coordinated activities such as supervision, individual counselling, and specialized training.

Conclusions and implications:

Our study confirms the existence of a gap in organisational resources for tackling the professional stress of Romanian health social workers, despite their essential role in emergency health care situations. Integrated organizational responses could include among others, continuous assessments of job stressors, structured professional supervision, individual counselling, and mindfulness training.

Keywords

social workers, occupational stress, staff management, coping behaviour

897

Advancing relationship-based practice: How Hartmut Rosa's concepts of resonance and alienation illuminate relational social work

Harry Ferguson

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Social work is (or aims to be) a relational practice and the notion of 'relationship-based practice' is a highly influential perspective through which it is theorised and analysed (Ruch, et al, 2018; Trevithick, 2012). However, the theory of relationship-based practice has yet to distinguish different forms of relationships. What matters is not merely the existence of a relationship, but the kinds of relating that happens. In over a decade of research in which I have used ethnographic methods to study social work practice close up by observing encounters between social workers and service users (Ferguson, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020) I have found significant differences between social workers in how they relate. Even practitioners based in the same office, working under the same procedures and managers can have markedly different relational styles. The social work literature has been poor at recognising and explaining these differences and in this paper I seek to do this by drawing on Hartmut Rosa's sociological concepts of 'resonance' and 'alienation'. Drawing on Rosa's book *Resonance* (2019) – which is well on its way to acquiring classic status – and applying it to empirical data from my research I argue that differences in social workers and their practice can be understood in terms of their 'relationship to the world', in terms of resonance and alienation. This exploration, it is hoped, can advance the theory and practice of relational social work.

Keywords

Relationship based practice, Resonance, Alienation, Ethnography, Practice

907

Methodological and ethical challenges and opportunities of conducting team research with young unaccompanied migrants. Reflections from a longitudinal cross-country study

Giacomo Orsini, Marina Rota, Océane Uzureau, Sarah Adeyinka, Malte Behrendt, Ine Lietaert, Ilse Derluyn

Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Unaccompanied young migrants constitute an especially vulnerable group who is only marginally targeted by research. Due to their young age, their unaccompanied status and as an effect of the several repressive migration policies targeting this population, access to this mobile individuals and groups is complicated and implies a number of major methodological and ethical challenges. With this presentation we want to discuss our experience conducting research with over 300 unaccompanied minor and young adult migrants as part of a highly innovative longitudinal, mixed-method, and multi-country study funded by the European Research Council – the ERC project ChildMove. Importantly, the study was conducted in various settings (e.g., reception and detention centers, or refugee camps) across several European and one non-European countries – which included Libya, Italy, Greece and Belgium. Due to the longitudinal nature of the research, data was collected at multiple points in time and space as we followed the young research participants over three years, also when they moved to other countries. In particular, in three distinct moments, young migrants were interviewed about their migratory trajectories and their wellbeing, with self-assessment questionnaires being distributed as well. Besides, this information was combined with other data which we gathered through the visual analysis of the graffiti found in reception and detention centers, as well as in informal camps. Furthermore, we also conducted and analyzed a series of participant observations in the spaces where the young research participants were recruited and interviewed – including for instance the Greek hotspots. Between the different measurement moments, we kept in touch with the young migrants through different social media, adding one further layer of (sensitive) information. As such, throughout the project, we developed strategies to deal with a series of major methodological and ethical challenges and opportunities. These obstacles deeply shaped our research and how we tried to overcome them can be of example for future and similar investigative endeavors.

Keywords

Unaccompanied young migrant, longitudinal methods, mixed-methods, multi-country, ethics

908

Pathways to Parenting Stress Reduction: Impact of the Parenting for Lifelong Health Program on Parents and Adolescents in South Africa

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Parenting stress has a range of effects on parents and their children. Higher levels of parenting stress are associated with negative outcomes among children, negative parental practices and increased risk for child maltreatment. Due to the physical, emotional and social changes experienced by adolescents, parenting stress may be particularly salient when the children reach adolescence, especially in high-risk communities.

The findings of a randomized controlled trial conducted in South-Africa have shown that the Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) program for the parents of teens (Sinonuyo Teen PLH) was effective at reducing parenting stress among the parents\caregivers of adolescents (aged 12-18) in low and middle-income countries. Employing an ecological perspective, the current study investigated a mechanism of parenting stress reduction through potential mediators at the levels of the child (parent-child relationship), the parent (parental depression) and the social context (family poverty).

Methods: A pragmatic cluster randomized controlled trial was conducted among a total sample of 552 families (dyads for parents\caregivers $M = 49.37$; $SD = 14.69$ and adolescents $M = 13.84$; $SD = 2.38$) who were recruited from 40 communities (located in 34 rural villages and three large peri-urban townships) located in South Africa's Eastern Cape province. A PROCESS statistical analysis was performed using was conducted to investigate direct and indirect effects (mediation analyses).

Results: The findings of the study show that parenting stress reduction operates via three significant mediators: improved parent-child relationship ($\beta = .546$, $P < .001$), reduced parental depression ($\beta = .893$, $P < .001$), and reduced family poverty ($\beta = .438$, $P < .001$).

Conclusions and implications: This study provides valuable insight for evidence-based practices that target negative parenting outcomes among vulnerable families in low and middle-income settings. These results will be especially applicable to families with adolescent age children in vulnerable communities. Based on a social-ecological perspective, the findings of the study highlight the importance of considering adolescent, parental and contextual factors in the design and development of interventions to reduce parenting stress in highly vulnerable families, particularly those with adolescent children, one of the most challenging developmental stages that parents face. The findings are of high importance for social workers and practitioners who work with vulnerable communities.

Keywords

parenting intervention, parenting stress, adolescents, South-Africa

909

Students' attitudes towards addictions: evidences from online university workshops in social work in Italy

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Due to pandemic, online teaching changed abruptly but did not interrupt, although its effectiveness on students is still ambiguous on students' learning process and peers' interactions. In this paper we analyse the effects of online educational workshops where social work university professors and Experts by Experience stimulated students on critical thinking on addiction issues (i.e. drug, alcohol and gaming). We examined students' attitudes on dependencies before and after the online workshop and, using statistical tools and textual analysis techniques, we studied the effects of this educational activity. Results confirm that workshop activities stimulate a better understanding of social problems, a significant change of students' personal attitudes towards addictions, an improvement in their vocabulary, and an increase of positive emotions after the workshop. With regard to networking abilities the majority of participants (40%) felt themselves and all participants fully networked, while only less than 10% was feeling isolated or weakly connected to the workshop class. These results are important because although the Social work workshop was entirely online, with no live contacts or personal interactions, personal contacts were enabled anyway and the overall educational activity addressing attitudes towards addiction was successful.

Keywords

social work activities, attitudes towards addictions, online teaching and learning, relations among students, emotion analysis

910

Innovation, Sustainability and Social Change. The fantastic three. Challenges to Social Work in times of neoliberal policies

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

Given the multidimensional nature of sustainability (Coraggio, 2008), social intervention projects are now required to provide evidence of their "results and impacts": for example, if the organization has adapted to the needs of the community; if there is a balance in production of services and responses, whether their performance in providing such responses has improved. This attention to results arises from managerial concerns in measuring the existing effectiveness and efficiency of projects and/or policies, falling within what is a managerial management. This concern, more than disagreeing with the traditional interests of Social Work, incites some limitations on the ability of "social actors" to innovate within an organization (Hughes & Wearing, 2017). Through semi-structured interviews with 20 social workers linked to governance projects we aim to explore the understanding of (i) social work as a profession that promotes social change (IFSW & IASSW, 2014) and social worker, in itself, as an agent of change; (ii) the concept and meaning of "social change" and other related concepts that today seem to intersect with the neoliberal discourse (e.g. social impact), and even (iii) the perception of social well-being. It is considered

that this work brings strong contributions as a response to the “dominant paradigm” of an evidence-based practice, proposing “alternative modes” of evaluation established in sustained and scientifically verified models. It is believed that from here it will be possible to create new guidelines for the evaluation of programs and policies of social intervention and innovation.

Keywords

innovation, sustainability, social change, social well-being

913

Beyond self-centeredness: how to make reflective practice more social in social work education

Josip Kešić

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Proposal type

Oral Presentation

Abstract

This paper addresses the question: how to make reflective practice in social work education more social? Whilst reflection have been widely acknowledged as an important feature in social work education, its application in education however often fails to adapt to the complex social dynamics of social work practice. Our research in the Dutch context reveals that reflective practices in education predominantly or even exclusively revolve around the individual (Kesic, Krijnen & Linders 2021). Indicative of this neo-liberal individualized self-centeredness in reflection is the lasting influence of the notion of the ‘reflective practitioner’ famously coined by Donald Schön (1983). As a result, this focus on the individual operates at the expense of an orientation to the broader context (such as social structures and governmental policy). This asymmetry in favor of individualistic reflection is problematic for it frustrates the realization of social work’s fundamental principles that seek to bring about contextual and structural change.

Therefore, it is necessary to make reflective practice more instrumental to the mission and practice of social work by complementing self-centered reflection with the socially oriented Social Reflexivity we define as “an awareness of oneself in relation to other in a context” (Kesic, Krijnen and Linders 2021; Lichterman 2005). In order to enhance Social Reflexivity in educational settings, we have developed and experimented with an interactive tool that, by design, invites and stimulates participants to explore the relations between the individual social work student and various other actors and factors at micro-, meso- and macro-levels.

This paper presents the background, content and challenges in the ongoing application and ongoing development of this Social Reflexivity tool. Through participant observation, it became clear that that [1] students experience reflecting on broader social relations and influences as abstract, difficult, overwhelming and not part of their professional role; [2] students tend to move directly to solutions at the expense of reflecting on underlying causes; [3] there is a huge amount of implicit knowledge that students cannot access themselves, but that can be transformed into explicit awareness through reflecting with others in social interaction when given time and guided by accessible questions.

In order to make social workers and students more effective and adaptive in a complex and changing field, it is crucial to complement existing individualized forms of reflection by further developing social modes of reflective practice. More research is required on, among other things, how to tackle the challenges of complexity,

abstraction and overwhelm, and, how to qualitatively 'measure' and practically stimulate elusive notions such as awareness.

Keywords

Reflection, social reflexivity, structural change, education, Netherlands

914

What Makes for Excellent Research? Learning from the UK Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021)

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Proposal type

Workshop

Abstract

This workshop will draw on the expert insights of members of the sub-panel that assessed social work research submitted by UK universities to REF2021: the national assessment of research quality occurring every six years. REF exercises have had a profound impact on how UK researchers and universities operate. Similar assessment exercises are being established in some other European countries and elsewhere; learning from the UK REF may be helpful in shaping and engaging with these.

The REF has provided us with a framework for examining the quality of UK social work research publications, the influences that social work research has on practice, policy and public understanding, and what it is that enables high-quality research to flourish. It is hoped that insights drawn from this framework may help social work researchers with enhancing their own and their colleagues' research excellence, in their own country contexts.

The workshop will begin with a brief introduction to the UK REF processes, how the sub-panel did its job, and the implications of the REF outcomes for social work researchers, schools and departments in the UK.

The main body of the workshop will offer an interactive opportunity to identify: the key features of excellent social work research publications; how research can achieve high impact beyond academia; and what makes for a supportive research environment. Participants will be invited to provide examples of other national approaches to research assessment and to explore the value of applying REF criteria and principles to their own research and settings.

Keywords

Research excellence, research assessment

Special Interest Groups

SIG: Workforce Research Special Interest Group - Preparing and sustaining the social work workforce. Research on critical issues and challenges in international social work workforce contexts

Paula McFadden¹, Pia Tham², Maija Mänttari-van der Kuip³

¹Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom. ²University of Gävle, Gävle, Sweden. ³University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

SIG Programme

Please note: Presentations will last 10 minutes with 5 minutes at the end for questions.

8.45 am – 09.00 am – Meeting (in the seminar room) of the Social Work Workforce Special Interest Group – social in person meeting of the workforce SIG with coffee

Theme: Health, resilience and professional identity in Social Work

9.00– 9.15 am Clarissa Hitchcock: From student to practitioner: Social workers' experiences of developing and integrating professional resilience (Australia) (online) first due to time difference

9.15-9.30 am Erica Russ and Louise Morley, Southern Cross University, Australia: Child welfare workforce trends and need for public health perspectives (Australia)

9.30-9.45 am Siv-Britt Björktomt: Building professional identity during social work education -reflective writing as a tool (Sweden)

9.45-10.00 am Lazăr F, Gaba D, Bobarnat ES, Mustatea AM, Mihai A, Alecu L, Pop O, Luca A, Rentea G: Addressing social workers' mental health through mindfulness-based and neurofeedback-based interventions: a systematic literature review (Romania)

10.00 – 10.15 am Cheryl McMullan: Theatre of the Oppressed: Creative methods in Social Work Research and Education (Ireland) (online)

Comfort Break 20 min

Theme: Working conditions and capabilities in Social Work

10.35 – 10.50 am Pia Tham: The transition from education to the workplace and working conditions of newly educated social workers (Sweden)

10.50 – 11.05 Amanda Norrgård: Child welfare social workers' assessments of their first-line managers' leadership over a 15-year period (Sweden)

11.05 – 11.20 am Maija - Mänttari-van der Kuip: Central capabilities in child welfare work (Finland)

11.20 -11.35 am Steinunn Hrafnisdóttir: The working conditions of Icelandic social workers in a comparative light. (Iceland)

11.35 – 11.50 am Jermaine Ravalier, David Jones, Rory Truell, Paula McFadden: Global social work working conditions: an IFSW international study.

Lunch 11.50-13.00

Theme: Threats, violence, harassment and digitalisation

13.00 – 13.15 am Kenneth Burns, Fiachra Ó Súilleabháin, Olwen Halvey and Elaine O'Callaghan: Social media abuse and online harassment in social work in Ireland. (Ireland)

13.15 – 13.30 pm Jimmy Munobwa and Sofia Wikman: Threats and violence towards social workers: proposed countermeasures in Swedish occupational injury reports 2002-2020 (Sweden)

13.30 – 13. 45 pm Gloria Kirwin: Digital Turn in Social Work: How Social Workers are Surviving and Thriving the Digitalisation of their Work. (Ireland)

Theme: Social Work during the Pandemic

13.45– 2.00 pm. Simon Cauvain: Retention and resilience among social workers during the pandemic (UK)

Comfort break 20 min

2.20 – 2.35 pm. Paula McFadden, Justin MacLochlainn, John Mallett, Susan McGrory, Heike Schroder, Denise Currie, Patricia Nicholl, Jermaine Ravalier, Jill Manthorpe: Phase 6 Workforce Wellbeing and Coping Study Results: A reflection over 3 years of research on social workers wellbeing before, during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.35 - 2.50 pm pm Austin Griffiths - Child Welfare Workforce Health: Longitudinal Evidence of Increased Physiological Stress During COVID-19 (US) (online) (should be last due to the time difference)

2.50 – 3 pm Common discussion and closing

Contact details and affiliation: Dr Paula McFadden, Ulster University, Northern Ireland

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SIG: Substance Use and Social Work

Thomas Svendsen¹, Lillian Bruland Selseng²

¹Stavanger University Hospital, Stavanger, Norway. ²Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Sogndal, Norway

SIG Programme

The Substance Use SIG meeting this year will continue the conversations we have had about ideas for further collaboration. The group published a book together in 2022, and we will use the day to develop theoretical, empirical and practical ideas for new collaborative projects.

We will continue to work on the theme ‘Love and Loss in the Landscape of Recovery’ that has developed from our discussion with group members from across Europe during the last years. The theme follows from our work together on our newly published book, and the group also presented a research symposium on the topic at the previous main conference. At the SIG event, we plan to work together with excerpts from transcriptions from data material that can be shared, to jointly develop research questions, analytical perspectives and aims that are fruitful for secondary analysis of our data material.

We will also spend time reflecting and discussing ideas for further collaboration such as a new book, secondary analysis, collaborative papers and applications for joint funding.

This SIG event will welcome any researchers interested in the notion of substance use and social work to join the group. It is a warm, fun and friendly group that welcomes researchers at all stages of their research careers. We have an openness to learning from each other, and this provides an exciting and vibrant feel to the group.

Morning session – 09:30-12:30

Chairs: Lillian Bruland Selseng & Thomas Svendsen

09:30 – 09:50 Welcome and group introductions

09:50 -10:15 Present the plan for the day and introduce the theme of love and loss in recovery

10:15-11:00 Working in groups with reading and analysing transcripts of shared data.

11:00 – 12:00 Whole group discussion

- What potential for cross-sectional analysis have the groups seen?

- How can these analyses be developed further?
 1. Research questions and aims
 2. Theory/analytical concepts
 3. How to capture the relations between lived experiences and Systems/structures/culture/policy?

12:00-13:00 – Lunch

Afternoon session – 13:00 – 15:30

Chairs: Lillian Bruland Selseng and Thomas Svendsen

13:00 – 15:00 Whole group discussion on developing ideas for further collaboration:

1. New book?
2. Secondary analysis project?
3. Collaborative papers?
4. Apply for funding for a joint research project?

15:00 – 15:30 Whole group discussion: Summary, next steps and SIG close.

SIG: Social Work, History and Research

Darren Hill¹, Susanne Maurer², Darja Zaviršek³

¹Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, United Kingdom. ²University of Marburg, Marburg, Germany.

³University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

SIG Programme

9.30-10.00 Introductions & Welcome.

10.00-10.30 – Paper One: *Remembering Canadian Social Work History: an analysis of collective memory and the construction of history* (Marjorie Johnstone & Eunjung Lee)

10.30-11.00- *Paper Two: A 'family' home?: Memories of Edzell Lodge Children's Home* (Vivienne E. Cree and Robert Mackenzie)

11.00-12.00 – Summary & General Questions.

12.00-13.00 Break

13.00- 13.30 Paper Four: *Lessons from social work research in historical spaces of difficult legacy: examples of the extermination of patients in Institution for the Nervously and Mentally Ill in Kobierzyn nearby Krakow (1943) and the Mental Health Service in the Terezin ghetto (1941-1945)* (Hubert Kaszyński & Olga Klepáčková)

13.30 -14.00 Paper Five: *The Emergence of Anthroposophical Social Initiatives in Israel* (Ron Eilon)

14.00-14.30 Paper Six: *Gendered Space and Diaspora Women's Memory Work & Memorialization* (Mira Philips)

14.30 -15.00 – Summary/Future Work Publication.

SIG: Social Work, Crime and Criminal Justice (SWCCJ) - Justice Social Work as Human Right: The role of criminal justice social work in ensuring no one is left behind

Caroline Bald¹, María Inés Martínez Herrero²

¹University of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom. ²Universidad Internacional de la Rioja, Logroño, Spain

SIG Programme

Background:

Worldwide, social workers have many functions and roles to play in the areas of crime and criminal justice. The SWCCJ will offer opportunities for sharing research and practice in relation to these, including: CCJ issues relating

to the social work workforce (e.g., social work education admissions decision-making, representation of CCJ lived experience among social workers) and CCJ issues relating to social work practice (e.g. policing policy, criminalised poverty, parental imprisonment, carceral human rights, rehabilitation and interprofessional working with police and prisons). Social work practice and research in these and other CCJ areas are often dominated by legalistic approaches and regulation constraints. Because of this, social workers and researchers in this field often feel powerless facing oppressive procedures and regulations when working and advocating for service users and in their struggle to promote social justice-oriented change. In the SWCCJ SIG we strongly believe, drawing from the experience of our members, that international comparison and collaboration is a key avenue for learning good practice and envisaging alternative understandings, practices and regulations regarding social work in the areas of crime and criminal justice, and for enhancing social work's contributions and influence on these. Hence the SWCCJ is conceived as an empowering and fruitful space for discussion, mutual learning, peer support, collaborative publication and research based social justice advocacy for social work researchers across Europe in the SWCCJ field.

This inaugural SIG event will create a community space for criminal justice social work to develop a network of support and collaboration and work towards the SWCCJ aims:

- Yearly SIG event at the ECSWR.
- SWCCJ symposiums at the ECSWR.
- Yearly SIG activity report for ESWRA.
- Regular internal SIG online meetings.
- Active communications and information sharing through the SWCCJ SIG website, ESWRA newsletters and social media.
- Participation in ESWRA online seminar series when ready to present SWCCJ SIG research outcomes
- Edited book on Researching social work, crime and criminal justice.
- Joint academic work and publications (incl. research funding applications and cross-teaching).

Conference committee:

- Caroline Bald, University of Essex (UK)
- María Inés Martínez Herrero, Universidad Internacional de la Rioja (UNIR, Spain)
- Domingo Carbonero Munoz, Universidad de la Rioja (Spain)
- Rafael Alcazar Ruiz, Universidad de Alicante (Spain)
- Brian Littlechild, University of Hertfordshire (UK)
- Heidi Dix, Suffolk University (UK)
- Beth Weaver, University of Strathclyde (UK)
- Kirstin Parkes, Robert Gordon University (UK)
- Helen Woods, University of Birmingham (UK)
- Gill Buck, University of Chester (UK)
- Mthoko Ngobese Sampson, University of West London (UK)

Programme

1.00-1.15 pm Welcome & Opening Keynote: *Connecting criminal justice social work: why not? with an introduction to the event's* discussion - Caroline Bald, University of Essex & British Association of Social Work England Criminal Justice Group co-chair (UK)

1.15 – 2.00 pm Special Inaugural Keynote: *The future of criminal justice social work: a space for change and caution* - Professor Fergus McNeill, Professor of Criminology & Social Work at the University of Glasgow & Associate Director of the Scottish Centre for Crime & Justice Research

2.00 – 2.15 pm *Break*

2.15 – 2.45 pm *Mapping Connection: Small group exercise mapping location, role, research interests and hopes from group.* - SWCCJ SIG Committee

2.45 – 3.00 pm *Consolidating Mapped Connection: Bringing together connection and goal setting for coming year (events, communication, collaboration, book)* - Caroline Bald & María Inés Martínez Herrero

3.00 – 3.30 pm Closing Remarks - *SWCCJ as Human Rights: next steps* - María Inés Martínez Herrero, Universidad Internacional de la Rioja (UNIR, Spain)

SIG: Special Interest Group: Social Work with Adolescents - Research, policy and practice with adolescents across Europe

Kristine Hickle¹, Carlene Firmin²

¹University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom. ²Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

SIG Programme

This pre-conference event will comprise a workshop focusing on shared interests in research, policy, and social work practice with adolescents. We hope that this meeting will allow us to continue ongoing discussions amongst SIG members in relation to shared substantive interests within the broad spectrum of social work interventions for young people at risk of harm. We also aim to use this workshop to 1) achieve a more comprehensive collective understanding of the similarities and differences in relation to how harm is conceptualised and how interventions for and with young people are delivered, and 2) identified several common goals that the SIG may work collectively to achieve within the next year.

We would warmly welcome both current SIG members alongside anyone else interested in joining us for a half-day workshop in the afternoon. We would also like to invite anyone who is interested to present to the group (approximately 10 minutes) either about 1) a relevant piece of research they are working on/have completed or 2) a key policy or practice dilemma facing young people in their context, particularly as it relates to the conference theme 'social work research through and towards human relationships'.

Presentations might cover recently completed or ongoing research focused on innovative methodologies for collaboratively engaging young people in research, theorising the role of social workers in young people's lives, evaluating interventions for young people and their families, or seeking to understand new forms of harm relevant for safeguarding young people.

If you would like to present your work, please submit your request before 1st March 2023 to Kristi Hickle (k.hickle@sussex.ac.uk). In your email, please include: Presenter(s) names, affiliation (e.g. university or place of work) and a brief description of what you would like to present.

SIG: Special Interest Group: Social work research on migration and asylum

Emilio José Gómez Ciriano¹, Elena Cabiati², Sofia Dedotsi³

¹Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Ciudad Real, Spain. ²Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, Italy. ³University of West Attica, Athens, Greece

SIG Programme

This the annual SIG event of the Special Interest Group 'Social Work Research on Migration and Asylum' (SWIM). This year, the event will be a full day, with different activities in the morning and the afternoon session. The aim of the event is to network with current and new members and discuss research initiatives and prospects on social work and migration and asylum.

Structure of the session:

9.00-9.15 Welcome and brief introduction by the conveners

9:30-11:30 Thematic presentation and discussion on 'Doing social work research with immigrants and refugees'

“Migrating stories: storytelling as a tool of social work research”, Marina Rota, Researcher, Ghent University, Belgium

“The Impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on Asylum Seekers and social Workers in North Greece and South Italy”, Prof. Shulamit Ramon, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, UK, Prof. Elena Allegri, Piemonte Orientale University, Italy, and Prof. Theano Kallinikaki, Democritus University in Trace, Greece.

‘Human relations through inter-religious dialogue groups as a tool for promoting human agency’. Assistant Professor Miguel A. Pulido. Blanquerna. Universitat Ramon LLull (Barcelona. Spain)

11:30-12:00 Discussion and debate

Common lunch (12.00-13.00)

13.00-13:30 Thematic presentations and discussion on ‘Doing social work research with immigrants and refugees’
‘Considerations for ethical engagement when conducting research with people of a refugee background’, Muireann Ni Raghallaigh, University College Dublin, Ireland

13:30-13:45 discussion and debate

13:45-15:15 Groupworking: Thematic discussions in small groups and networking (discussion on social work research with immigrants and refugees - ethics, methodologies and impact)

15.15-15.30 Summary and Conclusions

SIG: Social work practice research SIG - Co-creation *within* social work practice research: Coping the flux of practice

Martine Ganzevles¹, Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås², Lars Uggerhøj³

¹HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands. ²Faculty of Education and Arts, Nord University, Bodø, Norway. ³University of Aalborg, Aalborg, Denmark

SIG Programme

The general aim of the SIG Social Work Practice Research is to strengthen the knowledge–base for social work practice and research throughout Europe, and to respond to the contemporary emphasis on evidence-based practice with collaborative, research-led and innovative means. In this year’s (2023) SIG - conference we would like to take a close look at the idea and practice of Co-creation within social work practice research.

The SIG of Social Work Practice Research is inspired by the Salisbury statement of Practice Research, revisited and developed further in Helsinki 2012 and Hong Kong 2017. The statement builds upon the idea that practitioners and researchers are united by the desire to improve social work practice, meeting the need to develop relevant knowledge for better practice in the ever changing, complex and uncertain situations, what we have called the flux of practice.

This opens up questions for advancing social work practice research: How do we design processes allowing everyone (researchers, practitioners, service users, students and other stakeholders) to fully participate in the co-creation of knowledge? What are the possibilities and challenges related to democratization of research methods for co-creation? How can we design and facilitate research processes to ensure that the outcomes are relevant to and useful for practice, while at the same time expanding and promoting research/theoretical knowledge? How does co-creation in social work challenge “traditional” ideas of valid knowledge? How can we think about and respond to challenges related to language and power? How can we engage students in social work practice research? And what are the skills needed in social work education to meet the new demands for co-creating social work practice knowledge?

The SIG-conference will bring you abundant of opportunities to explore the theme of the conference together.

The program contains plenary speeches, where we will elaborate over the presentations in light of the statements on Social work practice research. We will also have a group-based sharing session on diverse practice experiences in each other’s social and cultural contexts.

Organizing committee

- Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin. Dep. of Master Social Work, Han University of Appl. Sciences (NL)
- Camilla Landi Department of Sociology at the Catholic University of Milan (Italy)
- Sui Ting Kong, Dep. of Sociology, Durham University (UK)
- Elke Plovie University of Applied Sciences UC Leuven-Limburg (Belgium)
- Sara Serbati, Dep. of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy, Appl Psychology, University Padova (Italy)
- Martine Ganzevles – HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (the Netherlands)
- Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås - Centre for Practical Knowledge, Nord University (Norway)

PROGRAM FOR THE DAY

09:30 – 09:55 Welcome and presentation of participants and program

By Martine Ganzevles, Institute of Social Work, University of applied sciences Utrecht

09:55 – 10:15 Exploring Social work practice research statements. How does it challenge social work practice research today?

Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås. Nord University, Norway.

Presentation of questions for analyzing presentations

Sara Serbati, University of Padova, Italy, and Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås, Nord University.

10:15 – 10:50 Let's reflect together: "the power" of the research function within social work practice with vulnerable families to bridge the gap between research-practice

Sara Serbati and Daniela Moreno. Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Science, University of Padova, Italy.

Discussion

10:50 – 11:05 Break

11:05 – 11:40 Co-designing an action framework on politicization of social work

Elke Plovie, University of Applied Sciences UC Leuven-Limburg (Belgium)

Discussion

11:40 – 12:00 Crucial change in child and youth welfare

Masterstudents Corina Lustenberger and Simon Gutknecht. University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (School of Social Work)

Discussion

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 13:35 Examining the utility of participatory approach for democratising social work practice research (Online)

Sui-Ting Kong Durham University, Department of Sociology, United Kingdom

Discussion

13:35 – 14:10 Doing a multi-case study on emergent systemic everyday practice in child welfare

Ilse Julkunen, with co-researchers Ida Nikula and Tobias Pötsch) University of Helsinki.

Discussion

14:10 – 14:20 Break

14:20 – 15:10 Group session – Exploring participants experiences in light of the idea of co-creation within social work practice research.

15:10 – 15:30 Plenary – summing up.

Each plenary presentation is given 20 minute presentation and then 15 minute discussion.

ABSTRACTS

Let's reflect together: "the power" of the research function within social work practice with vulnerable families to bridge the gap between research-practice

SERBATI SARA, MORENO DANIELA

Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Science, University of Padova, Italy

The presentation will focus on the participatory perspective of the Participative and Transformative Evaluation, a research-practice methodology used in social work with vulnerable families during the 10-year journey of the P.I.P.P.I. (Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization), an innovative intervention strategy implemented in Italy to reduce child neglect and prevent the placement out-of-home of children 0-14 y.o. The programme is inspired by the resilience of Pippi Longstocking, a metaphor of the children's strength and resilience in facing challenges and difficulties. P.I.P.P.I. results from a longstanding collaboration between the Laboratory of Research and Intervention on Family Education of the University of Padova and the Italian Ministry of Welfare.

Several are the 'implementation strategies' adopted to bridge the gap between the programme innovations, deriving from research evidence, and the adoption of these effective interventions into practice, referring to the political level, such as organizational and the practice level. They will be presented during the main conference.

At the SIG conference on practice-research in social work we will focus on the practice level, exploring how the Participatory and Transformative Evaluation support participation of families, valorising the research function inside the practice.

The presentation will refer to case studies about interventions realised by following the P.I.P.P.I.s methodological directions for the work with vulnerable families with children aged 0 to 3 years. From the standpoint of the Critical Best Practices (Ferguson, 2012), the cases help to illustrate three different components of Participative and Transformative Evaluation: reflective and critical thinking, decision-making and opportunities for parents' capabilities to flourish. The three dimensions of the Participative and Transformative Evaluation are leading to appraise the research function of the evaluation processes (Dewey, 1933; Shaw 2012) in social work in the stance of the pedagogical tradition of human educability. They will be discussed looking for opportunities and challenges for their realisation.

Co-designing an action framework on politicization of social work

ELKE PLOVIE

Coordinator Center for Burgerschap en Participatie, Docent. UC Leuven-Limburg

Social workers have a political mission. In international definitions we find that social work realizes changes embedded in a pursuit of social justice, equality, solidarity and human rights. Politicization is one of the ways social workers can shape those changes.

Politicization refers to practices that contribute to the public disagreement about how we want and can live together. With 'the public' we refer to the openness of the difference of opinion. This difference of opinion is inextricably linked to the underlying balance of power. Politicization practices question and disrupt the existing order, making people and issues visible and audible (again).

Social workers are often active in practices in which the shortcomings and injustices in society become painfully clear, or in practices where the ambition to change that society takes shape in concrete alternatives.

The special position of social work, close to the social environment, is a strong stimulus for politicization processes by workers and/or participants. Today, politicization had been put back in the spotlights in Flemish social work and it has been adopted as one

of the key features of 'strong social work' in Belgium Flanders. In order to support social workers in these politicization processes, an action framework was elaborated by a development group with Flemish practitioners, academics and social work lecturers. A basic action framework was launched at the Flemish social work conference.

From all Flemish schools for social work, researchers engaged in social work practice research came together to create a common research agenda for politicization. The goal is to create knowledge on politicization that helps us to finetune the action framework. This finetuning process is a co-creative endeavor with both practitioners and researchers identifying and discussing blind spots and fields of tension in the framework.

I will present the process of this co-creative endeavor and how this combined effort has the potential to strengthen a social justice approach of social work.

Crucial change in child and youth welfare

CORINA LUSTENBERGER, and SIMON GUTKNECHT

FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work

Research on working conditions and challenges inherent in child and youth welfare has identified a variety of stressors social workers experience such as confrontations, shift-work, bureaucracy, time pressure, lack of staff, mental burden, unrealistic expectations, lack of appreciation...

Low wages, not enough training to prepare for practice and resources, which are cut by the demands, further complicate the situation (e.g. energy-giving activities such as hobbies, social contacts).

The problem has been recognised and suggestions are being made from different sides (politics, professional association etc.) on how working conditions could be improved. However, the perspective of the social worker themselves has not been considered or is even still not known. Our planned study aims to capture social workers' experience by exploring what is crucial for them in the field of child and youth welfare in Switzerland.

What are pivotal conditions and dynamics social workers in child and youth welfare identify as crucial for a change?

The following points were demanded by professionals in Germany: more employees, more appreciation, better wages, supervision, improved infrastructure, more time for individual client care, less bureaucracy... They do not perceive organisations as a support at all and employee retention do not seem to have found an established place in social work yet.

The authors are planning focus group discussion with social workers to find answers on their question and wonder how they can find out about the most important topics who are crucial to them while working in this field. Based on that they are thinking about ways to let the voices of social workers change things which need to be changed on a sophisticated professional ethical reflexion.

Examining the utility of participatory approach for democratising social work practice research

SUI-TING KONG

Durham University, Department of Sociology, UK

The synergy between social work practice research, given its quintessentially collaborative nature, and participatory action research (PAR) has been explored by many researchers. Participatory action research (PAR) or sometimes called participatory research (PR) is a research approach that emphasises working 'with' instead of 'on' people. According to the UK Participatory Research Network (UKPRN), the aim of PAR/PR 'is to maximize the participation of those whose life or work is the subject of the research' (visited on 10 November 2022). Those traditionally seen as the receivers and users of knowledge are involved in the design, implementation and dissemination of research, making decisions on the knowledge production process to ensure usefulness, relevance and workability of the produced knowledge (Kong, 2016).

This presentation will revisit some participatory research traditions and draw the parallels with some key ideas in social work practice research. Some innovative participatory methods will be also presented here to further explore how democratising social work practice research might enrich our knowledge production through the lens of extended epistemology.

Doing a multi-case study on emergent systemic everyday practice in child welfare

ILSE JULKUNEN (with co-researchers Ida Nikula and Tobias Pötsch), University of Helsinki.

ilse.julkunen@helsinki.fi

Background: A systemic approach within child welfare is being implemented in social work in Finland. There is some knowledge on the implementation process, but not knowledge on broader outcomes for end-users and how the professional knowledge expertise is being developed in a systemic perspective. The overall aim of this two-year study is to gain knowledge about which everyday effects in a systemic context are created in three newly formed multilingual wellbeing service county areas.

Methods: This paper presents the methodological design in aiming for knowledge of the systemic real effectiveness practice of social work. The study is planned collaboratively with the practitioners, user organisation of after care and experts within the field. It is based on the knowledge development within three multilingual areas which also form the knowledge interest of the study. What is unique in this study is the multicase design which aims at developing learning processes between the different areas, a methodological approach that is seldom used in social work research. Another point is that this study will be performed during a historical situation in Finland when a large wellbeing services county reform is implemented, which has a huge impact on doing research in practice.

Conclusions and implications: We believe that creating a relational approach to studying everyday effects serves to close the gap between research and practice. In this paper we will reflect on the practice-based research process and what we have learned so far.

SIG: Social Work Ethics Research Group (SWERG SIG) - ETHICAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH: Handling feedback, conflict and consent in sensitive practice settings

Ana Marija Sobočan¹, Sarah Banks²

¹University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia. ²Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

SIG Programme

The interactive session is designed to foster mutual support and a sense of community among social work researchers with an interest in ethics. It will involve discussion of works in progress and structured problem-sharing and problem solving.

SWERG has an interest both in researching social work ethics and the ethical issues that arise during the process of doing social work research. The focus of this workshop will be largely on the latter, although we will have time to share our experiences, interests and questions regarding the conduct of theoretical and empirical research on ethics in social work. During the first part of our meeting, we will invite participants to share their interests in social work ethics, before moving to three short presentations by researchers on ethical considerations arising in their research to stimulate our thinking and promote dialogue. These presentations will cover: ethical challenges related to reporting back the research findings; ethical dilemmas and issues arising in research practice; and ethical considerations in conducting pragmatic randomized controlled trials. The programme is as follows:

1. Introduction: Background to SWERG. Workshop participants share their interests in ethics
2. Three short presentations:
 - Reporting reconstructed framings of professional practice back to organizations: an ethical challenge, Julia Franz, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin (Germany); Heidrun Wulfekühler, Hochschule Hannover (Germany)
 - Ethical issues and dilemmas researching everyday parenting practices in highly conflictual divorce, Silvia Fargion, University of Trento (Italy); Diletta Mauri, University of Trento (Italy)
 - Ethical considerations in conducting pragmatic clinical trials: An example from a study of therapeutic foster care in the children's mental health system, Paul Lanier, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA)
3. Discussion of key themes and issues
4. Discussion of future activities and themes for SWERG

The pre-conference will be hosted by SWERG members: Kim Strom (USA), Teresa Bertotti (IT), Sarah Banks (UK), and Ana M. Sobocan (SI). For further information contact the SWERG convenors: Ana.Sobocan@fsd.uni-lj.si or s.j.banks@durham.ac.uk

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

JULIA FRANZ, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin (Germany)

HEIDRUN WULFEKÜHLER, Hochschule Hannover (Germany)

Reporting reconstructed framings of professional practice back to organizations - an ethical challenge

Social work organizations do not only have a formal structure (organization structure, integration into the institutional structure of the practice field), they are also characterized by practice structures. Such practice structures of professional (and thus: organizational) action are the subject of reconstructive social work research. In the present research project (Franz forthcoming), this object is framed through praxeological sociology of knowledge (cf. Bohnsack 2020, Franz 2022, Kubisch/Franz 2022). Group discussions with social workers were used to elaborate constituent framings (e.g. casuistic development of framing as an educational process, power-structured framing, arbitrariness, organizational loss of framing) that shape professional action in an organizational context.

How can such reconstructed constituent framings be fed back into professional practice, or more precisely: to the organizations researched?

We address this question by first ascertaining the goals from an ethical perspective that justify feeding back research findings to the organizations (cooperative knowledge creation or relationing of different types of knowledge, reciprocity). We then address how and when such feedback should be designed (dialogue, opportunities for critique or critical appropriation).

Such a feedback process can itself become a subject of ethical research in social work. We would like to outline this in conclusion.

Cited works:

- Bohnsack, Ralf (2020): Professionalisierung in praxeologischer Perspektive. Zur Eigenlogik der Praxis in Lehramt, Sozialer Arbeit und Frühpädagogik. Opladen/Toronto: UTB Barbara Budrich.
- Franz, Julia (2022): Urteilsbildung und Professionalisierung in der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Bonnet, Andreas/Hericks, Uwe (Hg.): Praxeologisch-wissenssoziologische Professionsforschung. Perspektiven aus Früh- und Schulpädagogik, Fachdidaktik und Sozialer Arbeit. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, pp. 463-487.
- Kubisch, Sonja/Franz, Julia (2022): Professionalisierung in der Sozialen Arbeit aus praxeologisch-wissenssoziologischer Perspektive, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Bonnet, Andreas/Hericks, Uwe (Hg.): Praxeologisch-

SILVIA FARGION, University of Trento (Italy)

DILETTA MAURI, University of Trento (Italy)

Ethical issues and dilemmas researching everyday parenting practices in highly conflictual divorce.

“Constructions of parenting on insecure grounds” (CoPInG), is a study which aims to provide an understanding of how parents who go through a conflictual divorce perceive their everyday childrearing practices. The idea of the project has been to give voice to persons who are very often portrayed as bad parents and who are often considered as not credible witness of their own experience (Jevne, 2017; Bertelsen, 2021; Treloar, 2018).

In this presentation we would like to share and discuss some ethical issues we had to face in our research. The first one relates to our goal of giving voice to people perceived as having little credibility and to how the tools for gathering data can affect this goal, especially in the specific context of our study. A second issue we identified, which is not specific to this particular theme of research, was that we were addressing a highly sensitive topic, and we were in doubt on how to deal with deep emotional involvement of both interviewees and interviewers, considering that the interviews were conducted online.

A third issue emerged after few interviews. As Shaw (2008) points out, in qualitative research many issues arise along the process and are particularly difficult to be dealt with, because of our being social workers. In literature it is acknowledged that the boundaries between high conflict and domestic violence are often blurred (Archer-Kuhn, 2018). In fact with some interviews we were confronted with situations that were defined by people themselves as highly conflictual divorce, but which in our view appeared clearly as domestic violence. This opens up a number of questions and dilemmas. In our presentation we will share and discuss our impasse and solutions.

Cited works:

Archer-Kuhn, B. (2018). Domestic violence and high conflict are not the same: a gendered analysis. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 40(2), 216–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2018.1444446>

Bertelsen, B. (2021) Staying with the conflict. Parenting work and the social organization of post-divorce conflict, *Journal of Family Studies*, pp. 1-17.

Fricker, M. (2007) *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Jevne, K.S. (2017) Negotiating client positions: parents with custodial disagreements talking about their experiences with child welfare workers, *Nordic Social Work Research*, 7, 3, pp. 223-35.

Shaw, I. (2008). Ethics and the practice of qualitative research. *Qualitative social work*, 7(4), 400-414.

Treloar, R. (2018) High-conflict divorce involving children: parents’ meaning making and agency, in «*Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*», 40, 3, pp. 340-61.

PAUL LANIER, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA)

Ethical considerations in conducting pragmatic clinical trials: An example from a study of therapeutic foster care in the children’s mental health system

Pragmatic randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are increasingly used to study the effectiveness of social work interventions in “real-world” clinical settings. Because of the highly applied and practice-focused nature of pragmatic RCTs, these designs have great value for yielding evidence with high utility for decision-makers and practitioners. Further, the increased availability and access to electronic administrative data enhances the feasibility of pragmatic RCTs. However, several key ethical issues and regulatory concerns arise when planning for the implementation of pragmatic RCTs when applying frameworks developed for standard RCTs. Specifically, pragmatic RCTs do not involve novel or “experimental” interventions, they typically study commonly used

practices delivered in usual care clinical settings. An overarching question is where and how to draw a distinction between research and practice. In some cases, the nature of pragmatic RCTs might justify relaxing or removing the accepted requirements of informed consent and disclosure to participants. Further, some suggest pragmatic RCTs should be exempt from research ethics review and oversight completely. Meanwhile, others suggest that removing research protections including informed consent violates key pillars of ethical research. These issues will be discussed in the context of a pragmatic RCT examining therapeutic foster care services delivered in a public children's mental health system.

Citations:

Goldstein, C.E., Weijer, C., Brehaut, J.C. et al. Ethical issues in pragmatic randomized controlled trials: a review of the recent literature identifies gaps in ethical argumentation. *BMC Med Ethics* 19, 14 (2018).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-018-0253-x>

Manti S, Licari A. How to obtain informed consent for research. *Breathe* 2018; 14: 145–152.

<https://doi.org/10.1183/20734735.001918>

Sugarman J, Califf RM. Ethics and Regulatory Complexities for Pragmatic Clinical Trials. *JAMA*. 2014;311(23):2381–2382. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2014.4164>

Truog RD, Robinson W, Randolph A, Morris A. Is informed consent always necessary for randomized, controlled trials? *N Engl J Med*. 1999 Mar 11;340(10):804-7. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejm199903113401013>

SIG: More-than-human Special Interest Group

Tina Wilson¹, Heather Lynch²

¹University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. ²Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom

SIG Programme

The Social Work and the More-than-human Special Interest Group convenes and supports transnational scholars working on the ways in which the more-than-human, broadly defined, challenges human-focused social work research, education and practice. In different ways the Covid-19 pandemic, environmental emergency and human-made technologies each generate political and economic instabilities that amplify existing inequalities between humans, but also between humans and non-human life. These events and phenomena draw attention to the potential harms of the human exceptionalism embedded in modern social and political thought, and they evoke new philosophical questions that challenge state-anchored professional social work to imagine beyond the traditional scope of research and practice.

For ECSWR 2023, our group will host a panel discussion on ways in which we might foreground “nature” and the more-than-human in social work activities traditionally imagined and articulated in relation to the human-centred “social.” Panel speakers will respond to the question posed by philosopher Michelle Serres in *The Natural Contract*: “What language do the things of the world speak, that we might come to an understanding with them, contractually?”

Speakers:

Verena Fisch, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

Heather Lynch, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland

Tina Wilson, University of British Columbia, Canada

We warmly invite conference attendees with an interest in more-than-human research topics – including but not limited to build environments; material objects; nature and natural environments; data and technology; non-human life; questions of time, space and place – to join us for our first in-person SIG event.

SIG: Social Work and Health SIG - Social Work in connection with Health: Chances and Perspectives in a changing society

Wim Nieuwenboom

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Basel, Switzerland

SIG Programme

Since the SIG “Social Work and Health” was founded in 2017, several developments took place that influenced the relationship between Social Work and Health significantly. The Covid Pandemic highlighted the social aspects of health (inclusive mental health). The Ukrainian war and a new wave of refugees has been a new challenge for the European society and for social work as well. The ongoing climate debate while addressing ecological and health issues as a societal problem means a challenge for social work as a profession and discipline. And it has also an influence on the ongoing debate on how or in what way should social work claim to be, and act as, a health profession. The overall purpose of this SIG event is to discuss how the above developments play together and which impact they have on social work research.

The first aim of this meeting is to provide an update and discuss the changes that took place in the last years between Social Work and Health in different countries and different contexts. This will be done by a couple of presentations that focus on the connection between social work and health, how this changed and which factors (at different levels, also political/contextual) contributed to these changes.

A second aim is to discuss the topics that should be part of a research agenda and how we can contribute to this to happen. We will discuss this topic in one or more discussion groups.

Thirdly, the meeting will be a platform for professionals from practice and research to meet, build alliances and set up networks for new projects around these teams.

Main Convenor: Wim Nieuwenboom

Organizers: Wim Nieuwenboom and Ines Arendt

SIG Service User Involvement (SUI) - ‘Service User involvement’, ‘Expert-by-experience’ and ‘experiential knowledge’ – It’s all in the name?

Kristel Driessens¹, Sidsel Therese Natland²

¹Karel de Grote-Hogeschool, Antwerp, Belgium. ²Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

SIG Programme

In this year’s SIG pre-conference, we wish to discuss some important concepts affiliated with the term “user involvement”. When service users are involved in participatory research projects, they are often positioned as “experts by experience”, and their contribution to the knowledge production is valued as bringing in “experiential knowledge”. However, this position and this knowledge is also contested, for example it might be challenged by other scientific disciplines, researchers and policy makers when it comes to questions about the validation of “experiential knowledge”. To carry out high quality research with users’ involvement, and to better communicate with significant stakeholders, the field needs enhanced epistemological and conceptual discussions on what is meant by the expert-by-experience and experiential knowledge.

In this year's SIG we will explore these concepts and decide about the name of our SIG. We hope to see many participating to discuss and contribute to the discussion. Warmly welcomed to contribute.

Programme

13.00-13.10. Welcome – Kristel Driessens, University of Antwerp (B) and Sidsel Natland, Oslo Metropolitan University (N)

13.10-13.30. Recovery - indications for the practice of social work oriented to human needs. An example of a methodology for involving users in research - Hubert Kaszyński, Jagiellonian University in Krakow (PL)

13.30-13.50. "Experiential knowledge" in social work research – Sidsel Natland

13.50-14.10 Ontology and epistemology of 'experiential knowledge' – Jean-Pierre Wilken, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (NL)

14.10-14.30. Discussion

15 min break

14.45-15.30. What is in our name? The results of a small survey and discussion about the name of our SIG – Kristel Driessens and Sidsel Natland

15.30-16. Plans for the future:

- A special issue in the new journal?

- How can we facilitate participation for service users in seminars and conferences?

- What should be the topic for the next meeting/collaboration with other SIGs?

SIG: Research on Social Work and Policy Engagement SIG

Riccardo Guidi¹, Idit Weiss-Gal², John Gal³

¹University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy. ²Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel Aviv, Israel. ³The Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Jerusalem, Israel

SIG Programme

9:30 – 10:40 Session 1 - Chair: Riccardo Guidi

Agnieszka Zogata-Kusz, Policy Engagement Research – Inspirations from Policy Process Theories

Sarit Sened, Idit Weiss-Gal & John Gal, Ethical Dilemmas in Policy Practice

Roman Balaz, Interests of Social Workers as Motives for Policy Engagement

10:40 - 10:50 Break

10:50 – 12:00 Session 2 - Chair: Idit Weiss-Gal

Riccardo Guidi, Annamaria Campanini, Giovanni Cellini, Martina Francesconi, Luigi Gui, Silvana Mordeglia, Urban Nothdurfter, Marta Pantalone & Mara Sanfelici, Social Workers' Policy Practice in Italy: Initial Findings of a National Study

Miriam Burzlaff, Tobias Kindler & Talia Meital Schwartz-Tayri, Voluntary and In-Job Policy Engagement of Social Workers in Germany, Israel, And Switzerland: Levels and Determinants

Noga Pitowsky-Nave, Tanja Klenk & Lihi Lahat, Social Service Workers as Street-Level Policy Entrepreneurs and Collaborators: Findings from Israel and Germany

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 – 14:10 Session 3 - Chair: Miriam Burzlaff

Simone Leiber, Sigrid Leitner, Laura Einhorn, Corinna Schein, Welfare Organizations as Collective Actors of Social Work? Particularities of the German Case

Christian Kroll, Helena Blomberg & Johanna Kallio, Political Engagement among Finnish Social Work Students in the Digital Age: Exploring On-and Offline Modes of Activity

André Heinz, Collective Action Survey - An Instrument to Measure the Preconditions for Collective Interest Action

14:10 – 14:20 Break

14:20 – 15:30 Session 4 - Chair: John Gal

Mohammad (Hammudi) Saied, The Social Construction of Social Workers' Involvement in Policy Practice: The "Right to Electricity" Case Study

Massimiliano Capitanio, Monica Ghiretti, Daniela Luisi, Maria Cristina Montesi and Antonella Rai, Community Social Workers and Place-Based Approach. Impacts, Policy Change and the Political Soul of Social Work

Mary E. Hylton & Jill Manit, Policy Practice as a Tool for Promoting Social Justice: Analysis of Social Work Student Activity Logs

SIG: Post-Soviet and Post-Socialist Social Work Special Interest Group

Sue Taplin¹, Jovana Škorić²

¹University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham-Gloucester, United Kingdom. ²University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

SIG Programme

Morning Session

Speaker One – **Vedrana Lacmanovic – Serbia**

'Empowering Women Beyond Borders: The Legacy of Transnational Social Work in (Post)Conflict Societies - Insights from Women's Organizations in Serbia'

I aim to explore the collaboration among women in the post-Yugoslavia during and after the period of conflict, irrespective of their religious, national, or political affiliations. I was actively involved in an organization founded 30 years ago by a group of women who aimed to support women survivors of sexual violence in war. Women continued to spread the message of peace and support other women, understanding the fundamental human need for empathy and solidarity.

The legacy of the women's movement in the Balkans represents a valuable resource for transnational social work, allowing us to overcome prejudices, stereotypes, and imposed boundaries. This is also highly relevant in the context of the war in Ukraine, where support for women who have experienced violence during the conflict is crucial. Furthermore, it is important to reflect on the burden that post-conflict societies bear, particularly in terms of the prevalence of violence against women by war veterans, illegal weapons and how they are often used to perpetrate violence against women in Serbia. As I often say, the war has shifted from the battlefield to the household.

Therefore, this discussion aims to examine how women's organizations in Serbia and the Balkans have joined forces to foster peace and empowerment, and how this legacy can support women in conflict zones worldwide.

- *Vedrana Lacmanovic* is a licensed social worker and holds a Master of Arts degree in Political Sciences. With over 12 years of professional experience and more than 18 years of volunteer work, she is a dedicated women's human rights and peace activist. She worked at the Autonomous Women's Center (AWC), the oldest and largest women's organization in Serbia, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Together with her colleagues, she coordinated the local Women Against Violence Network, consisting of 30 organizations throughout Serbia, and worked on improving laws, policies, and practices aimed at preventing violence against women. She has extensive experience in providing direct support to women who have survived violence. Additionally, she is an accomplished researcher and author of several publications, with particular expertise in femicide prevention. She also serves as a board member of the European Women's Lobby, the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in Europe dedicated to promoting and protecting women's rights.

Speaker Two – **Johanna Laszlo – Hungary**

The Revival of Community Work in a Country with Post-Socialist Past: examples from Hungary'

As in several countries with Post-Socialist heritage, the terms related to community, collectivism, collective action and the relation of these to power are historically heavily loaded in Hungary. What can social workers committed to community work do to reclaim and re-shape these notions to develop a contemporary community work-based practice? In this session we will discuss some aspects of this question by using the framework of Radical Social Work.

- *Johanna László* holds a Master of Arts degree and is a community organizer and Social Worker from Hungary with more than 15 years of experience in working with formal and informal civil society actors, NGOs, both in Hungary and internationally in various fields, including housing, low-income individuals and groups. Her fields of interest are social justice and the practical implications of Radical Social Work, alongside with the professional communication and identity of social workers.

Afternoon Session - focus on Ukraine

Speakers - **Professor Shulamit Ramon, UK** and **Prof Dr Darja Zavirsek, Slovenia**

'Learning from the experience of a Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian social work educators' solidarity group.

Prof. Shulamit Ramon, Professor of Social Inclusion and Wellbeing, University of Hertfordshire, UK

- Ramon, S., Lloyd, M., Penhale, B. (ed) (2021) *Gendered Domestic Violence and Abuse in Popular Culture* Emerald Publishing
- Shulamit Ramon, Yaara Zisman Ilani, Alan David Quirk (ed) (2021) *Shared Decision Making in Mental Health: International Perspectives on Implementation*. Frontiers in Psychiatry.

Prof. dr. Darja Zaviršek, Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, Eileen Younghusband Memorial Lecture Awardee 2022, Chair of the Dept. of Social Justice and Inclusion, University of Ljubljana, President of the European sub-regional Association of Schools of Social Work, IASSW

- Zaviršek, Darja (2021). *The Detrimental Social Consequences of Child Marriage in the Slovenian Roma Population*. Alternator, 11/21, 8.3.2021, <https://www.alternator.science/sl/daljse/the-detrimental-social-consequences-of-child-marriage-in-the-slovenian-roma-population/>
- Darja Zaviršek, *There is no such boat as Noah's Ark in the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic: elderly women in Slovenia during Covid-19*. Social Dialogue Magazin of the IASSW, No. 24. June 2021. Social Dialogue 24.

SIG: Mental Health Special Interest Group (MH-SIG)

Sarah Vicary¹, Kevin Stone²

¹Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. ²Warwick University, Coventry, United Kingdom

Proposal type

SIG

SIG Programme

Programme - [Link to abstracts](#)

13:00 – 13:05 - Welcome to the Special Interest Group - Kevin Stone & Sarah Vicary
13:05 – 13:20 Interpreter-mediated communication in mental health social work practice: the INForMHAA study - Sarah Vicary
13:20 – 13:35 Social Work in Mental Health Service in Italy: a case study - Cristina Tilli and Patrizia Favali,
13:35 – 13:50 Comparing coercion in mental health and addiction care - Stefan Sjöström
13:50 – 14:05 Contextualising and theorising the alienation experienced by Approved Mental Health Professionals undertaking assessments of service users in crisis in England, UK. - Andrew Brammer

14:05 – 14:15 Questions

Link: [MHSIG Abstracts](#)

14:15 – 14:35 Break

14:35 – 14:50 Forty years on - can we maintain the moral voice in mental health social work?

Steven Malies

14:50 – 15:05 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Social Work: Evidence for impact

Lauren Gillespie, Pearse McCusker, Sarah Vicary, Gavin Davidson and Kevin Stone.

15:05 – 15:10 Questions

Link: [MHSIG Abstracts](#)

15:10 – 15:20 Book update: Mental Health Social Work: Crossing Boundaries

Discussion and update

Pearse McCusker, Sarah Vicary, Gavin Davidson and Kevin Stone.

15:20 – 15:30 Mental Health Special Interest Group AGM

Election of roles

We look forward to seeing you at the Mental Health Special Interest Group (MH-SIG)

SIG Conveners Prof. Sarah Vicary and Dr. Kevin Stone

SIG: Evidence into Practice Special Interest Group (EIPSIG)

Anne McGlade¹, Brian Taylor²

¹Social Care and Children's Directorate, Belfast, United Kingdom. ²Ulster University, Belfast, United Kingdom

Proposal type

SIG

SIG Programme

9:30 – Members arrive, informal exchange and networking

10:00 – 10:30 – Formal Introductions and welcome from members

- A brief reminder of why we started EIPSIG
- Achievements to date
- Revisit people's interests and interests in participation in EIPSIG

10:30-11:30 Welcome Professor Lisa Holmes (Applied Social Science, School of Education and Social Work University of Sussex UK.) *"The development of creative approaches to evidence-based practice"*

11:30-12:30

- Questions and discussions emerging from presentation
- Widen discussion to what EIPSIG address as a forum, if it is going to support your research and practice in the best possible way?

12:30-1:30 pm – LUNCH

1:30-3:30 pm – Business Meeting, including plans for next year; prioritisation of actions address.

3.30 Close and Thank you - Commencement of Main Conference

SIG: European Network Gerontological Social Work Special Interest Group

Sarah Donnelly¹, Janet Anand², Marjaana Seppänen³

¹School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland.

²Department of Social Sciences, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, Finland. ³Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

SIG Programme

10-12.00 pm (GMT) Morning session - Update on GSW SIG activities

10-10:10 am Welcome and Overview – SIG Convenors Janet Anand and Sarah Donnelly

10.10- 11 am SIG member introductions including overview of key areas of research interest

11-11:45 am *The future of GSW Education in Europe? Revisiting 2019 Mapping Exercise and discussion about 'where to now'?* Marjaana Seppänen and Mia Niemi

11:45-12 am Update on Special Issue of Journal of Adult Protection: *'European Perspectives on Safeguarding Older People: Voice, Choice, and Control'*- Sarah Lonbay and Kathryn Mackay

12 pm-12.15 Care Homes Sub-group. Update on *'Supporting a 'Healthy Transition' of an Older Person into a Care Home in Europe: Exploring the Potential Role of Social Work'* -Alisoun Milne

12.15-1 pm Lunch Break

1-2 pm Future Plans for the SIG & nominations & decisions re New SIG Convenors

Session on 'Hidden Challenges in GSW Research'

2-2:30 pm *'Eldercare as harm reduction for people who age with substance misuse and complex needs'* – Håkan Jönson and Tove Harnett (15 min presentation, 15 min discussion)

2:30-3 pm *'How do social workers perceive life situations of older adults? Reflections about implications in practice'* -Marjaana Seppänen, Eeva Rossi and Mia Niemi (15 min presentation, 15 min discussion)

3-3.30 pm Final Reflections and Close

DARSIG - Big Data and Algorithms in Social Work Decision Making: Fight, Flight, or Freeze?

Andrew Whittaker¹, Mary Baginsky², Campbell Killick³, Ravit Alfandari⁴

¹London South Bank University, London, United Kingdom. ²King's College London, London, United Kingdom. ³Ulster University, Londonderry, United Kingdom. ⁴University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

SIG Programme

Pre-conference event organizer: Dr Ravit Alfandari, University of Haifa

Topic

The tensions and challenges associated with the numerous tasks of decision making and risk assessment social worker have to make throughout their day are enormous. Dealing with uncertain and unpredictable practice situations, social workers often have to make difficult judgments and emotionally charged decisions quickly and with insufficient information. Recent initiatives to enhance social workers' decision-making practice, particularly their capacity to timely identify and evaluate possible risk, focus on developing automatic decision support systems based on big data and machine learning (ML) algorithms.

In a nutshell, data-driven machine learning models use vast datasets that integrates service records to link individual's data to certain high-risk outcomes like suicide, domestic violence, or child abuse. Typically, decision

support systems automatically generate assessments and provide actionable recommendations for consideration at appropriate decision-making points. An example from the healthcare field, are pioneering clinical decision support systems in hospitals, embedded in patient electronic health record that alert about high risk of child psychological abuse and offer recommendations or links to official guidelines. Some evidence indicates that these systems can increase identification of children with possible physical abuse, yet further research is needed.

Against this progress, a debate has been evolving in the literature about the possible professional and ethical implications for social work practice taking this direction. How would big data and algorithm-driven practice impact social workers' capacity to exercise professional discretion? How would it effect their engagement with clients? Can we assure these massive databases won't be misused? Would machine learning models reduce or increase the impact of social group biases (e.g., racial and socioeconomic disparities) on decision making?

We propose to organise the pre-conference event around these fundamental questions. We will start with a number of DARSIG members from different countries introducing pioneering local initiatives of incorporating big data and algorithms in social work decision making practice. We will then conduct an open discussion in a World Café format around the implications of such developments for research, practice and policy. This will be followed

SIG: Critical realism and social work research - Evaluation challenges in Social Work: Creating an ontologically deep understanding of change

Monica Kjørstad
Oslo and Akershus University College, Oslo, Norway

Proposal type

SIG

SIG Programme

Following up the previous SIG events of critical realism and social work research from the last years of ESWRA conferences (2013-2019), we wish to continue the discussions of critical realism's potential to contribute to a realistic approach for social work practice and research. For those unacquainted with critical realism, a general introduction will be given.

In this session, methodological and theoretical applications of critical realism will be presented. Intersectionality and interdisciplinarity will also be thematized as potentially useful analytical tools for explaining societal problems with a high degree of complexity. A central theme throughout the presentations is the idea of creating ontological depth in the analysis of social work phenomena to uncover the 'generative mechanisms' that cause change to occur.

PROGRAMME (minor changes may be made)

09:30-10:00 Welcome and introduction - Monica Kjørstad and Anu-Riina Svenlin
10:00-10:30 Evaluation Challenges in Social Work. Critical realist approaches and realist evaluation - different terminologies or real differences? - Monica Kjørstad, Oslo Metropolitan University
10:30-11:15 CAIMeR-theory in motion – reflections of how the theory has been used in social work research - Anu-Riina Svenlin, University of Umeå
11:15-11:45 Intersectionality as an analytical tool for creating ontological depth in social work research. An empirical example.
11:45-12:00 Discussion
12:00-13:00 Lunch break

13:00-14:00 A detective, physicist and historian walk into a bar: abduction, retroduction and retrodiction in critical realist evaluations - Didier Boost, University of Antwerpen
14:00-15:00 Presentations, discussion
15:00-15:30 Summing up. The way forward

SIG: Children's Rights in Practice

Paul McCafferty¹, Esther Mercado², Inger Sofie Dahlø Husby³, Wendy Eerdeken⁴

¹Queen's University, Belfast, United Kingdom. ²Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain.

³Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway. ⁴Artevelde University College, Gent, Belgium

SIG Programme

Abstract

Professionals worldwide are struggling with fulfilling children's rights and act in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is a myriad of challenges in everyday social- and child welfare and protection work with children and their families. As a new SIG group, we want highlight, discuss, and explore some of these challenges to expand and deepen practical, research and theoretical developments in the field. When speaking about children's rights in practice this goes into both child participation (known as article 12 in the UNCRC), but also issues related to the other articles: definition of a child (article 1), best interest of the child (article 3), care (article 7), protection (article 19, 33, 34), education (article 28), play (article 31), recovery (article 39) and so on.

The general aim of our SIG in Milan therefore is to provide a forum to bring together international scholars, policy makers, research students, managers, and practitioners interested in issues related to children's rights in practice across various organizations (public and non-governmental) to examine these challenges and produce research led solutions.

So, in Milan, we want to launch our new SIG, with a dynamic and interactive event that will set the foundation for our work and our plans going forward.

Our preliminary agenda.

09.30-10.15: Launch of the Children's Rights in Practice SIG. Vision, objectives, the SIG team and upcoming activities by the convenor Dr. Paul McCafferty, Queen's University Belfast.

10.30-11.15: International guest speaker (online): Professor Laura Lundy, Queen's University Belfast. Professor Lundy will present her internationally recognized children's rights model of participation. The presentation will be followed by an audience Q&A. Chair, Dr. Paul McCafferty, Queen's University Belfast.

11.15-12.00 Round table discussions on the practical application of Professors Lundy's model in different professional and international contexts. During this round table discussion, we will share examples of its application, critically reflect on the model's utility, examine its theoretical foundation, and develop new questions and research ideas on child participation. Chair Dr. Inger Sofie Dahlø Husby, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 13.30 Presentation of findings from a systematic review of systematic reviews related to child participation. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A session on the implications of the findings for research, policy, and practice in an international context. Presenters Dr. Esther Mercado, Complutense University of Madrid, and Dr. Paul McCafferty Queen's University Belfast.

13.30 – 14.15 World Café during which time participants will explore children's rights in an international context, examining common issues in small groups. The small groups will develop a series of questions that will be put to our international panel of experts in our next session. Chair Wendy Eerdeken Artevelde University College.

14.15 – 15.00 International panel of experts will be convened to discuss children’s rights and answer questions set during the world café. Issues such as care, protection, special support, education, children with disabilities, play activities, participation, and communication etc., will be introduced and examined. Chair Dr. Paul McCafferty, Queen’s University Belfast.

15.00 - 15.30: Summing up, membership and dates for the next events in the group. Chair: Dr. Paul McCafferty, with Dr. Esther Mercado, Dr. Inger Sofie Dahlø Husby and lecturer Wendy Eerdeken.

SIG: Arts-based methods in social work

Ephra Huss

Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Be'er Sheva, Israel

SIG Programme

Of late, we see a “visual turn “in social sciences in general, and also in social work practice and research. This includes the use of community art, photovoice, outsider art, arts for social change, arts and health, arts to humanize institutions, de-stigmatize minorities, and to give voice to silenced groups). This has extended the use of arts-based research in social work, that will be shown in this workshop to be an especially effective methodology to embody and articulate many of the epistemological aims of social work research.

For example, a central goal in social work is to integrate the knowledge of practitioners and of service users so as to co-produce effective solutions. However, while the theoretical, ethical and practical advantages of co-production of social work knowledge are clear, it requires a method to bridge the differences in power and in culture and forms of knowledge between social workers and service users, and to integrate them into a form of practice. Social workers are acculturated to define a problem and a solution mediated through Western and abstract psychological and social concepts, while members of marginalised groups often make sense of their experience and develop meaning structures using symbolic, narrative and visual forms of expression; This SIG will provide hands on theoretical base, sets of methods and experience in including arts-based methods within participants ongoing research.

The aims of the workshop

Firstly: the workshop will provide a theoretical rationale for using arts in social work:

Secondly: it will teach methods for using arts as subject, method, or end product of research

Thirdly: it will guide and give feedback to participants in applying these methods to their ongoing or future research projects:

Fourthly: it will create networks and collaborations between new and older arts-based researchers, through understanding each other’s aims and ideas, and creating a space for cooperation

Fifthly: it will provide a literature base and understanding of current arts-based research books and projects that will be used in the theoretical introduction.

Participants will leave the workshop with new understandings, skills, and connections, for using arts in their social work practices, teaching and research projects.

All of the presenters have published extensively alone and together in arts-based methods in social work, presented together at conferences, and the workshop will be based on their experience in the field:

We will hand out relevant literature and create an ongoing group to share publications and relevant events with the participants.

Ephrat Huss, Eltje Boss, Mieko Yoshihama, Susan Hogan, Kalia Kaparounaki

SIG: Doctoral and Early Career Researchers

Ozan Selçuk¹, Florian Spensberger²

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SIG Programme

* Networking Opportunities

* Call for contributions - 3 Minute Challenge (100 € prize)