

Lawyers are Counselors, Too: Social Workers can Train Lawyers to More Effectively Counsel Clients

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Abstract: *Attorneys new to practice often find themselves completely unprepared to assist emotionally distraught clients. Traditional law school curricula do not mandate coursework on how to interview clients or how to involve clients in the representation plan. The knowledge, values, and skills taught in schools of social work can be useful tools to address many common challenges faced by lawyers. The authors argue for transdisciplinary education in which social work educators teach courses in law schools. Systems theory, cultural competence, and the strengths perspective are used as examples of practice approaches that could greatly enhance the services provided to clients seeking legal services.*

Keywords: *Social work and law, interdisciplinary education, social work practice skills, transdisciplinary education*

INTRODUCTION

Law schools teach students to think like lawyers, meaning how to break cases down into legal principles (Wetlaufer, 1990). However, legal practice requires knowledge far beyond legal facts and analysis. Inevitable questions asked by beginning attorneys include “What do I do when my client cries?,” “How do I handle clients who tell me more than I want to know?,” and “Where do I send a client who needs psychiatric help?.” These are all questions answered in introductory social work courses. While lawyers sometimes try to deny the social work inherent in working with low income clients, many researchers argue it should be embraced (Aiken & Wizner, 2003; Coleman, 2001).

There are significant differences between the professional duties and ethics of law and social work; however, the knowledge and skills taught in schools of social work can be useful tools to address the common challenges faced by attorneys. There have been scholarly discussions about the need to form more cross-campus collaborations over the past several decades, but little has changed in universities or in the actions of faculty and students to further interdisciplinary work (Weinberg & Harding, 2004).

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the benefits of transdisciplinary education. The authors argue for moving beyond the traditional academic interdisciplinary model of allowing students to take a few courses outside their field of study. Instead, the authors propose shifting to a model in which knowledge and skills are shared from various disciplines that can benefit one another, and educators can teach across departmental boundaries.

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Transdisciplinary work is not one discipline imposing its own values, knowledge, and practices on another discipline or deciding which discipline is the best to use in certain situations. Instead it involves coming up with solutions that incorporate multiple ways of thinking, and collaboratively working together to serve clients and the community in a way that is better than segregated services (Bronstein, 2003; Voyvodic & Medcalf, 2004; Weinberg & Harding, 2004).

While transdisciplinary education has possible benefits for a multitude of fields and could be useful in both directions between law and social work, this exploratory article focuses on what social work educators should be called upon to teach in law schools. The authors first explore what is missing in law schools and why these deficiencies are problematic. Next, theoretical constructs from social work that could fill the gaps in legal education will be discussed. The theories will be briefly explained, followed by a demonstration of their relevance to legal education and a pedagogical example of how they could be conveyed in a law school setting. Barriers to developing transdisciplinary education with social workers in law schools are examined and recommendations for overcoming the barriers are explored.

WHAT IS MISSING IN LAW SCHOOLS?

Practicing attorneys spend much of their time in direct interactions with clients who are experiencing multiple problems that cannot be solved by solely focusing on legal issues. For example, a client in the midst of a divorce proceeding may also be in need of services such as housing assistance, food pantries, day care, job training, and emotional support. Therefore, law students may be better prepared to assist clients if they are trained in how to communicate, empathize, and interview clients, as well as to be aware of other resources that can help clients beyond merely legal resources. The most realistic way to prepare students for direct practice is to give them the opportunity to work with clients under supervision of practicing attorneys. However, the majority of law students graduate without a school-related internship, which is often referred to as clinical experience in law schools, or the benefit of instructor-supervised practice working directly with clients. Not all schools of law offer clinical experience opportunities, and very few American law schools require an internship as part of the law school degree requirements (Voyvodic & Medcalf, 2004).

Social work students, in contrast, are required to participate in a practicum under the supervision of licensed social workers to gain direct practice experience with clients before graduating (Voyvodic & Medcalf, 2004). Schools of social work and law take very different approaches to teaching "practice." Voyvodic and Medcalf (2004) explain there is a sense of "academic illegitimacy" associated with pursuing hands-on practice as part of academic programs, and they argue for a re-examination of this longstanding belief.

While professors of law may still object to clinical practice in law schools, there is a growing movement among clinical professors of law, who teach elective practicum courses, for interdisciplinary components to be added to clinical programs (Voyvodic & Medcalf, 2004). There is an emerging literature in legal journals, particularly clinical

teaching law reviews, discussing the ways in which social work practice skills could be useful tools for law students (Aiken & Wizner, 2003). For example, Galowitz (1999) explains that she realized there is a need for social workers in law clinics after supervising a law student assigned to a case with a client referred to the clinic for housing problems. It quickly became apparent the client also had other barriers in her life, such as HIV positive status, threats of losing her food stamps eligibility, and problems paying her utility bills. Galowitz states social workers can help law students view clients as whole people affected by multiple systems, instead of viewing clients only by their legal issue, so that client problems can be recognized before reaching emergency crisis situations (1999). Others advocate for incorporating social work approaches into legal education through a focus on social justice. The professional code of social work requires promoting social justice. Lawyers and law students can play a more significant role as professionals if they move beyond just providing direct services to clients and see the importance of using their knowledge and skills to practice social justice on a macro level (Aiken & Wizner, 2003; Rand, 2006).

WHY TRULY INTEGRATED EDUCATION IS NECESSARY

The primary reason social work education is needed in schools of law is to ensure better services for clients seeking legal assistance. Lawyers with some training in social work practice skills will have a more holistic toolbox from which to assist clients, will work more effectively in interdisciplinary teams, and will have better educational outcomes (Colarossi & Forgey, 2006; Coleman, 2001).

Much of the work already performed by attorneys falls into the category of social work rather than law, especially when they are serving low income clients (Aiken & Wizner, 2003). Attorneys are often asked to provide service referrals, mediate conflicts, and simply listen to a client's dilemmas. Research on the practice of law is scarce because most academic lawyers are not trained in empirical research methods, but in 1975 Shaffer found that lawyers could spend up to 80% of their time with clients performing counseling duties, as defined by talking with clients about issues that do not result in progression of the legal case. Yet the majority of attorneys have no educational background in counseling.

Workplace interdisciplinary partnerships between lawyers and social workers are becoming more common in practice areas such as family law, child abuse and neglect, and juvenile delinquency (Allen-Meares, 1998). Defining roles and communication between the professions can often be difficult in the workplace when professional identity has already been solidified (Allen-Meares, 1998). If the professionals had prior training on collaboration during their education, it could enhance effective communication and understanding of each other's skills and roles to ultimately better serve clients (Katkin, 1974). The ability of social workers and lawyers to work together in the courtroom has long been shown to impact the quality of services provided to clients (Shaffer, 1975; Weil, 1982).

Additionally, evaluation of innovative transdisciplinary courses provides initial evidence that courses co-taught by social work and law educators results in better

educational outcomes. Colarossi and Forgey (2006) used a pretest-posttest control group design to evaluate the effectiveness of a transdisciplinary social work and law course focused on domestic violence. The course, *Domestic Violence: Social Work and Law*, was offered as an elective and either co-taught by a social work and a law professor with enrollment from both fields or a control class taught by an instructor from the student's own profession. The results of the study indicate several themes: students involved in the transdisciplinary course experienced increased knowledge of domestic violence and of the roles that social workers and lawyers take in client intervention, students in the transdisciplinary course had fewer myths and stereotypes about domestic violence clients after completing the course (as compared with the control group), and the students in the experimental group experienced positive attitudes towards transdisciplinary education (Colarossi & Forgey, 2006).

Finally, social work educators should advocate for the value of their knowledge and skills to other professions. A qualitative study of lawyers found that attorneys were not aware of the professional duties and education of social workers, and believed they could perform the functions of a social worker as well as a professional social worker (Weil, 1982). Social workers are trained to advocate for others, but we also need to remember to advocate for ourselves. Our knowledge is important. While other professions cannot and should not take on our professional roles, a background in some of our interviewing and assessment skills can ensure clients receive better services from attorneys and that attorneys can provide appropriate referrals to social workers and other professionals.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL WORK THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES USEFUL IN LAW SCHOOLS

Professional social workers employ a variety of theories to inform the practice skills they select for use with clients. The theories are used to help explain the nature of human behavior and interaction to achieve various practice goals. Several of the essential goals social workers must achieve with clients are also essential goals attorneys must meet with each client. Examples include interview structuring, information gathering, and goal-setting based on client decisions. Both professions must prepare interview frameworks, and have the ability to maintain focus and know when to allow for deviation from the planned structure of the interview. Social workers and lawyers must also conduct information gathering sessions. They must know how to make clients feel comfortable disclosing necessary information in order for the professional's assistance to be effective. Finally, both professions must set goals for the outcome of the client services, and the client's input must be balanced with the duties of the profession.

Several theories borrowed from social work can help attorneys more effectively and systematically perform these tasks that the professions have in common. The following discussion of systems theory, cultural competence, and the strengths perspective is far from an exhaustive list of social work constructs that would be beneficial to future lawyers, but it is intended as a beginning discussion for social work educators to advocate for social work involvement in law school curricula.

Systems Theory

Systems theory, adopted from its origins in biology, is the primary perspective from which social workers evaluate client situations and needs (Andreae, 2011). The theory explains connections between various systems, whether in the body or between individuals and their community. When used in the social sciences, systems theory demonstrates how an action on any system has a reverberating impact on many other systems (Andreae, 2011; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

How systems theory is useful in legal education. Legal practice is typically focused on the individual; however, clients' needs are often multifaceted and the decisions they make in a legal office can impact multiple systems in their lives. Legal problems are often intermixed with social, medical, and economic problems (Coleman, 2001). Attorneys will provide more effective counsel if they understand systems and use the theory to help a client foresee all possible outcomes of legal action. For example, an angry father recently served with divorce papers may react by initially requesting his attorney take the most adversarial tactics available to fight for custody of his child. This single action will impact many other systems in his life. Only a few of the impacted systems include: the child herself, the child's school district, and each member of the larger family systems of both parents (e.g., whether grandparents/aunts/uncles/cousins will be able to easily visit the child).

Systems theory can also be useful in recognizing that clients often need services beyond what lawyers can provide; in this instance, it is important to recognize opportunities for crisis intervention services and other referrals. Law students should be made aware of community resources and have a local guidebook on hand for referrals.

Examples of how to teach systems theory in a law school setting. Socratic pedagogy, in which professor and student exchange questions on legal doctrine, dominates legal education (Wetlaufer, 1990); however, the types of role plays incorporated into social work education could greatly enhance demonstrations of how to gather information from clients and determine service goals. Systems theory, which is often difficult to explain abstractly, can be demonstrated clearly through example in a role play. The following example is one way to teach law students both the benefits of approaching client problems from a systems theory perspective and the ways the theory can be useful in skilled interviewing.

Provide one student with a scenario in which he or she is an attorney and her client has just received a settlement offer from her ex-husband regarding custody of their 10-year-old daughter, Casey. The instructor can play the client. The student will most likely begin with questioning the client on whether she understands the settlement. As the client, respond that you understand, and the only troubling stipulation is that the split of holidays means you will never have custody of Casey on Christmas. As the client, express in a timid way that you cannot make up your mind about what to do (be as indecisive as possible... worry that if you do not sign this settlement, your ex-husband might become angry and sue for full custody, resulting in a less favorable settlement). The lead author has utilized this scenario as a guest speaker in several clinical law courses, and the most common student attorney responses are "I can't tell you what to

do” and “Do you want to take a few minutes to think about it?.” In order to avoid imposing their own agenda, students put the power of self determination on the client’s shoulders and offer no guidance.

Next, process the interaction. Start by asking what the attorney did correctly. Under legal professional standards, the student did not make any mistakes. She refrained from advising the client on a personal decision; however, the lawyer could have better served the client by helping her think through possible outcomes. Systems theory can be used to guide the client through an interview based on “what if” scenarios. Inform students they can ask “What if you sign this settlement today? Tell me what Christmas will be like.” This will allow the client to explore various systems that will be impacted by her daughter’s custody arrangement. Next, the client must be asked what will happen if she does not sign. All possible outcomes should be exhausted to allow the client to determine the most informed decision for herself. After the discussion of systems theory, allow another student to conduct the client interview and incorporate systems theory.

An additional way to utilize systems theory is to require a homework assignment students begin by brainstorming a list of all resources their clients might need, such as financial, food and housing assistance. Next, ask students to research assistance available for each of these needs, such as TANF, food stamps and section 8 housing vouchers. Finally, students should conduct research regarding specific details on how to apply for these programs. In the process, students will learn what community resources are available, where they are located, and what information clients will need to gather in order to apply. The assignment can be explained and debriefed in relation to systems theory as students brainstorm what services will be needed for clients in various situations. The completed assignment will be a valuable resource book for attorneys who plan to practice locally upon graduation, and a starting point for collecting a database of resources for those who relocate.

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence involves the acquisition of knowledge about various cultures and traditions, and the practice of sensitivity and acceptance of diversity. Students of social work are asked to reflect on cultural traditions and their own beliefs in exercises to develop acceptance, in order to avoid pushing their own agenda or assessment of client needs on a client (Perry & Tate-Manning, 2006).

How cultural competence is useful in legal education. Attorneys have a similar requirement to respect client individuality and decisions. Social work training techniques regarding cultural competence are an effective way to teach the importance of removing self from client decisions. It is important for all professionals serving clients to devote time to becoming aware of their own biases, prejudices, values, ethics, experiences, and assumptions about human behavior, because all of these attributes can influence interaction with clients and approaches to working with culturally diverse clients (Perry & Tate-Manning, 2006). Practitioners who do not practice cultural competence run the risk of detrimental outcomes for clients, including disrespect, discrimination, improper

assessment and/or intervention, and lack of access to needed services (Simmons, Diaz, Jackson, & Takahashi, 2008).

The meaning of cultural competence is often misunderstood. Practitioners, including both social workers and attorneys, do not need to be an expert in all cultural differences to be a culturally competent professional (Simmons et al., 2008). Cultural competence means being aware of potential differences in values, ethics, behavior, language, and religious practices of clients in order to be sensitive to their unique needs and circumstances (Perry & Tate-Manning, 2006). Being culturally competent is an ongoing process as social workers and attorneys continually encounter new situations and new clients (Simmons et al., 2008). Directly asking clients questions is an appropriate way of addressing cultural differences—one cannot be expected to know everything about all cultures. However, being aware of the impact of cultural differences can have a positive impact on client-practitioner interactions and client outcomes. Clients can be asked about their culture, social background and preferences, such as how they would like to be addressed. Cultural competence is becoming even more important as the United States is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of racial, ethnic, religious, social, and cultural differences. There has been a corresponding growth in the need for people in social services to develop skills and knowledge of cultural competence (Simmons et al., 2008).

Cultural competence is also a useful construct for discussing accessible language. When teaching interviewing skills, a discussion of using language appropriate to the client's needs is imperative. Law school training aims to teach students to think and talk in legal language (Wetlaufer, 1990); however, students must also learn how to undo this training when speaking with clients. Legal terms can be used, but must be explained to clients in everyday language. Lawyers need to approach and interact with clients for whom English is a secondary language differently than with those who are native English speakers. Legal terminology is difficult for most people to understand and it is even more problematic for clients unfamiliar with the English language. Additionally, the educational level and any disability the client may have must be taken into account. The concept of "starting where the client is" is necessary to match the style of communication the client takes. While the attorney must adopt a professional appearance to maintain trust, he or she must also avoid being condescending toward the client in order to maintain an open relationship.

Example of how to teach cultural competence in a law school setting. As with any type of social work theory, construct, or practice skill, there are many ways to teach the application of cultural competence. The authors have utilized the following exercise in a clinical law course and received positive, systematically derived qualitative feedback on its effectiveness from students, with the primary theme being that the exercise made them realize that flexibility is needed when working with clients because everyone will have differing needs. To complete the exercise, students are given a homework assignment of preparing a preliminary set of interview questions for a client who has made an appointment to file for a protective order. Just like social work students, beginning law students working with clients tend to prepare in great detail and remain rigidly bound to the set of interview questions prepared in advance. During the next class session, ask a student to role play the attorney and the instructor will act as the client. As soon as the

student begins on the line of scripted questions, interrupt that you are no longer sure you want the protective order. The student will most likely be at a loss for words now that the script is no longer relevant.

The role play allows for class discussion of the need for flexibility and a brainstorming session on cultural competence. The client has made the effort to attend the appointment, which indicates she wishes to address the matter. Ask the students to brainstorm what her reluctance could mean. A non-exhaustive list of discussion points includes:

1. Cultural competence issues of education: She may not understand what a protective order is.
2. Cultural competence issues of socioeconomic status: She may have limited financial resources and believe it is beyond her means to file a protective order.
3. Cultural competence issues of culture: Cultural differences may impact how openly a client will divulge relevant information. For example, Native American cultures have a taboo of speaking of domestic violence in public.
4. Cultural competence issues of background experiences: She may be an illegal immigrant and afraid that her status will be reported if she becomes involved with the justice system through a protective order.
5. Cultural competence issues of recognizing when a referral is needed: She may not yet be ready to leave her partner. In this case, she should be given information for a local shelter and told to keep it in her shoe just in case.

Strengths Perspective

The strengths perspective is a practice approach that involves identifying clients' sources of resilience. The strengths model is based on six principles: the focus is on individual strengths rather than pathology, the community is viewed as a source of resources, interventions are based on client self-determination, the practitioner-client relationship is seen to be primary and essential, aggressive outreach is employed as the preferred mode of intervention, and people are seen as being able to learn, grow, and change (Saint-Jacques, Turcotte, & Pouliot, 2009).

How strengths perspective is useful in legal education. Social workers utilize the strengths perspective to facilitate the empowerment of clients and include them in the problem solving process (Aiken & Wizner, 2003). Clients seeking legal representation are typically in a crisis situation and often feel hopeless. Although it is not the role of the attorney to help the client emotionally work through the situation, the attorney's representation can be more effective if the client can focus on resilience. Clients who feel empowered will be more likely to be engaged in helping themselves. Clients need to be motivated to do what is necessary to provide effective representation, such as returning phone calls, attending meetings, returning documents, and finding necessary evidence.

The strengths-based approach to practice is sometimes misunderstood as an approach that only focuses on the positives in a situation or only on the potential benefits one can

experience from adversity. Instead, strengths-based approaches do not ignore or minimize problems of clients, but make a point to assume all clients have competencies and strengths that can help them cope with and overcome their problems (Sousa, Ribeiro, & Rodrigues, 2006). They also involve helping the clients view their identity as separate from their current legal problems (Sousa et al., 2006).

The barrier to the strengths-based approach is that many professionals who serve clients are trained in a deficit or problem-based approach. Indeed, society in general is more problem-based or negatively focused, approaching life by identifying what is wrong. Detrimental effects of the problem-focused approach can include frustration (by both the professional and client), stigmatization, apathy, a greater dependency on social services, and disempowerment (Sousa et al., 2006). Strengths-based approaches go beyond the identification of the problem to also identify what is working or has worked in the past and what can be learned from the situation. Professionals then help clients identify and utilize their talents, values, competencies, skills, and knowledge to better their lives (Early & GlenMaye, 2000).

A law student must learn the subtle art of applying a strengths perspective. Out of context, the question “What good has come out of this?” or “How might you benefit from this bad experience down the road?” would only alienate an emotionally distraught client. Timing and subtlety are keys to the use of strengths perspective by attorneys. Seemingly insignificant comments, such as how bringing in necessary documents has moved the case along, can have a significant influence on how clients perceive their ability to help in resolving their legal problems, and therefore, their ability to be resilient in the face of the crisis. As their belief in their ability to overcome the problems increases, so will their motivation to engage in the representation process.

Example of how to teach strengths perspective in a law school setting. Subtlety and timing are two very difficult practice skills to teach. The benefits of praising clients for helping with the process and reinforcing the progress when gains in the case are made can be discussed in theory; however, the practice needs to become a subconscious habit and part of the future attorney’s natural approach to work with clients. The skill of applying a strengths perspective begs for the institutionalization of social work education and practicum experience in a legal curriculum so that students can practice work with real clients under the supervision of professionals trained in both law and social work.

Internalizing the skills needed to work from a strengths perspective requires teaching students to restructure how they view their clients. Legal educators often still use victim terminology when discussing clients. Approaching the clients from a strengths perspective means viewing the client as someone who can assist in legal advocacy rather than as a victim who should be passive in case development. Since paradigm shifts occur slowly, it is important to discuss the strengths perspective early in a course and to revisit the topic throughout the semester. Therefore, an exercise on client strengths should be given in one of the first class sessions. A scenario describing a typical client seen in a law school clinic can be provided. For example, a client of a poverty law clinic often arrives at the clinic crying. She appears underweight and has stains on her jeans. The first thing she asks is if you know of any food or clothing pantries nearby. She is late for her

appointment because her car broke down and she had to take the bus. When asked why she is seeking services, she responds that she has been denied TANF benefits unfairly. She says she documented every interaction she had with her county's social services office and she gives you a pile of folders. When you open them, the documents are barely legible and it is clear she only has about a third grade writing ability.

Ask students what they think about the client in the scenario. Students will generally respond that they feel sad for her, that she sounds pathetic and that they feel too overwhelmed by all the files to know where to start the process of helping her. Next, ask students if this client has any strengths she can bring to the case (a brief definition of strengths prior to this discussion would be helpful). Write the brainstormed list of strengths on the board. A non-exhaustive list of possible strengths includes:

1. She made it to the meeting. Her car broke down, but she found an alternative transportation method.
2. Though the first glance at the notes shows they are poorly written, they are meticulous. She documented each date so transcripts of phone conversations might be called into evidence.
3. She asked if you could recommend any food pantries or clothing resources. Though she appeared to have malnutrition she is interested in networking to find resources. She also wants to appear more professional in her clothing, which will be helpful in court.

After listing the strengths, a debriefing discussion should include issues of how to reframe the students' thinking about clients. Discussion should also cover how to encourage clients to focus on their resilience through subtle encouraging remarks, and how this can increase clients' motivation to actively engage in their representation. The exercise can be revisited in class discussions throughout the course and in supervision meetings with students as they begin internship duties with clients. This exercise can also overlap with systems theory and cultural competency. Systems theory can be seen in the client's desire to connect with other resources and lawyers should be ready to encourage this sign of resiliency with a guidebook of resources. Cultural competency can also be addressed by increasing student empathy for clients who are different from themselves.

BARRIERS TO TRANSDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION

The two primary barriers to implementing transdisciplinary education are differences in teaching pedagogy and differences in professional ethics. Differing pedagogy results in varying educational cultures, which makes a deviation from institutionalized teaching styles difficult to implement. Additionally, lawyers and social workers are bound to different professional ethics and duties, and these differences must be understood by the social work educator who steps into the legal classroom.

Differences in Culture and Pedagogy

Some of the differences between the educational culture of schools of law and social work are immediately clear upon observation through the classroom design, dress, and student-professor interactions. However, Taylor (2006) conducted a systematic study of the pedagogical differences between law and social work. She separately observed law and social work classes to assess social interactions, educational techniques, and group dynamics in both disciplines. Data collected involved different aspects of the social work and law classrooms, such as dress, language, layout of classroom, length of class, teacher-instructor interactions, and type of classroom instruction. She concluded law instruction tends to be lecture-based, focuses on summarization of cases, places little emphasis on personal reactions to course material, and allows little time for class discussion. Social work instruction, in contrast, is discussion-based, focuses on personal reactions to material, and allows a great deal of time for class interaction. With the variations in culture and pedagogy, it will be difficult for a social work instructor to be accepted as a legitimate educator in a law school.

Beyond the basic differences in legal and social work education, legal education itself may make acceptance of varying pedagogies difficult. As Weinstein (1999) states, "Legal education, with its mission to train students to think like lawyers, indoctrinates the narrow focus and confined boundaries of linear thinking that define traditional law practice" (p. 340). This can further hinder openness to perspectives from other disciplines or alternative forms of pedagogy (Weinstein, 1999). However, it is exactly this type of narrow consideration of issues and clients that transdisciplinary education aims to overcome. If collaboration is implemented at the university level, prior to student solidification of professional boundaries, the culture will slowly shift as each new class graduates.

Differences in Ethics and Duties

Social workers and attorneys are each bound by a code of ethics established by laws and professional organizations. There are two primary differences between the professions' standards. First, attorneys and social workers are bound by differing ethical standards regarding client confidentiality and privileged information. The issue of confidentiality is most salient in cases of suspected child abuse. Privileged information rights are trumped by child abuse mandatory reporting laws for social workers, but attorneys are not required to mandatorily report child abuse (St. Joan, 2001). The issue has been addressed by law firms that hire social workers and several models for resolution have been developed. For example, social workers may be categorized as employees for the firm in some states, in which case the privileged information standard for attorneys is extended to the social workers (St. Joan, 2001). Alternatively, a model in which clients are informed that social workers and attorneys will be sharing information on their case and mandatory reporting laws are explained can be utilized (St. Joan, 2001).

The second major differentiation between the professions involves to whom the professional is responsible when working with clients (Galowitz, 1999). For example, social workers may represent multiple family members with different or conflicting

interests. They may serve as the family advocate, child protective investigator, foster-placement worker, or parent worker (Weil, 1982). The interests of the parents may differ greatly from what is in the best interest of the children, and social workers are expected to help families as a whole. Lawyers, on the other hand, often represent only one client, not the entire family (Weil, 1982). It is imperative any social work educator teaching law students be aware of the differences, which vary by state, and incorporates these differences into lesson plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Law schools prepare students to practice law in the form of developing legal arguments, but they do not prepare students to practice with real clients from whom they must procure the necessary information to prepare the legal arguments. It is imperative students be trained in interviewing and goal setting in order to provide the best services possible. Thus, social work is a discipline with an abundance of knowledge and practice tools to offer law students. To ensure law students graduate prepared to counsel clients, the authors recommend several additions to traditional law school curricula. First, mandatory interviewing and counseling courses taught by social work educators should be implemented. Second, law students should be required to complete practicum hours with supervision by practicing professions from multiple disciplines. Finally, implementation of these transdisciplinary curricula adjustments should be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness with regard to student learning outcomes, client service outcomes, and longitudinal use by lawyers after graduation.

Most law schools offer elective courses on interviewing and/or counseling, but these classes are generally taught by practicing attorneys who have learned their skills in practice rather than from instruction on techniques grounded in empirically-based best practice approaches. The authors recommend that these courses be taught by social work educators, or possibly co-taught with both a legal educator and a social work educator. Furthermore, we recommend the courses be mandatory rather than elective since all attorneys will have to interact with clients regardless of their specific area of practice

It may also be beneficial to consider the implementation of a mandatory practicum for law students under the direction of both a law and a social work educator. Students could greatly benefit from supervision from experienced professionals while working with clients during their education. Otherwise beginning attorneys' first experience working with clients could be at a firm, where superiors have their own heavy caseloads and little time for mentorship. A practicum is an important part of several practice-based professional schools, such as medicine, social work, and physical therapy. The lack of practical training in law schools is incongruent with the realities of the profession.

The authors also recommend the transdisciplinary education approaches be monitored to ensure implementation is accepted by students, faculty, and university administration. The courses and practicum should also be evaluated for learning outcomes of students to see if students both perceive themselves to be prepared for practice and can demonstrate appropriate use of social work approaches. For example, law students could be pre and post tested with an interviewing skills assessment tool.

Finally, longitudinal data should be collected to assess whether law school graduates continue to utilize social work approaches to practice after graduation.

The time has come for social workers to advocate for themselves. We have effective and useful knowledge, values, and skills to offer other disciplines. Clients will be better served if attorneys are trained in basic social work approaches to practice. Lawyers will be able to better assist clients, and they will know when and how to refer client issues beyond their professional scope to social workers. We have much to offer law schools and it is time we told them.

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