

Editorial: Innovations in Social Work

Margaret E. Adamek

Social work is a diverse, growing, and dynamic profession with new areas of practice emerging all of the time. In the Fall 2018 issue of *Advances in Social Work* we are pleased to present 14 manuscripts--11 empirical, 3 conceptual--written by 38 authors from 13 states across the U.S., representing the East Coast (CT, FL, MA, NY), the Midwest (KY, IL, IN, MN), the West (CA, ID, OR) and the South (LA, MS). Three papers address cutting-edge issues relevant to social work **research**, five papers present innovations related to **teaching**, and seven papers present **practice-related** advancements. A diverse array of topics are addressed including public access to research, social work in libraries, young minority fathers, social work supervision, virtual teaching, resilience of MSW students, perinatal depression, text-based crisis counseling, gun safety, civic engagement, depression education for high schoolers, SBIRT implementation, evidence-based practice, and self-care among social workers. We are privileged to offer the contribution of these scholars and practitioners to advancing the knowledge base of the profession.

Research Innovations

Based on her expertise as a social work librarian, *Pendell* questions the ability of social work practitioners to fully carry out research-informed practice when their access to published research is largely restricted by paywalls. Finding that over half of a random sample of articles from the top 25 social work journals did not offer full-text access, Pendell encourages social work authors to publish in open access journals and use full-text digital repositories.

Provence reviews public library policies that treat individuals experiencing homelessness as problem patrons, essentially criminalizing homelessness. In support of the trend of public libraries hiring social workers, Provence calls for schools of social work to partner with public libraries to assess the needs of patrons, particularly those with social service needs, so that public libraries can be inclusive and supportive of all patrons.

Young minority fathers are another underserved population. To enhance services to this population, *Mogro-Wilson, Loomis, Hayes, Drake, Martin-Peele, and Fifield* conducted face-to-face interviews with young fathers participating in a larger RCT of a fatherhood intervention to examine their perspectives on recruitment and retention strategies. The young fathers preferred non-traditional strategies such as intensive community outreach, culturally competent recruiting specialists, and flexible contact methods.

Teaching Innovations

Pedagogical innovations in social work are typically designed for BSW students *or* MSW students. One school included an experiential exercise in a BSW practice course that involved MSW students as peer supervisors. Each BSW student was matched with an

Margaret E. Adamek, PhD, Professor and Editor, *Advances in Social Work*, Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, IN 46202, madamek@iupui.edu

Copyright © 2018 Author, Vol. 18 No. 4 (Fall 2018), ii-iv DOI: 10.18060/22908



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

MSW student who was taking a course on supervision. *Fisher, Simmons, and Allen* used mixed methods to evaluate the semester-long supervisory exercise. The goal of the exercise was to help BSW students be better prepared to take advantage of supervision once they entered their field placements.

While literature on strategies for effectively engaging students in online courses has grown tremendously, there is much less attention to the need for community among online instructors. *Schwartz, Weiss, and Wiley* describe a variety of institutional and programmatic interventions designed to promote community and collaboration among faculty who teach virtually. Creating strategic opportunities for virtual and ground-based faculty to connect both informally and formally has the potential to foster a culture of inclusivity, connection, and a productive community of practice.

Acknowledging that many students come to social work education with substantial trauma histories, *Thomas and Beecher* conducted a study to examine the association between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and resilience in a sample (n=139) of MSW students. Interestingly, their data showed a positive relationship between higher ACE scores and resilience. Social work educators are called to acknowledge risks associated with students' avoidant coping and provide learning experiences aimed at developing students' capacities for increased awareness and acceptance of challenging experiences—their own and others.

A sample of 177 MSW students from five public universities in California were surveyed by *Goyal and Han* regarding their course instruction related to perinatal depression (PD). Less than one in five acknowledged receiving such training which is concerning given the well-documented association of PD with child abuse/neglect and domestic violence. To promote maternal and infant well-being, Goyal and Han advocate for content on early PD screening, identification, and referral to be incorporated into both MSW curricula and continuing education.

Practice Innovations

In our increasingly digital world, providers need to be adept at meeting the needs of clients using various technology formats. *Nesmith* examined the counseling process between young adults seeking crisis intervention and providers who use a texting format for counseling. The privacy and flexibility afforded by texting might lead some individuals to seek help who might otherwise avoid face-to-face intervention. Nesmith encourages the development of best practices for texting-based crisis intervention.

Logan-Greene, Sperlich, and Finucane argue that social workers are in an excellent position to encourage gun safety with at-risk populations such as families with children, families experiencing violence, and individuals at risk of suicide. Their review of social work sources indicates that clinical guidelines and research on preventing gun violence has lagged in social work compared to other disciplines.

Service-learning is an increasingly popular pedagogical approach. *Lim, Yang, Maccio, and Bickham* explored the utility of service-learning compared to traditional-learning methods in advanced policy courses. Service-learning may be used not only to enhance

policy practice efficacy, but also student engagement and enthusiasm in relation to policy advocacy.

Peers are a strong influence in adolescence. While typically we think about peer influence among youth as a negative force, *Kelly, Freed, Kubert, and Greibler* demonstrate how peer influence can be leveraged as a tool for combatting depression and preventing suicide among youth. They report on their evaluation of the intervention, *Real Teenagers Talking about Adolescent Depression*, a video-based classroom discussion intervention created by social workers, parents, and youth. Ultimately, building mental health awareness in school communities is critical to helping to prevent depression and suicidal behavior.

Evidence-based protocols such as SBIRT are heralded as best practices in working with individuals facing substance addiction. However, the effectiveness of such protocols may be compromised by a lack of congruence to model fidelity. *Vinjamuri, Ogen, and Kahn* examined how social work faculty, student, and fieldwork instructor approaches to using the evidence-based SBIRT protocol affected implementation and model fidelity. Efforts to find a fit between the protocol, settings, and professional approaches to social work often led to implementation but questionable model fidelity. Repeated exposure to new material and opportunities to engage with it, having specific tools, and supporting learners' efforts to uphold social work values can promote faithful implementation.

Chonody and Teater explored social workers' perceptions of evidence-based practice (EBP) as either a process, a product, or some combination. Given the centrality of EBP in social work and based on their findings, Chonody and Teater recommend that instruction on the *process* of EBP be offered as mandated continuing education hours, much like ethics has been added as a requirement in some states.

Self-care is one of those things that we all know we need to do, and yet many of us fail to prioritize in our lives. *Miller, Lianekhammy, and Grise-Owens* examined the self-care practices of over 1,000 social workers, finding only moderate involvement in personal or professional self-care. If social workers are to excel in caring for others, we must find ways to take better care of ourselves in the process.

We hope that our readers find value in this set of empirical and conceptual papers as we endeavor to contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge in social work. In this issue we have included acknowledgements of 139 individuals who reviewed manuscripts in 2018. These reviewers represent 6 countries, 33 states and 2 territories, and 71 different colleges or universities. Without their contribution to the manuscript review process, *Advances in Social Work* would not be possible.

In Memoriam

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the untimely passing of our colleague, Dr. Jim Hall, who served as both board member and reviewer for *Advances in Social Work* throughout his tenure at Indiana University School of Social Work. We are saddened by this loss, but are very grateful for his many contributions to the journal and to scholarship in the field. We are reminded of the fragility of life and the importance of each moment. Accordingly, we encourage all of us to intentionally value and support all those in our learning communities.