

Spring 2023 Editorial: “Intersectional Injustice”

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In the Spring 2023 issue of *Advances in Social Work*, we are pleased to present 12 papers written by 44 authors from different regions of the U.S. and Finland. Ten empirical studies and two conceptual/advocacy pieces offer new perspectives and findings on emerging areas of social work practice, policy, and education.

The title of this editorial, “Intersectional Injustice,” is borrowed from the lead article by *Leotti, Sugrue, Itzkowitz, and Williams* who point out the contradiction between social work’s core value of social justice and our complicity as a profession with state intervention in the lives of marginalized families through the current foster care system. Leotti and colleagues invite readers into a critical conversation about how to work collaboratively with families (as happened during the pandemic) with a focus on supportive and preventive interventions rather than relying so heavily on out-of-home placements.

“Multiply-Marginalized” Populations

In an effort to promote socially-just human services organizations, *Miller and Ball* collected data from 52 women and non-binary people of color regarding their experiences with microaggressions on the job. Acknowledging the role of “multiple marginalization” and “intersectionality” of employee identities, they found that employees of color in particular faced many stereotypical misperceptions by their co-workers. Miller and Ball call for human service organizations to offer training and establish policies that intentionally address workplace microaggressions.

Offering another contribution to our understanding of the impact of racial discrimination, *Seiler’s* study used a nationally representative U.S. sample to help us connect the dots between experiences of racial microaggressions, institutional racism, and minority stress. Seiler’s hope is that by acknowledging the deleterious impact of racism experienced by people who are Black in the U.S., macro-level health care policies and micro-level therapeutic interventions can be developed to counteract and ameliorate the harmful consequences of racial discrimination.

While jails and prisons are meant to be punitive and not rehabilitative, the impact of incarceration on families is rarely emphasized, especially for mothers. *Sutherby* collected data from 34 mothers who experienced both incarceration and an Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) program. Elevating their voices, Sutherby calls for social work to lend greater support and advocacy for mothers in conflict with the law through non-carceral approaches that allow mothers to receive help with addictions, past trauma, and parenting.

Another marginalized population in the U.S. is low-income Spanish-speaking adults with learning disabilities. In order to improve access to needed benefits and interventions, *Cordón and colleagues* tested 3 brief screening tools to determine which had the best

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predictive utility. A culturally-sensitive and validated LD screen will help ensure that social workers can better connect Latine clients with appropriate and legally required interventions.

Kirjavaninen and Jalonen point out the paradox of social media becoming a primary means of social interaction among youth and yet there are growing levels of loneliness and social withdrawal. Using Sen and Nussbaum's capability approach to frame the phenomenon of social withdrawal among youth in the digital age, Kirjavaninen and Jalonen analyzed posts on a popular discussion forum among Finnish youth. Their findings highlight the exclusion felt by many such youth and point to social media as a potential bridge for social services providers to reach socially withdrawn youth.

Innovations in Social Work Education and Practice

We live in an increasingly digital world. *Bibbs and colleagues* consider how social work's ongoing relationship with technology necessitates that we evaluate and re-envision how tech ethics create, shape, and transform social work practice. In this contribution, Bibbs and colleagues introduce a tool—the Ethical OS—to help social workers thoughtfully consider the technology-related ethical issues that may arise in social work practice, education, and policy. Regular use of the Ethical OS can help practitioners to build coherent social work tech habits of mind.

Social work students are trained to offer resources to clients who experience food or housing insecurity. But what happens when our students themselves are food or housing insecure? *Gilster, Hein, Perruzzi, Conrad, and Croft* surveyed 125 BSW and MSW students at a School of Social Work in the Midwest and found that more than half experienced food or housing insecurity, sometimes with negative impacts on academic outcomes. Gilster and colleagues offer several suggestions for Schools of Social Work to address food and housing insecurity among their students.

As public libraries increasingly serve as a setting for social work practice, the boundaries and arenas of practice are undergoing development. To add to our understanding of this emerging area of practice, *Johnson, Paauw, and Giesler* investigated the perspective of social work interns placed in public libraries. While the participants noted several challenges including unclear boundaries, confusion about their roles, and physical space limitations, overall they appreciated the tremendous learning experience that came with helping to define the role of library social workers.

Does understanding systems of privilege and oppression translate into greater engagement in social and political activism? Based on a survey of over 300 MSW students, *Digby Franke* explored this question by making comparisons of students with different intersectionalities including gender, race, sexual orientation, and macro concentration. As Digby Franke asserts, "Without discussions about privilege and power, education about diversity and social justice falls short."

Using the EPAS self-studies from 16 BSW Programs as data, *Skeen* questions whether field education in social work fits Shulman's criteria for signature pedagogy. After presenting an historical overview of accreditation oversight of social work education,

Skeen offers a number of suggestions to ensure a bi-directional integration between classroom coursework and field education.

Life as we know it changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While mostly behind us, the repercussions of the pandemic persist—some negative, some positive. Just this week, a colleague reported being newly infected with the virus. *Sullivan, Hostetter, & Commodore-Mensah* interviewed 36 mental health professionals during the height of the pandemic in 2020 to learn about their experiences and impressions of transitioning to telehealth. After overcoming the initial challenges of learning to offer virtual services, many study respondents embraced telehealth and were able to articulate several unexpected benefits since as reaching more clients and connecting them with providers in a more timely manner. While the pandemic forced a transition to virtual services, the potential of telehealth in the future is ever-evolving.

Passing the Baton

With the next issue of *Advances in Social Work*, I will be passing the baton as Editor to Dr. Carol Hostetter as I take on a new administrative role at the Indiana University School of Social Work. Dr. Hostetter has capably served as a Guest Editor for our sole double-issue of *Advances in Social Work* as well as a reviewer for several years. I am confident that *Advances in Social Work* will continue to thrive under her leadership. I appreciate the camaraderie with the AISW team including authors, reviewers, board members, and guest editors and of course our staff: Valerie Decker, our Managing Editor as well as our editorial assistant, Michael Hernandez, our statistical consultant, Dr. Jieru Bai, as well as our OJS Support, Ted Polley, who has helped us stay abreast of developments with open access publishing. Serving as Editor since 2015 has greatly enriched my career as well as my teaching about scholarly writing and publishing. Best wishes to the AISW Team moving forward!