Spring 2025 Editorial:
Navigating the Academy, Educational Processes, and Practice Innovations

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In the Spring 2025 issue of ***Advances in Social Work,*** we begin with a critical view of standard research practices in the academy. Then we investigate racism, well-being, pedagogy, culture wars, executive coaching, and eco-friendly conferences in social work education. In our section on social work practice, 10 articles address aiding people from a wide range of backgrounds. Authors write about issues for people who are elderly, transgender, incarcerated, marginalized, traumatized, struggling with recovery, considering self-harm, or needing child protection support. Social workers ourselves are the focus of three articles, whether experiencing compassion fatigue, experiencing inequities in clinical supervision, or experiencing challenges in interprofessional teams. Understanding ways to support the profession is valuable as the profession grows and develops.

Biases in Research

Lauve-Moon, Devlin, Lewright, Lee, Abbott, Elizondo, and Bacon raise concerns about the extent to which mainstream social work research investigates the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people and the systems that oppress them. Through a content analysis of major journals, they reveal the alarming paucity of research on the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people.

Along the same vein, ***Carlson, Wright, Bagwell-Gray, Mendenhall, Diaz, McCall, Williams, Akin, and Banda*** share what members of several research teams experienced while engaging in a research team practice that was intentionally anti-racist. The authors call for a critical understanding of the role of academia in oppressive systems so that social work research can disrupt racist systems in academia.

The article by ***Ogbonnaya, Lechuga-Peña, Jiwatram-Negrón, Mitchell, Crudup, Ignacio, Billiot, and Mendoza*** provides evidence about the ways race and racism lead to undervaluing BIPOC scholarship, and how BIPOC scholars with intersecting identities are doubly undervalued. They call for social work educators to adopt anti-racist policies and practices.

Education

Education is consistently an area of investigation for *Advances in Social Work.* In our first article in this group, by ***Joseph-McCatty, Goodkind, Garrett, and Joyner***, the authors used classroom observations in a U. S. secondary education to reveal unequal discipline and classroom management practices for Black girls. This is consistent with national trends

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showing Black girls are three times more likely to be suspended than their peers, and shows the pervasiveness of inequality based on racism.

Duhaney, Lorenzetti, Halvorsen, and Han used survey methodology to center the voices of Black college students' views on racism on their campus. The case study revealed a variety of responses, notably, that 50% of respondents indicated that they had experienced anti-Black racism on campus. The negative emotional consequences, such as losing a sense of belonging and self-confidence, are documented.

Surveys by *Shaffer, Houser, and Hembree* measured the levels of anxiety and empathy of social work students, revealing a correlation between anxiety and empathy for the students. The authors recommend that social work educators keep this in the forefront when planning curricula and practicum placements. Students can learn skills to manage their feelings so that they can be available to help others.

Critical relational pedagogies, which emphasize relationship-building and the co-creation of socially just spaces, are promoted by *Iacono and Loveland*. In this critical reflexive paper, the authors reflect on their practices with helping social work students in the mental health challenges discussed in the previous piece. They share insights and pragmatic strategies to enhance teaching in social work education.

Continuing the theme of facing the emotional and psychological stressors social work students often encounter, *Nahar, Wagner, Colvin, and Ricks* interviewed social work majors at two Hispanic Serving Institutions. They sought to understand, through the lens of planned behavior theory, students' perceptions and responses to the online learning required during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ortega-Williams, Mustaq, Davoodzadeh, Isles, Anwar, Hidalgo-Ruiz, and Soler reimagined the concept of rigor in social work education in the era of ChatGPT. Reflections from students and educators about the meaning of assignments that are alternative to papers were shared, with an eye to increasing creativity, social justice, and relevance to the field of social work.

A reflection on the experiences of social work PhD students who are preparing to teach was presented by *Goldsborough, Champagne, and Bietsch*. Through this collaborative autoethnography, the authors shared key themes such as navigating role and identity transitions, the value of community, the need for enhanced institutional support, and the role of educators as gatekeepers.

Culture wars appear to be everywhere in the U.S. these days, and social work education is no exception. *Davis and VanCamp* surveyed 35 social work educators to examine their perceptions of the effect of culture wars on programs, students, and faculty. Their findings indicated significant implications for teaching where social work values clash with institutional values or political influences.

Watkins discussed the importance of executive coaching for social work faculty, purporting that social work faculty face unique challenges that demand academic expertise, strong leadership, and management skills. Benefits for faculty's research, teaching, and service responsibilities are presented.

Kang, Gounder, Weatherly, Jankowski, and Reyes Mason wrap up our section on education with their study of the environmental impact of attending academic conferences. Using data from SSWR 2023, they estimate that the average air travel carbon footprint for an individual presenter was 0.82 tonnes of carbon emissions. They provide alternative conference models, such as virtual and hub and node models, and state that our values for social justice and activism require us to consider the effects of our travel.

Practice

Switching to the group of articles which addressed issues in social work practice, we first find work by ***DeLiema and Sommers***. The authors summarized research on the costs of elder financial victimization and advocate for person-centered and trauma-informed interventions. They presented ways that social workers can improve the lives of elder financial exploitation victim-survivors using trauma-informed psychotherapy, engagement with others, and advocacy.

Luquet, Redcay, Counselman-Carpenter, and Gunn examined the impact of social, legal and medical transition psychological distress for transgender persons. Using survey data, the authors found that each stage of transition can serve as a protective factor to increase overall well-being. They also found that improving access to services supporting transition can reduce psychological distress.

Scott's article also addressed identity issues, although of a different sort. The conceptual paper asserted that culture and identity impact clients' experiences of trauma, and provided guidelines for the inclusion of identity-based factors in culturally responsive trauma assessment. Scott also discussed culturally responsive trauma assessment approaches, which include an exploration of identity disruption and displacement as an important dimension.

Trauma was the subject of the next article, by ***Baldwin-White***. The concern was that students of color are at an increased risk of experiencing sexual assault, and are more likely to have worse outcomes due to the trauma compared to White students. Secondary data analysis was used to reveal that there is a significantly higher prevalence of sexual assaults for students of color, and that the impact of trauma for students of color was greater as well.

Moulick, Mukherjee, and Abrams studied another type of trauma, that of burn injuries. This conceptual paper highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach acknowledging the importance of trauma-informed social work in addressing the complex physical and emotional needs of burn patients and survivors in both inpatient and community-based therapeutic settings.

People who have been incarcerated face challenges returning to life outside the prison system. ***Clarke and Allen-McCombs*** interviewed returning citizens, with the results revealing that social stigmas and economic, social, physical, and psychological deprivations are interconnected and compound the difficulties in reintegration. The authors expressed the need for social workers to develop macro-level infrastructure in communities to help with these challenges.

Much of social work practice deals with people experiencing substance use disorder. *Gallagher* explained the key symptoms of substance use disorder when it is a brain disease and points out that not everyone who has a substance use disorder also has the brain disease. Also, guidance was provided on when social workers should recommend abstinence or harm reduction as the recovery goal in clinical treatment planning, with examples of clinical treatment plans provided for curricula.

Heckert addressed the issue of suicidality by describing a practice model that social workers may adopt, which includes factors outside of the client in addition to the usual internal challenges. Using a case scenario, an example is given, embracing an ecological systems approach for the various roles within social work practice.

This qualitative study by *Tayebjee, Lewkowicz, and Isobel* examined the integration of lived experience workers, called parent supporters, into a Pregnancy Family Conferencing program designed for families facing child protection risks during the perinatal period. Through thematic analysis of perspectives from families, supporters, and professionals, the study found that lived experience roles enhanced engagement and brought benefits across multiple levels of the system.

The study by *Daşlı and Şimşek* investigated xenophobic attitudes among 436 healthcare professionals toward displaced migrants, using xenophobia and cultural intelligence scales. The findings showed that xenophobic attitudes were lower among those with diverse language skills, immigrant friends, relevant training, and high motivation, but higher among those concerned about disease transmission, with financial stress, or elevated metacognitive scores. The results underscore the need to consider these factors when designing social work interventions to reduce health inequalities for displaced populations.

Glassburn, Lay, and Canada's interpretative phenomenological analysis explored the lived experiences of compassion fatigue and burnout among twelve social workers who had personally encountered these challenges. Two central themes, moral distress and shame, emerged, highlighting underexplored emotional dimensions that can deepen the understanding and complexity of compassion fatigue and burnout. The findings suggest current approaches to social work education, self-care, and supervision may be insufficient to prepare or protect professionals from these deeply impactful experiences.

Clinical supervision is a critical requirement for social work licensure. The article by *Christensen* explored its role in shaping professional advancement and equity within the field. Barriers to obtaining supervision contribute to systemic inequities. Regulatory structures and supervision functions were analyzed, and recommendations were given such as reducing costs, enhancing training, and integrating supervision content into social work education.

Lanteigne and Iancu conducted a qualitative study exploring the experiences of 35 health care and social work practitioners working in interprofessional teams across urban and rural settings in New Brunswick, Canada. They sought to understand various aspects of the interprofessional collaboration experience for workers in different practice settings. Findings identified individual, relational, organizational, and systemic factors influencing interprofessional collaboration.