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Developing a Peer Mentor Program for African American First Generation and Low-Income College Students: A Social Justice Service Project

Adrian Rodriguez, Ph.D.
California State University Fullerton – Department of Human Services

Abstract

This presentation reviewed the development of a peer mentor program for African American First Generation and Low Income (FGLI) students at a southeastern predominantly white institution (PWI). African American students attending PWIs experience multiple challenges related to ethnic identity that impact their sense of belonging and persistence rates. In addition, the first generation and low income subset of this community face additional experiences of marginalization that increase their likelihood of attrition. Evidence based practice (EBP) guided by the tenets of social justice-focused research was utilized to create a training manual for preparing mentors to better meet the needs of this community at the PWI. This approach was selected as it empowers communities and decreases the chance of implementing culturally insensitive research practices. Focus groups were conducted with nine participants. A grounded theory analysis uncovered four themes related to peer mentoring needs for this community: 1) Similarities help adjust to diversity, 2) Authenticity and genuineness, 3) Guidance and advice, and 4) Forming connections. Recommendations for the development of a peer mentoring program for African American FGLI students at the PWI are discussed.

Introduction

Connecting communities with appropriate support is integral to the field of Human Services. Therefore, it is important to adequately address the most pressing issues confronting underserved populations. Through evidence-based practice (EBP), human services professionals are able to translate the best evidence from research, clinical expertise, and client preferences and values into a model for best supporting the needs of the communities being served (Connor, 2014). An EBP approach recognizes that the opinions of leaders in the field as well as clients in the community are often most helpful in translating theory to practice (Connor, 2014). A social justice-focused approach is an invaluable method to enhance this process. Theories of social justice-focused research recommend that researchers examine the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals within a community in order to benefit that population as well as the larger community as a whole. In doing so, a researcher can better relate the research problem to the needs of the community (Henderson, 2011; Samdahl, 1999) and minimize the chance of using research practices that are culturally insensitive (Rogers, 2012).

Through use of this approach, I identified a subset of African American students at a southeastern Predominately White Institution (PWI) who were both first generation and low income (FGLI) and thus may be viewed as a community in need of support. I engaged in a year-long service project where I provided assistance to a support program that served FGLI

students at the PWI. I developed my clinical question around the African American student FGLI contingent of students served by the support program and focused my literature review on African American FGLI populations in general. As recommended by Floyd (2014), I involved the African American FGLI students in 1) the identification of the research problem, 2) the determination of methodology, 3) the development and implementation of interventions, and 4) the evaluation and dissemination of results. The following article is not a formal research study but an overview of the best practices approach I utilized to develop a training manual for peer mentoring of African American FGLI students at the PWI.

Significance

Based on enrollment data at this southeastern PWI, of the approximately 23,000 undergraduates, about 1,500 identified as Black/African American. According to the university's data on persistence through graduation, this community was less likely to graduate within six years when compared to non-minority populations at a rate of approximately 55% to 63%, respectively. The lower graduation rates of this community of African American students indicated that there were issues related to student retention that needed to be further assessed. In considering how to define the African American community at the PWI, I found it helpful to adopt Cole's (2009) framework that requires that researchers seek answers to the following three questions: 1) Who is included within this category, 2) What role does inequality play, and, 3) Where are the similarities between groups? In practicing the tenets of Cole's (2009) framework, I considered which subgroups existed within the larger African American community at the southeastern PWI that may be most in need of support.

Social justice advocacy involves the development of projects that focus on those groups which tend to be excluded from the larger research because this allows us to better identify how race, class and other identities are shaped for all individuals (Cole, 2009), and this highlights how oppression is maintained through current practices and policies (Danso, 2015). Through a literature review on African American college students and perusal of existing campus services at the PWI that served members of this population, I decided upon a more specific subgroup to support through my service project. I determined that to practice social justice advocacy, it was most appropriate to center my support around the most vulnerable segment of African American students at this university, those who were also FGLI (Von Secker, 2009).

African American College Students

African American college students, when compared to their White counterparts, face many significant challenges while attending PWIs, including increased experiences of racial conflict, pressure to conform to stereotypes, and discriminatory treatment from faculty, staff, and teaching assistants (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Grier-Reed, 2013). The associated stress for this community creates an overall mistrust of campus agents, decreases help-seeking efforts, and makes it more difficult to adjust to campus life (Watkins, Green, Goodson, Guidry, & Stanley, 2007). Those individuals who persist cope with such stressors by utilizing informal networks with other African American individuals (e.g., faculty, staff, peers) on campus which has led to reductions in their overall distress at PWIs (Chiang, Hunter, & Yeh, 2004; Constantine et al., 2003).

More specifically, when African American students are able to develop these informal networks, they are better able to cope with the associated psychosocial stressors of attending a PWI, as these groups provide culturally significant alternatives to formalized mental health counseling interventions (Grier-Reed, 2013). However, as African American students are underrepresented at PWIs (Thompson, Gorin, Obeidat, & Chen, 2006), it can be difficult for them to find other individuals on campus who can relate to their experiences in order for these students to build the necessary social networks to deal with such stressors (Grier-Reed, 2013).

First Generation and Low-Income College Students

First generation (being first in the family to attend college) and low-income (as defined by national standards) individuals comprise about 24% of the college population across the nation (Engle & Tinto, 2008). The retention rates for FGLI college students is much lower than for other groups (Moore & Shulock, 2010). For example, Engle and Tinto (2008) found that within a 6-year time frame, FGLI students graduate at significantly lower rates than their non-FGLI counterparts: 11% versus 55%, respectively. This is due in part to the fact that FGLI individuals are less likely to have adequate academic preparation, less likely to get financial assistance from parents, and due to familial needs at home, are less able to get involved academically and socially on campus (Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Yeung, 2007; Schademan & Thompson, 2016).

Of the aforementioned issues, a lack of college readiness, or the need to take remedial coursework is of significant concern for this community (Baker, Clay, & Gratama, 2005). The persistence through graduation rates for African American and Hispanic/Latinx college students who require remedial coursework is lower than 30% (Von Secker, 2009). Thus, there is a need to address the low retention rates among FGLI students due to a myriad of challenges that make it difficult for them to navigate their academic journey.

Current Project

To address the needs of African American FGLI students at the PWI, I reached out to a campus support program that provided numerous services (e.g., tutoring, academic counseling, and academic success workshops) geared toward this community, where over 60% of the student members identified as both African American and FGLI. By connecting with this department I aimed to practice EBP by synthesizing my review of the literature with opinions of the leaders (e.g., director and professional staff in the department) to identify a clinical question regarding needs for this community (Connor, 2014).

Through discussions with the director and various staff members, I learned that their students had for quite some time requested a peer mentoring component. Through consensus with these individuals, I decided that engaging in a service project focused on peer mentorship would be the most helpful way for me to provide support to the community. Using a social justice-approach, I engaged in an emic investigation of the community, employing a grounded theory analysis of qualitative data gathered through focus groups to prepare a best practice peer mentor training manual.

Method

Participants

Nine students in the support program, all invested in the development of a peer mentor component, requested to participate in the focus group sessions. They were provided with informed consent forms, and consented to participate in the study. All participants identified as African American, first generation, and low-income status. Class standing included 1 first-year, fourfour juniors and four seniors, with four participants self-identified as female, and five as male. The mean age was 21 years old. Each participant also identified as having either 1) been a mentee in a prior formal mentoring program on campus or during high school, and/or 2) established an informal mentor relationship with a faculty or staff or with an older peer on campus or during high school.

Procedure

It is important to become involved in the lives of the community being investigated to ensure that one will uncover the best approach to helping its members (Floyd, 2014). I adopted an emic approach to investigation with the aim of respectfully obtaining the participant's viewpoints through repeated and mutually beneficial interactions (Hogan, 2013). To become fully immersed in the community and to build their trust in me, I spent four months engaged with students in the following ways: 1) attended weekly staff meetings, 2) operated the computer lab one day each week, 3) created an information session with invited faculty and advisors for students considering careers in a helping profession, and 4) attended events to celebrate students' accomplishments.

I engaged in informal interactions with over 30 student members during the four-month time period by spending time with them during study hours at the support program as well as interacting informally in the lounge area. These interactions led to the determination that an interview format was an appropriate way to best uncover needs related to peer mentoring. As noted by Danso (2015), to empower marginalized communities, it is important to utilize interview practices that align with their cultural norms. Further, this approach aims to minimize issues related to power and privilege of the researcher in their interactions with community members (Danso, 2015; Rubin & Babbie, 2014).

Students in the support program decided that a focus group would be the format most conducive to explain their experiences to others. They also contributed to the semi-structured interview protocol that included questions such as, 1) What did you do to form connections at [current PWI], 2) What would you expect from a mentor, and, 3) Who has been a mentor to you? Three focus groups were conducted, with three participants per group. Interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded using a digital recorder.

I recruited an ethnically diverse team of four undergraduate psychology majors that included two females and two males to assist in analysis of the data. Prior to initiating data analysis, I developed a reflexivity statement where I examined how my own identities, privilege, power, and biases might influence my interactions with the community and my interpretation of findings (Glesne, 1999; Jones, Torres, & Arminio., 2014). I identify my ethnicity as half African

American and half Mexican and Native American. I was a first generation and low income college student as well as a peer mentor during my undergraduate experience.

Professionally, I worked exclusively with first generation and low income college students as an academic counselor for over five years in another state prior to beginning this investigation. All of these factors influenced my motivation to conduct this study, and made it important for me to continually consider how my own biases and expectations might impact my interactions with the community and interpretation of findings. Each research team member also developed a reflexivity statement prior to beginning data analysis.

We utilized the Corbin and Strauss (2008) approach to grounded theory analysis of qualitative data, which has an emphasis on how meaning-making processes influence individuals' behaviors. This approach allowed for exploration of how past and present experiences with mentorship led these participants to request that a peer mentoring program be developed within their current support program. During open coding, the first step of the Corbin and Strauss (2008) approach, we utilized analytic triangulation (Patton, 2002). That is, every team member independently coded each transcript, followed by review of codes by the larger group. We concluded this process by reaching group consensus during weekly meetings on revised open code names.

The next step involved axial coding, where the team placed data into a timeline. This approach allowed us to illuminate the process by which mentorship resulted in academic and social benefits for the participants. Lastly, selective codes were identified to represent the emergent data. By the eighth interview, we determined that we had reached saturation of results, a point where no new material was being introduced. Through analysis of the ninth or final interview, we believed that we had gathered an exhaustive list of relevant results for this community. This data analysis process resulted in the development of four themes related to peer mentoring needs as explored in the results section.

Many efforts were taken to establish trustworthiness and credibility. For example, at weekly meetings, the team engaged in ongoing group discussions of reflexivity, including how our lived experiences might influence interpretation of each new finding we uncovered in subsequent weeks (Kimball, Moore, Vaccaro, Troiano, & Newman, 2016). At end of weekly meetings, we also wrote individual memos following Corbin and Strauss's (2008) recommendations. I utilized these memos to facilitate discussion of any group or individual reflexivity-related concerns that needed to be addressed before further interpreting data.

As a final step, I conducted member checks, in which I emailed participants with a provisional description of the results, as well as the complete transcript for their interview excerpts from their respective focus group session. Participants were given a two week time frame to review the results for accuracy. All participants responded. Each affirmed the results, and no one requested any changes or noted any omissions in their transcripts.

Findings

During the focus group sessions, participants reflected on their formal and informal experiences with individuals they considered to be mentors. Using the Corbin and Strauss (2008) method helped to undercover the process through which mentorship led participants to successfully navigate their undergraduate experience at the PWI. Through our analysis of data, four themes emerged related to the mentorship process. One theme that emerged was the

importance participants placed on having mentors with similar ethnic identities and/or demographic factors as themselves. A second theme reflected participants' desires to have mentors who were authentic in their own lives as well as in their feedback to participants. The third theme situated mentors as guides who utilize the developing relationship with participants to provide meaningful and tailored advice. The fourth theme captured how mentors and the supportive environments in which they were housed encouraged participants to get involved and establish new relationships with others across campus. Elaboration of these themes is provided below.

Similarities Help Adjust to Diversity

Participants noted that being a member of the support program provided them a unique opportunity to make connections with people who were similar to them in terms of ethnicity and FGLI statuses. Having staff and peers of similar ethnicity, and who could relate to their experiences, helped participants to establish a sense of safety, familiarity, and commonality as they transitioned to college. One participant wonderfully summarized this experience,

[The current support program] provided me the environment where there are other people I
>*could relate to who come from a similar environment. This helps me to deal with the*
>*diversity in the larger campus. Because I'm a non-traditional student, I don't see a lot of*
>*other people in my classes who look like me. But through study groups in [this program],*
>*I made friendships that carried on even after my classes end.*

Being members of a support program geared toward the needs of these participants also helped with their adjustment to the overall campus. Another participant described how he "feels more comfortable now when there aren't other black students in my classes or at lunch because I know I can come to [current support program] and be around my people."

In line with attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980), having a secure base from which to explore their environment ultimately encouraged some participants to "keep from staying with my own little group." They described the confidence that came from being a part of their current support program in facilitating their willingness to join clubs and make friends with others from different backgrounds. This desire to make connections outside of their support program is further discussed in theme four.

Authenticity and Genuineness

Another important consideration for effective peer mentoring support expressed in the interviews was the need to approach the mentor role from a place of authenticity. As one participant stated, "A mentor is someone who is real with you, helps you out…a mentor gives you the real picture and does not sugar coat." The establishment of a friendly connection where mentors were truthful about their own struggles was an important part of this theme, as participants find that this "helps to better prepare [theme] for reality." Through discussions with authentic mentors, participants were able to make better-informed decisions about topics such as courses to take, internships to pursue, and clubs and organizations to join. A participant discussed the benefit of having a mentor who held themselves accountable,

>*I liked how she [mentor in previous campus program] would not only help me identify*
>*options and different ways to reach a goal, but she would also practice what she*

preached…she would make sure she was doing those things too, and even let me know when she wasn't. We bonded over our struggles...I could go to her and just cry [smiles]…that was so nice!

Participants also appreciated receiving genuine feedback about the options they were considering. They appreciated when former mentors "took the time to learn about who I was as a person and tailored their advice to my strengths and my interests". This way, mentors were able to develop a better understanding of the bigger picture that impacted participants' needs and that shaped their reality. A participant highlighted the value of receiving such feedback,

My mentor really sympathized with me and what I was going through. He took time to get to know me and [pauses]…we sat down and looked at what really seemed realistic. I got really excited and had all these big plans after one of our conversations and he said, 'Woah, woah, let's not get crazy!" [laughs]. I trusted him and dialed it down a bit cause I agreed that I was wanting to take too many classes the next semester and I would still have a lot of family responsibilities too…and work.

This theme suggests that a very important skill for mentors to possess is the ability to be truthful to both themselves and to their mentees. This truthfulness helped participants connect with their mentors and readily receive their support. Therefore, it is critical for mentors to take the time to get to know the lived experiences of their mentees.

Guidance and Advice

Participants conceptualized mentors as individuals who take initiative to reach out and who consistently put in the effort to nurture and advance the mentor/mentee relationship. They described mentors as individuals that lead by example and provide advice and options regarding major and career concerns. It was very important to have a mentor within their own majors so that participants could obtain meaningful information about coursework, requirements and opportunities specific to the major, and related career options. A participant highlighted this,

To me, a mentor is someone you get to know…they help you out if you have questions. A mentor should be in the same college, and even better if in the same major so they can help me with concerns like what classes to take, and when I'm nervous about talking to the advisor. They can also share about the steps they took to move forward in the major, and talk about where they see themselves going in the future.

Advice giving should be meaningful and provided within a context of the developing relationship between the mentor and mentee. In order to develop this relationship, mentors should, according to one participant, "always be open and available…this makes you feel like you can come back to them." The following quote from a participant captures this theme in a precisely,

I think what's most important is guidance and respect. A mentor is aware of the whole picture. There's more than school going on for people…a mentor helps a person work through this. [The current support program] staff do this for me...they help me manage when things get overwhelming… they always help me find the best approach.

It was important that mentors took the initiative to get to know participants in order to provide advice that was developmentally, academically, and individually appropriate.

Forming Connections

Participants described how essential staff (as mentors) in their current support program had been in preparing them to form crucial connections with others on campus. They described staff as proactive in reaching out to them, and encouraging them to also approach faculty and staff in other departments. A participant described the benefit of this approach to mentorship,

> *The staff [current support program] are super hands-on so I didn't need to seek out much help from others. But they also encourage us to make connections with teachers and TAs [teaching assistants] in our majors. It was so easy to approach them [program staff] that approaching other staff and faculty got easier too…it helped making friends easier too.*

Those individuals who lived in the residence halls at the PWI also described how they were able to make meaningful connections in those environments. The residence halls provided open, homey spaces for studying, socializing, and informal interactions with approachable residence hall advisors that helped participants navigate homesickness during the transition to college. One participant captured this sentiment,

> *Living on campus has helped me to meet a lot of people. Especially the lounge area in the residence hall. I think that providing an open space where people could mingle informally is important. When I go to other parts of campus that don't have this, I tend to keep to myself.*

Another participant took a step further, and saw this welcoming environment as an opportunity to get further involved as a member of an organization,

> *Being in the res hall, I've made friends outside of my normal friend group. I saw advertisements about getting involved in the housing association and asked one of my friends who recommended getting involved. I've met a lot of good people because of this, and now I'm working in a leadership role as a member of the exec board.*

In addition to the residence halls, participants also described the feeling of being connected to their major as very important. By forming connections with faculty and teaching assistants within their major, and peers in their current classes, they became more aware of major-related organizations and activities and were more likely to join because of the connections they made within these departments. A participant described how this connection to the major led to her academic success,

> *I really love my major because I have good relationships with my professors and the TAs. They have given me a lot of resources and encouraged me to get involved. I am a member of three major clubs, and I made the Dean's list last semester!*

Overall, participants experienced anxiety and uncertainty related to transitioning to college and forming connections as do many individuals when beginning college. What was critical to the participants' success was their relationships with proactive mentors in supportive environments who utilized a nurturing approach to encourage formation of new relationships and exploration of new opportunities outside of the students' safe spaces.

Discussion

Implications

With EBP, after gathering evidence, it is important to determine the credibility and clinical significance of the results (Connor, 2014). To engage in this process, I critically appraised the results of the focus group sessions by comparing these findings with the results of existing literature on peer mentoring programs for African American students at PWIs. Much of the existing literature available regarding this specific topic was significantly dated, which suggests the need for continued exploration in this area. The available research described the multiple benefits of providing peer mentoring support to African American students as they transition to college (Brawer, 1996; Good, Halpin, & Halpin, 2000; Schwitzer & Thomas, 1998; Stolar & Cowles, 1992).

One such benefit involved teaching these individuals to navigate the racism and perceptions of racism that are unique to attending a PWI. For example, Good et al. (2000), assert that peer mentors helped to mitigate their African American mentees' experiences of stereotyping, ethnic isolation, and perceptions of racial discrimination. In the current service project, participants did not speak of overt racism on their campus; however, as theme one (Similarities Help Adjust to Diversity) described, participants shared feelings of isolation and difference across the university and expressed their gratitude for membership in a support program where they could be around others of similar backgrounds. Together, these findings suggest the importance of preparing mentors who share similar ethnic backgrounds to engage in conversations around feelings of loneliness as related to race and ethnicity should mentees describe such concerns. A related task would be for mentors to discuss ways that they have successfully managed such experiences during their college journey.

While Good et al.'s (2000) study also investigated peer mentoring for African American students at a southeastern university, the program they examined was housed within an engineering program whereas the current service project was not major specific. It is important that research studies consider how experiences and perceptions of racism may influence one's major of study, as some departments may appear more welcoming to students of color than others (Porter & Umbach, 2006). The current study did not delve into exploration of this consideration. Also, in Good et al.'s (2000) study, their findings focused on the positive impact providing mentorship had on the upper division mentors. Therefore, while not representative of the current service project's aim, the authors' findings influenced my decision to develop an assessment of peer mentors' growth and related learning outcomes as part of my overall recommendations.

In a study by Stolar & Cowles (1992), a peer mentoring program was described where African American and Hispanic males were selected to become peer mentors to high school students preparing for college. Similar to Good et al.'s (2000) study, emphasis was placed on the benefit of the program for the mentors. Tingson-Gatuz (2009) examined peer mentoring as it relates to leadership development for students of color at a large Midwest university and found that peers (other peer mentors) played an important role in advancing leadership skills for the participants (peer mentors). All three studies detailed how involvement in mentorship assisted

mentors in their own growth and development, but did not focus on the impact of these mentors' efforts on their mentees of color. The current service project places mentees' success as the ultimate goal. This is important in taking a social justice-focused approach because the mentees are considered more vulnerable than their mentors in terms of the power dynamics within the mentor-mentee relationship as well as regarding the mentees' level of expertise in navigating their campus.

Prior research asserts that first generation and low-income students across ethnic minority groups are more likely to pursue college to improve their financial situations, attend part-time, and work full-time while enrolled (Saenz et al., 2007). Consistent with existing research, all participants in the current service project spoke of the need to juggle multiple responsibilities, which included factors such as family responsibilities, work duties, and financial concerns. They valued mentors who possessed the skills related to successfully navigate their unique concerns. This is captured by the findings detailed in themes two (Authenticity and Genuineness), and three (Guidance and Advice).

The identified qualities of genuineness and authenticity are essential components of mentorship that must be considered when hiring mentors, and further nourished and honed through training activities. While these qualities may be difficult to ascertain in a hiring or selection process, it is important that support programs be aware of the value of selecting peer mentors for whom such traits can be further polished. Genuine and authentic mentors are able to establish trust with their mentees, who, as a result, will be more apt to follow their guidance and advice. Thus, African American FGLI students at the PWI will benefit most when their mentors are prepared to offer realistic advice, truthful feedback, and practice what they preach.

Offering valuable advice that is relatable to African American FGLI students is enhanced when individuals are also paired with individuals within their areas of study. For example, a study by Schwitzer and Thomas (1998) investigated the impact of peer mentoring on mentee retention for African American students at a PWI. The mentees received counseling support from upper division student mentors regarding first-year adjustment concerns. Schwitzer and Thomas (1998) suggested that the mentor-mentee relationships were successful in part because mentees described feeling more comfortable in raising their concerns about the transition to college when their mentors were around. Participation in the program led to mentees' development of advanced problem-solving skills, and a higher two-year retention rate than their nonparticipant counterparts. Findings from the current service project indicated that African American FGLI students were positively impacted through mentorship pairings with individuals within their majors. This suggests that it is crucial to recruit mentors from within the same field of study who can help with not only the common transition to college issues but also with the unique concerns and requirements related to the major.

Consistent with the final theme (Forming Connections), prior research also suggests that peer mentoring programs have helped African American FGLI students make connections with peers across campus. For example, Brawer (1996) investigated minority students in peer mentoring program, including African American students, and found that through participation, those individuals developed the skills necessary to form connections with other new peers on campus. In the current service project, one participant used her newfound ability to seek out and assume a leadership position as a member of the executive board at her residence hall. Other participants described comfort in the residence halls. While this promotes an idea of the

residence halls as a home away from home, this experience was not shared by students of color in a separate study.

Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, and Lewis (2012) examined racial microaggressions for students of color in residence halls at a PWI and identified four themes related to their experiences of the environment as negative. While they also examined focus group data, the purpose was to examine racial microaggressions across campus. In the current service project, participants did not describe negative experiences in the residence halls of their PWI. Conversely, they found it comforting to have common spaces in the halls where they could choose to connect with receptive staff and familiar peers in informal ways and at their own convenience. It is difficult to compare these two studies as participants in each study may have been primed to think about their experiences in the residence halls differently. What is important to consider is that for some students of color, universities may also provide additional places of support for students of color outside of the traditional support programs designed to meet their needs. Also, the spaces that some students of color may find supportive, others may not.

Participants in the current program not only discussed mentoring relationships with peers on campus and staff in their support program, but also shared how these mentoring relationships encouraged them to create new mentoring bonds with faculty. A study by Strayhorn and Terrell (2007) investigated the relationship between faculty-student mentoring and overall satisfaction in college for Black students. They found that faculty use of formal research-focused mentoring was helpful whereas an informal approach was not. In the current service project, participants did not describe the detail of their relationships with faculty but spoke of the value of meaningful interactions. It is important to note that Strayhorn and Terrell (2007)'s study involved an analysis of secondary data, whereas the current service project utilized a qualitative format that allowed for discussion of faculty mentorship to unfold organically.

Still, in light of such findings, as I developed the training manual, I found it important to consider the weight a training program should place on preparing mentors to engage in formal versus informal modes of interactions with their mentees. For example, I recommended that peer mentors, when offering guidance related to major requirements and career opportunities, might take a more formalized approach to mentorship, similar to a faculty member providing such advice. Whereas, to build the rapport necessary to develop trust, mentors might begin more informally, bonding over commonalities and sharing anecdotes of their own experiences at the university.

With social justice-focused advocacy it is necessary to keep the target community in mind when preparing findings for presentation. When conducting EBP, evidence gathered should be integrated with one's clinical expertise to prepare best practices for dissemination to the community (Connor, 2014). Also, based on the findings, community members and advocates should be able to develop concrete action strategies (Danso, 2015). To support this goal, I drew from my prior experiences as a peer mentor and academic counselor for FGLI students. Using this knowledge, I developed the findings from the focus group sessions into a training manual. The intent was to provide program staff with concrete steps to prepare peer mentors to adequately address the mentoring needs of the African American FGLI contingent.

My manual included the following components: 1) essential qualifications for mentor applicants, 2) training guidelines and goals for understanding the needs of African American FGLI students, 3) training guidelines and goals for advancing mentors' authentic interactions and advice giving, 4) overall program objectives, 5) learning outcomes for the mentor/mentee

pairing, 6) suggested evaluation and assessment approaches, and 7) environment and space considerations to facilitate formal and informal interactions. Both a social justice-focused approach and EBP recommend disseminating findings at venues, such as to community members (Connor, 2014; Van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c). Accordingly, at the conclusion of the study, I presented the peer mentor training handbook and my recommendations to the support program director.

Limitations

Although these findings are important and shed light on the needs of the African American FGLI students, there are several limitations to consider. First, although I set out to uncover whether there were unmet needs for African American students at a southeastern PWI that needed to be addressed. I decided to focus solely on the FGLI subset of this community. This approach excluded those African American students who did not fit the FGLI demographic. Such individuals may also have needs related to attending a PWI that were not explored because they were not included in the study. Secondly, I chose to reach out to a pre-existing program designed to support the needs of FGLI individuals. Thus, the participants were already being provided support services to assist in their adjustment to and persistence at the PWI. A third issue was that all but one of the participants had been students on campus for longer than one year, meaning they had more opportunities to develop approaches to successfully navigate their undergraduate experience. This may have shifted their initial perceptions of needs as well as facilitated changes in needs over the course of their time at the PWI. Had I chosen to focus specifically on African American FGLI individuals who were brand new to campus, and who were not invested in a support program, the findings may have been drastically different.

In line with a social justice-focused approach, I attempted to listen to the needs of the community by focusing on the peer mentoring program request that the director and staff at the support program shared. While this was my attempt to directly address community needs, I was working off secondhand information from the professional staff who worked with this population. This influenced how I spent my four months interacting with the community members as my ultimate goal from the start was to provide student-driven recommendations for a peer mentoring program. Also, I selected participants who expressed an interest in the development of a peer mentoring program, and I later learned that they had prior mentoring relationships with others. Had I interviewed community members with no prior experience as mentees and/or with no identified interest in the addition of a peer mentoring component to their support program, results may have greatly varied. My overall approach may have impacted my ability to uncover other unmet needs for the African American FGLI students that went unconsidered.

Lastly, my own similarities to the community in terms of demographics and my prior experiences as a peer mentor strongly influenced my desire to assist in the development of a peer mentoring program for this community. Thus, my belief in the inherent value of peer mentorship may have influenced how I interpreted findings. As mentioned beforehand, I undertook multiple steps to reflect on my related biases throughout the project. Future considerations should include: 1) an examination of the needs of African American students who are early in their transition to college and compare results with their counterparts who are at later points in their undergraduate career; 2) examine whether there are differences in needs between those African

American students who identify as FGLI and those who do not; 3) and consider how the needs of African American FGLI students actively involved in support programs may differ from their counterparts not enrolled in such support programs. Finally, it may be helpful to investigate the experiences of African American FGLI students at PWIs in other parts of the country to see how their needs may differ by geographic location.

Conclusion

This social justice-focused service project explored the peer mentoring needs for African American FGLI students at a southeastern PWI. The results suggest that the most important aspect of mentorship for this community is being paired with an individual who is similar in terms of identity, experiences, and major of study, as this facilitates the development of a personal relationship with another person on campus. Secondly, this process is best facilitated by providing a supportive space for informal interactions with such individuals. In order to safely explore our worlds, Bowlby (1980) suggests we need to have a secure attachment to a primary caregiver. This way we can turn to this person for safety and support when things get difficult. Individuals who are trained to become mentors can provide this security, bridging the connections between home culture and campus culture.

When mentors can relate to the needs of the population they are serving, they are more sensitive to how such needs impact one's ability to succeed in college. Additionally, because they can understand how external demands uniquely influence the academic experiences for African American FGLI students, they can provide the necessary and relevant encouragement when students become discouraged. Mentors can share their own tools for stress management when guiding mentees' exploration of best approaches to overcoming obstacles. The outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship should ultimately include the development of the mentee's increased confidence and increased self-efficacy in their ability to 1) establish meaningful connections with individuals across campus, 2) become involved in major and other campus-related activities, and 3) make informed decisions about how to navigate college and prepare for the next steps after graduation.

Through this service project, I have presented a social justice-focused approach to investigating the peer mentoring needs of African American FGLI students at a PWI. The findings present an approach to conceptualizing peer mentorship through the needs of this marginalized community. Programs geared toward this community must not be based on what professionals think is best for the African American FGLI community at PWIs but rather grounded in the voices of these community members regarding their perceptions of and experiences with mentorship. To effectively meet the needs of this community calls for the preparation of peer mentors from similar backgrounds and in similar fields of study to provide these individuals with authentic and genuine guidance and advice in welcoming settings. It was a pleasure and a privilege to be welcomed into the lives of the participants and their larger community at the university. I hope that these findings might also help to advance the exploration and conceptualization of peer mentoring support for African American FGLI students across a variety of academic settings.

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The Circle of Mental Health: "Take it to the Streets"

Dr. Elaine M. Barclay, Ph.D.
Walden University

Abstract

Many communities have deficiencies that contribute to dysfunction in family systems. Communities are complex. For example, there are many different cultures with their own understanding of what family is. Communities are also constantly evolving. Additionally, people with many life challenges may become overwhelmed to the point they cannot problem solve.   Although community resources are available to meet needs, understanding how to obtain and apply such resources seems missing. Lack of understanding prevents getting resources to the community for their benefit. This paper will examine how education contributes to self-care, trust, and integrity for human services professionals who desire to increase community resources. Lastly, I suggest a solution for change based on integrating these elements. Thus, professional knowledge "taken to the streets" is a source for improving communities in the circle of mental health treatment.

The Circle of Mental Health: "Take it to the Streets"

The National Organization for Human Services (NOHS) Code of Ethics begins by addressing our responsibility to clients. Standard One reports how human service professionals are to recognize and build on client and community strengths (NOHS, n.d.). The code of ethics begins with a professional self-awareness to build the client within community. Professionals operating from a base of self-awareness, courage, and a willingness to progress can start a domino effect towards increased function in family systems and improved communities, overall. Providing guidance for those facing mental limitations requires professionals to be willing to do their own work during the process. The Human Service (HS) professional must provide an understanding that change will not occur within a short amount of time. Instead, clients will need to embrace the process while continuing to work toward a set of goals that may aid them back to a place of peace. In addition, considering the integration of community resources with education in treatment is vital. Ethical human service practice requires introspection along with the ability to apply education and knowledge of community resources. Maintaining a balance with taking care of one's self is essential to providing services that uphold the standards of the HS code of ethics.

The following discussion will provide an overview of how professional balance and self-care are foundational to serving communities. Unethical practices will occur if HS professionals do not adhere to Standard One of our code of ethics. This goes beyond being aware of the community connections but also includes knowing how to link the community connections with clients. This connection assists the client on a path of wellness and persists when they return to their individual surroundings. Below, I discuss how self-care, trust, and

integrity benefit from a professional's personal commitment to an ever-increasing knowledge base.

Self-Care

If human services practitioners do not maintain self-care, they will be susceptible to burnout. Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) stated many teachers, professors, and human service professionals are vulnerable to burnout due to the demands of the job and negative interactions with colleagues and administrators. These factors may result in practitioners choosing to leave the field of human services. Additionally, when a person is experiencing feelings of burnout they may not provide the best practices towards those they are serving (Aloe et. al., 2014). Practitioners functioning with high burnout symptoms provide a disservice to the communities they serve.

Everyone faces a certain amount of stress on a daily basis regardless of the socioeconomic status or level of degree a person may have. This further illustrates the importance of all helping professionals being intentional towards daily self-care. Self-care protects the human service professional from burnout. Additionally, being intentional with maintaining a self-care regimen can provide an example of balance and trust for those served in the community. Properly educating the community on self-care can produce higher levels of well-being and empowerment. Education on self-care assists in navigating life challenges for everyone.

Trust

Building trust is a main component in moving toward positive mental health. Trusting to reach out for help is difficult for hurting people. Reaching out for initial assistance can produce feelings of humiliation for many people. The following mental health limitations are just a few examples that may present complications for individuals in reaching out for professional assistance (Miller, Orellana, Briggs, & Quinn, 2014):

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Flashbacks
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Suicide attempts
- Stress related health problems
- Anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Irrational thoughts
- Major depressions

Trust does not come easily for many individuals with such mental health limitations. In addition, negative experiences with helping professionals in the past may further decrease their

trust in getting help. Therefore, the professional must do what they can to build a bridge of trust with help-seekers. One essential skill to trust building is multicultural awareness.

It is vital to be multi-culturally educated to build trust with clients. Without multicultural education, HS professionals may inadvertently act in ways that exploit, oppress, or exclude clients. Instead, equality is a necessary component to developing a trusting relationship while serving the multi-cultural population (Manzanillo-Manalo, & Manalo, 2014). Additionally, helping professionals should consider the micro, mezzo, and macro environment of a person when connecting specific services to meet their needs. This continues a positive cycle of trust building with the client. Through such an experience, people in their communities may become stronger through provided services as trust continues to evolve. Not only is trust essential when serving the various communities, but integrity is a necessity when connecting the families to the specific services.

Integrity

Integrity is important to human services practice. It is actually a form of dishonesty when human services professionals lack training to intervene in presenting problems, yet they persist with treatment. This may even occur unknowingly. HS practitioners are not honest with themselves if they fail to self-evaluate for skills and abilities. Additionally, a lack of accountability in the profession may contribute to diminished integrity of providers. It is the responsibility of the provider to assess personal abilities of professional practice. Lack of self-knowledge impedes treatment and may unwittingly produce poor outcomes. Conversely, a human services professional with integrity is knowledgeable about themselves, their clients, and available resources. They are honestly assessing their day-to-day interactions.

 HS Professionals show integrity when they stay up-to-date on practice. There are many opportunities for HS professionals to obtain continuing education classes. Education allows greater sensitivity to problems. There is a greater chance of recognizing specific problems that can assist the HS professional in a treatment planning. Families are looking to be relieved of their presenting problems. When families make the choice to seek assistance, they expect integrity from professionals. This includes knowledgeable practice.

Knowledge of community resources is another important aspect of service integrity. Knowledge of a wide array of community resources provides a clear direction for deciding which specific resource is useful for each family. It is not enough to provide *a* referral – standard of care requires the *best* possible resources for clients. It is impossible for an uninformed human service professional to provide the best for clients. Instead, the best care requires the best knowledge of services. The HS professional gains comfort from knowing that knowledgeable service is service with integrity. This form of integrity provides the professional hope toward relieving family distress.

Solutions Toward Change

When HS practitioners choose to serve, they must prioritize self-care, trust, and integrity. It is unwise for helping professionals to avoid self-care. Burnout is a high risk for our profession and preventative self-care is necessary. HS workers also must work to build trust with those they serve. There is a certain level of vulnerability when seeking assistance. It is the HS practitioner's responsibility to form bridges of trust with clients. Additionally, integrity is foundational for connecting specific services to meet the needs of the families. Making self-care, trust, and integrity a priority for all helping professionals can best serve the family unit within communities.

Being aware of community needs and resources is a necessity for helping professionals. In many cases, lack of knowledge of community resources can add to poor outcomes (Barclay, 2016). Further, if knowledge is not applied, it cannot help in solving community challenges. It is important to understand that connecting to community resources is a vital part of human services work.

In closing, HS professionals face increasingly complex and difficult issues in their work. Education may provide some stability for meeting these challenges. Education is a part of self-care, trust, and integrity for HS workers. Such awareness may bridge service gaps and lead to best practices in professional care. At the heart of HS practice is collaboration with families that includes self-care, trust, and integrity. This is the type of practice that ultimately builds healthy communities. With education, choosing to reach out a hand and lift the next person up from despair will improve the lives of all involved. It is this collaborative effect of professionals, families, and communities working together that model a healthy cycle of mental health care. This is how the circle of mental health, taken "to the streets," improves our overall communities.

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A Pedagogical Approach to Ethical Decision Making in a Human Service Curriculum

Patricia A. Eber, PhD, LMFT, HS-BCP
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

Abstract

It is difficult to ascertain the level of knowledge undergraduate students have regarding the implementation of ethical decision making. Most human service students are required to learn the National Organization of Human Services Ethical Standards. They are directed to apply the codes in term papers, explain and analyze the codes on exams, and compare and contrast them with other professional codes. Yet, it is still difficult to determine if students will have the ability to make ethical decisions in the field. Although it is not possible to guarantee that any one strategy can assure students will make good ethical decisions, models of ethical decision-making can assist in this process. The article will provide information on the creation and use of the Human Services Ethical Decision-Making Model. The model was created utilizing key components from current research on ethics. Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals were also incorporated into the model. Additional strategies and techniques are offered for instructors to utilize when teaching the model to college level students. These strategies focus on Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development.

Introduction

A second-year human services student, Mariah, sat in her professor's office uncertain of how to begin the story that she and two other students had agreed not to share with anyone. Mariah and the two other students were interning at an inner-city youth agency that offered programming for children before and after school. The agency was housed in the back of an old community center that was no longer used. The three students had been at the site for three months. It was now November and the site recently had a large increase of children attending due to the cold weather. Before school, the agency offered a warm breakfast to children and after school they served them a hearty snack; enough to nourish those children who would not receive a meal at home. Mariah supported the agency for the difference they were making to decrease the children's food insecurities. However, the board of health had conducted two investigations of the site. The inspector wrote a report after the first visit demanding the agency stop serving hot food because it did not have adequate equipment to assure safe temperatures, preparation, and storage of the food. The report stated the agency would be closed down if they did not comply. Mariah said the second visit was positive and they no longer found evidence of food preparation on-site. Mariah explained they did not find it because all of the evidence had been hidden by the students and the volunteers at the site. The director of the agency had shown them how and where to hide evidence if the inspector returned. She explained if the students and volunteers did not comply, they would be forced to stop serving the children food and they would go hungry. It had been three weeks since the last inspection and the site was always on standby to conceal the evidence if needed. Mariah said the other two students agreed with what

they were doing but she felt it was being dishonest. She wasn't sure what to do because she did not want the children to go hungry.

This ethical dilemma was brought to the attention of the author by a student five years ago. The National Organization of Human Service (NOHS) Ethical Standards were used as a reference as the author worked through this with the student. It was realized though, that there were no step-by-step guidelines to follow to help students learn the critical thinking skills necessary for these situations.

A Review of the Current Curriculum

A reflection of the department's pedagogy of teaching ethics did not bring answers. The department introduced ethics in the freshman year. Students were required to study the NOHS Ethical Standards, tested on them, and required to refer to them in papers. In the second year of the program, students were asked to compare and contrast several professions' codes and they were again tested on the basics of the standards. Professors wove the NOHS Ethical Standards into lectures, discussions, and assignments. Guest speakers were brought in on ethical dilemmas the third year and role plays were initiated. Again, students were tested on the standards. During the last year of the curriculum students needed to explain and analyze ethical vignettes and discuss real life ethical dilemmas from their internship sites. The effectiveness of the pedagogy being used was questioned. Students were able to reiterate what was stated in the standards but they still struggled to defend an ethical decision. No where in the curriculum were students being taught the critical thinking skills and steps necessary for ethical decision-making.

The dilemma was also examined from a student's perspective. They did not understand the process involved to make sound ethical decisions. The options seemed ambiguous due to unknown facts, conflicting policies and ethical codes, plus uncertain costs and benefits to those involved. There was no framework for them to follow during the decision-making process. Memorizing codes of ethics was not enough for students to understand how to work through and resolve ethical dilemmas.

Development of the Human Services Ethical Decision-Making Model

Variables Needed in the Model

A review of the literature indicated that ethical decision-making models could provide a framework for students to use when faced with ethical dilemmas. Castro-Atwater and Hohnbaum (2015) stated that providing students with ethical decision-making models is one of the most important tasks of an educator. A model can assist students in analyzing an ethical-dilemma from various lenses (Castro-Atwater & Hohnbaum, 2015). Ethical decision-making models have been developed to offer a flexible comprehensive approach to ethical dilemmas (Neukrug, Lovell, & Parker, 1996). Mitchell and Yordy's (2010) model of ethical decision-making was necessary for students who lacked the tools to analyze an ethical situation.

The National Organization of Human Services addressed the necessity of educators helping students understand ethics. Specifically, Standard 44 in the NOHS Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals states educators must assure students are . . .

"familiar with, informed by, and accountable" . . . to the ethical standards (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Wark (2016) explained the revised NOHS Ethical Standards encourages the use of ethical decision-making models.

Salient variables to incorporate into the new model were examined. Neukrug (1996) explained Corey's ethical decision-making model focused on seven main steps:

1. identifying the problem
2. identifying the potential issues involved
3. reviewing the relevant ethical guidelines
4. obtaining consultation
5. considering possible and probable courses of action
6. enumerating the consequences of various decisions, and
7. deciding on what appears to be the best course of action (p. 22).

Additional variables that are crucial to include in ethical decision-making models were shared by other researchers. Castro-Atwater and Huynh Hohnbaum stressed students must be able to consider the benefits and risks of each possible outcome when using an ethical decision-making model (2015). Raines and Dibble (2011) indicated that identifying multiple courses of actions minimizes the either-or-thinking and takes into account the needs of multiple stakeholders. A possible cultural component of the model was also examined. Luke, Goodrich, and Gilbride (2013a) proposed the Intercultural Model of Ethical Decision Making (IMED) to address ethical dilemmas in school guidance counseling. Key points within the model focus on the recognition and analysis of "…cultural, religious, and worldview factors…" (p. 193) within ethical dilemmas. Luke et al. (2013a) emphasized the importance of supervision when utilizing an ethical decision-making model. Raines and Dibble (2011) also emphasized the importance of seeking consultation with an experienced professional when making ethical decisions. Consultations can: stimulate thinking, offer options, point out personal influences that need to be considered, reduce professional liability, and increase practitioner's ability to work through future ethical problems (Raines & Dibble, 2011).

Steps in the Model

The Human Services Decision-Making Model was created in 2013 to assist students in developing critical and systematic processing skills for ethical decision making. It was introduced in sophomore internship courses. In senior internship courses students applied the model to ethical dilemmas, discussed the process of their decisions, and provided feedback on the model. In addition, the professors who used it also provided feedback. Modifications were made for readability. Additional steps were added for clarification. The model is currently being used at three universities.

The model consists of six major steps with tasks listed under each step. The six steps are: 1) define the ethical problem 2) generate and evaluate possible solutions to the problem 3) decide on a course of action 4) implement the decision 5) evaluate and 6) document. The language in the model was written for a student focus but can be adapted for professionals in the field. Following are the tasks for each step. Students are instructed to consult with their supervisor at

each step. (The term supervisor is meant to refer to both their instructor and/or their field supervisor; the actual individual which fulfills this task will be dictated by the institution).

1. **Define the Ethical Problem**
   ● What are the relevant facts?
   ● Who are the stakeholders?
   ● Are there unknown facts?
   ● Examine the problem through the lenses of various stakeholders.
   ● Which NOHS ethical standards are involved in the dilemma?
   ● Identify any cultural, religious, and worldview factors that may affect the problem.
   ● Is this situation eliciting an emotional response in you? If yes, stop and consult with your supervisor.

2. **Generate and Evaluate Possible Solutions to the Problem**
   ● What agency policies need to be considered?
   ● What alternatives are there for a solution?
   ● What are the benefits/costs of each possible solution?
   ● What effect will this decision have on the client, the agency, and the human service worker?
   ● Could someone be harmed by the decision?
   ● Are there competing values/ethics?
   ● Is it ethical not to take action?

3. **Decide on a Course of Action**
   ● Does this action follow all applicable NOHS ethical standards and agency policies?
   ● Can you explain/defend your course of action based on the ethical standards and policies?
   ● Is this action legal?
   ● If the answer to any of the questions in this section are no, stop the process and consult with your supervisor.

4. **Implement the Decision**
   ● Communicate with stakeholders.
   ● Make a list of tasks needed to implement the decision.
   ● Who will complete each task?

5. **Evaluate**
   ● Was this the best decision for the client? Explain.
   ● Did your personal values influence the decision?
   ● Were there conflicts between the NOHS ethical standards and other ethical guidelines used by the agency?
   ● Do changes need to be made to your original decision?
   ● Evaluate the process with your supervisor.

6. Document
  ● Include the steps taken in the decision-making process.
  ● Include the reasoning used for the decision.

A figure of the model is in the Appendix.

Integration of The Ethical Decision-Making Model with the Ethical Standards for Human Service Professionals

The steps within the model were integrated with ethical standards from the National Organization of Human Services. Following is a listing of the standards that are associated with the steps of the model.

STANDARD 1 Human service professionals recognize and build on client and community strengths (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Step one of the model, define the ethical problem, incorporates this standard. Students are able to build on the client's strengths by identifying facts on the problem with a focus on the strengths the client brings to the situation. In addition, the student identifies any relevant culture or religious factors that may affect the problem. These facts may educate the student on important factors about the client as well as identifying strengths through their culture or religious factors. In the vignette at the beginning of this article, Mariah could identify the caring nature of the workers as a strength.

STANDARD 4 If it is suspected that danger or harm may occur to the client or to others as a result of a client's behavior, the human service professional acts in an appropriate and professional manner to protect the safety of those individuals. This may involve, but is not limited to, seeking consultation, supervision, and/or breaking the confidentiality of the relationship (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Step two of the model, generate and evaluate possible solutions to the ethical problem, integrates this standard. Students are asked if someone could be harmed by the decision. If the answer is yes, they are directed to talk with their supervisor. Although students are instructed to have a dialogue with their supervisor throughout the process, this particular task is linked to specific guidelines to involve their supervisor in the process. In Mariah's case, she struggled because she felt the youth would be harmed and be hungry if the board of health closed down the center.

STANDARD 7 Human service professionals ensure that their values or biases are not imposed upon their clients (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). This standard is evident in step one, define the ethical problem and in step five, evaluate. Within step one students must identify cultural, religious, and worldviews that may affect the problem. This task may focus on the client, as outlined previously, or it may focus on the student's cultural and religious beliefs. Even if a student does not feel they have any values or biases that affect their ethical process, the next task in the model offers an additional avenue to examine this situation: Is this situation eliciting an emotional response in you? Standard 7 is focused on again in the evaluation step of the model. As students evaluate the ethical decision they made, they are asked: Did your personal values influence the decision? This is an excellent opportunity for reflection by the student. Mariah realized she definitely was experiencing an emotional response to the situation. She wanted to protect the children but she expressed frustration and anger that she was expected to be unethical to accomplish this.

STANDARD 10 Human service professionals provide services without discrimination or preference in regards to age, ethnicity, culture, race, ability, gender, language preference, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, or other historically oppressed groups (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). An examination of this standard is evident in step one, define the ethical problem and in step five, evaluate. As previously noted, in step one students must consider cultural, religious, and worldview factors that may affect the problem. This task is meant to focus on both the client and the student to help assure the ethical dilemma is being handled without discrimination or bias. In step four of the model, evaluate, students are asked to explain if this was the best decision for the client. This is a key area for dialogue with a supervisor. At the beginning, Mariah could not understand how resolving this situation in an ethical manner could be the best decision for the children who relied on the meals the center served. (By the end of the process she and her supervisor were able to offer the agency a possible solution that would be the best for the children).

STANDARD 11 Human service professionals are knowledgeable about their cultures and communities within which they practice. They are aware of multiculturalism in society and its impact on the community as well as individuals within the community. They respect the cultures and beliefs of individuals and groups (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Step one, define the ethical problem, focuses on this standard. The tasks in this step direct students to examine the problem through the lenses of various stakeholders and to identify any cultural, religious, and worldview factors that may affect the problem. The objectives of these tasks are to aid students in identifying multicultural variables and how they may affect each stakeholder's view of the ethical situation. Mariah learned through her supervisor that her community had several foundations that offered numerous grants to assist with this type of need. She was also given a community resource guide to help in the future.

STANDARD 12 Human service professionals are aware of local, state, and federal laws. They advocate for change in regulations and statutes when such legislation conflicts with ethical guidelines and/or client rights. Where laws are harmful to individuals, groups, or communities, human service professionals consider the conflict between the values of obeying the law and the values of serving people and may decide to initiate social action (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). In step three of the Human Service Ethical Decision-Making Model students decide on a course of action. Within this step they must evaluate if the action is legal. Students may not understand what constitutes an illegal action compared to an unethical decision. Supervision can help students learn resources that are available to help with this distinction. These ethical standards and steps were the core of Mariah's struggles. Through supervision and guidance she was able to serve the children within the realms of the law.

STANDARD 13 Human service professionals stay informed about current social issues as they affect clients and communities. If appropriate to the helping relationship, they share this information with clients, groups, and communities as part of their work.

STANDARD 14 Human service professionals are aware of social and political issues that differentially affect clients from diverse backgrounds (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Standard 13 and Standard 14 are being combined because the same tasks in the model support both standards. When students define the ethical problem in step one, they analyze if there are unknown facts and multicultural variables that may affect how the problem is

viewed. Social issues that are relevant should be examined here. Supervisors can stress with students the importance of staying abreast with current political and social issues in their communities. Step two, generate and evaluate possible solutions to the ethical problem, also includes tasks that incorporate standards 13 and 14. Students are directed to consider possible effects the ethical decision may have on the client, the agency, and the human service worker. Social and political issues should be considered as a supervisor advises a student on these tasks. Step two asks if someone could be harmed by the decision. Students need to consider social and political consequences as well as legal ones when answering this question. Mariah was unaware the community had steps in place to assist with food insecurities in the area. This information was also shared with the center by Mariah so they could work together to solve the problem.

STANDARD 15 Human service professionals provide a mechanism for identifying client needs and assets, calling attention to these needs and assets, and assisting in planning and mobilizing to advocate for those needs at the individual, community, and societal level when appropriate to the goals of the relationship (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Within step one, define the ethical problem, students are directed to examine the problem through the lenses of the various stakeholders. In step two, generate and evaluate possible solutions to the ethical problem, students are told to examine the various alternatives for the solution. This part of the process involves looking at the client's needs and advocating for them through various solutions to the ethical problem. Mariah could assist the inner-city youth agency in writing a grant to obtain funds for the equipment needed to safely prepare food for the students.

STANDARD 25 When a conflict arises between fulfilling the responsibility to the employer and the responsibility to the client, human service professionals work with all involved to manage the conflict (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). Step two of the Human Service Ethical Decision-Making Model is based on generating and evaluating possible solutions of an ethical problem. Within this step students are asked to be aware of any competing values and ethics. Mariah was able to identify conflict between herself and the agency as well as between the agency and the board of health. She was unable to manage the conflict until she consulted with her supervisor.

STANDARD 26 Human service professionals seek the training, experience, education and supervision necessary to ensure their effectiveness in working with culturally diverse individuals based on age, ethnicity, culture, race, ability, gender, language preference, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, or other historically oppressive groups. In addition, they will strive to increase their competence in methods which are known to be the best fit for the population(s) with whom they work (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). At each step of the Human Service Ethical Decision-Making Model students are directed to seek supervision. Mariah did not immediately engage in supervision when she became aware of the ethical dilemma. Part of her struggle was the fear that telling would cause the children to be hungry.

STANDARD 34 Human service professionals are aware of their own cultural backgrounds, beliefs, values, and biases. They recognize the potential impact of their backgrounds on their relationships with others and work diligently to provide culturally competent service to all of their clients (National Organization of Human Services, 2015). The model addresses standard 34 at several steps; when defining the problem, while generating and evaluating possible solutions,

and during the evaluation step. Students are asked to analyze competing values and ethics as well as reflecting on their own emotions and values. Questions pertaining to this are: Is this situation eliciting an emotional response in you, are there competing values/ethics, and did your personal values influence the decision? Mariah's values were in agreement with her agency supervisor's values regarding the need to provide nutrition to hungry children. However, they did differ on their beliefs of how this need should be fulfilled.

STANDARD 44 Human service educators ensure students are familiar with, informed by, and accountable to the ethical standards and policies put forth by their program/department, the course syllabus/instructor, their advisor(s), and the Ethical Standards of Human Service Professionals. This standard guided the creation and implementation of the Human Services Ethical Decision-Making Model.

- The Ethical Standards for Human Service Professionals can be located in its entirety at: http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/ethical-standards-for-hs-professionals

Teaching the Model to Students

Utilizing Perry's Scheme to Teach Ethics

Deciding when and how to teach an ethics course within a curriculum is a key factor to the success of student learning. Neukrug (1996) declared Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development (Perry's Scheme) was a good model to use when teaching ethical decision-making. Perry's Scheme focused on the intellectual and ethical development of college students. His theory consists of nine developmental stages (called positions) that college students move through (Henrikka, Clarkeburn, Downie, Gray, & Matthew, 2003; Love & Gutherie, 1999; Myers, 2010). The first five positions center on the student's intellectual development and the last four focuses on ethical development. Henrikka et al. (2003) differentiated the pedagogy of teaching ethics to lower levels as opposed to teaching students who have reached the highest level. The lower levels may learn better by roleplays and higher-level students by discussing ethical vignettes.

De L´etoile (2008) explained how the nine positions are often grouped into four categories: dualism, multiplicity, contextual relativism, and commitment with relativism. The first is dualism and contains Perry's positions one and two. Freshman students may begin college in this stage. They prefer structure within their classes and they believe professors are authorities and will explain what the right answer is to them (De L´etoile, 2008). Students at this level believe in right or wrong and that everything is known (Love & Gutherie, 1999). Neukrug (1996) avowed students at this level strictly adhere to a code of ethics. Teaching ethics to students at this level is best accomplished by providing assignments where students make a simple decision or construct a simple argument to defend a position (De L´etoile ,2008). Educators can assist students in developing to the next stage by ethical role plays or discussing basic case studies.

Multiplicity, the second category, is most commonly observed in freshman students in late spring or in sophomore and junior level students. Multiplicity students still believe there is a right or wrong answer but they also understand the answer may not be known (De L´etoile, 2008). Students at this level complete assignments based on what they feel their professors want

from them (Love & Gutherie, 1999). To move students forward educators may ask students to create a treatment plan for a client and to justify the therapeutic goals they created. Teaching ethics to this level student can be daunting; students may still have difficulty understanding that there may be more than one correct solution to ethical dilemmas.

Contextual relativism, the third in De L´etoile's categorization of Perry's positions, is when the student transforms from a dualistic perspective to one that allows for multiple opinions to be considered (2008). The majority of students who reach this level are seniors. Students at this level can read research and evaluate its worth. They can participate in heated class discussions on ethics and respect their peer's opposing perspectives.

The last category is commitment to relativism. According to Henrikka et al. (2003) not all students will reach this final level. De L´etoile's (2008) explained that students who are in this stage see their professors as a mentor who has resources to help them in their education. Love and Gutherie (1999) avowed students at the relativism level want to define their own personal choices. Relativistic students are able to write papers explaining their viewpoint and how it interrelates with others'. Students at this level can work through salient variables of an ethical decision, examine a variety of views, and explain and defend their final decision.

Henrikka et al. (2003) stated it is important to consider which of Perry's positions a student is in prior to introducing ethics. Henrikka et al. (2003) designed the Meta-Ethical Questionnaire (MEQ) to determine what level students are currently in. The questionnaire takes 10-15 minutes to complete and can be useful for institutions to consider. Instructors can also observe students' ethical discussions in class and have an understanding with which of Perry's positions they most closely align.

It is suggested that The Ethical Decision-Making Model be presented in introductory human service courses. Students can become familiar with the steps and work through some of the factual tasks in steps one and two. Students in the multiplicity position can be asked to compare and contrast values and ethics as well as listing benefits and costs of each possible solution. They may struggle in deciding on a course of action because they still have difficulty generating solutions. They view ethical situations as having a right or wrong answer and few if any options in between.

Students in the last two positions, contextual relativism and commitment to relativism, have an easier time of considering numerous possible ethical solutions. This student is able to see each client as different and reflect on the client's cultural and social variables. They can deliberate on which solution is in the best interest of a particular client and explain how they arrived at the solution.

Presenting the Steps of the Model to Students

When using the model with students it is helpful to use ethical vignettes and work through the vignette with the steps of the model. Castro-Atwater and Hohnbaum (2015) found that utilizing real life events can assist students in developing critical thinking skills necessary for ethical decision-making. Students have a keener interest in real life events and see the dilemma as more relevant. In addition, real life events, unlike textbook cases, do not offer guidelines to follow; students must discern them. Events can be taken from students' internship experiences or from current issues in the news.

It is suggested that initially the complete model be introduced to students. Covering one or two steps at a time with their corresponding tasks will allow time for students to reflect on the tasks. The first step in the Human Services Ethical Decision-Making Model is outlined below with possible questions to expand on the tasks.

Define the Ethical Problem

- What are the relevant facts? Facts should inform decisions. The majority of ethical decision-making models begin with this step (Raines & Dibble, 2011). What do the students know? What does the client report? Has the agency provided additional information? What facts does the supervisor know about this?
- Who are the stakeholders? Stakeholders are anyone who could be affected by the decision. In addition to the client, stakeholders may include the client's family, the agency, the board of directors, agency and university representatives, and local and national organizations. How will stakeholders be impacted? Students should consider the various levels of impact to the different stakeholders. Consider those that may be affected by the decision and also those individuals who will be needed to implement the decision.
- Are there unknown facts? Are students assuming facts? Have they asked questions of the stakeholders concerning the situation? Have they engaged in supervision to find out what facts they may be missing?
- Examine the problem through the lenses of various stakeholders. This step assumes the stakeholders are identified and the student knows enough about them to consider their positions on the issue. Empathy and putting aside personal viewpoints are important for this task. Ask students what might happen if this task is not considered.
- Which NOHS ethical standards are involved in the dilemma? Students should be encouraged to examine each of the standards for this question. Students may miss key standards if they feel they know the standards well and simply name the standards they know.
- Identify any cultural, religious, and worldview factors that may affect the problem. NOHS ethical standards 10-16 are a good resource for students to refer to when exploring this topic. In addition, supervision can bring out local cultural, social, and political variables the student may not be aware of.
- Is this situation eliciting an emotional response in you? Processing in small groups or during supervision will allow students to be open on this topic.

Conclusion

Ethics are incorporated across human service curriculums. Instructors use a variety of approaches to teach ethics including lectures, discussions, quizzes, papers, case studies, and guest speakers. The Human Services Ethical Decision-Making Model was created as an additional method to teach ethics. The model incorporates evidence-based variables, NOHS Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals, and Perry's intellectual and cognitive theory of development. Strategies and techniques were provided to utilize when teaching the model in college level courses. Although it is not possible to guarantee that any one strategy can

assure students will make good ethical decisions, models of ethical decision-making can assist in this process.
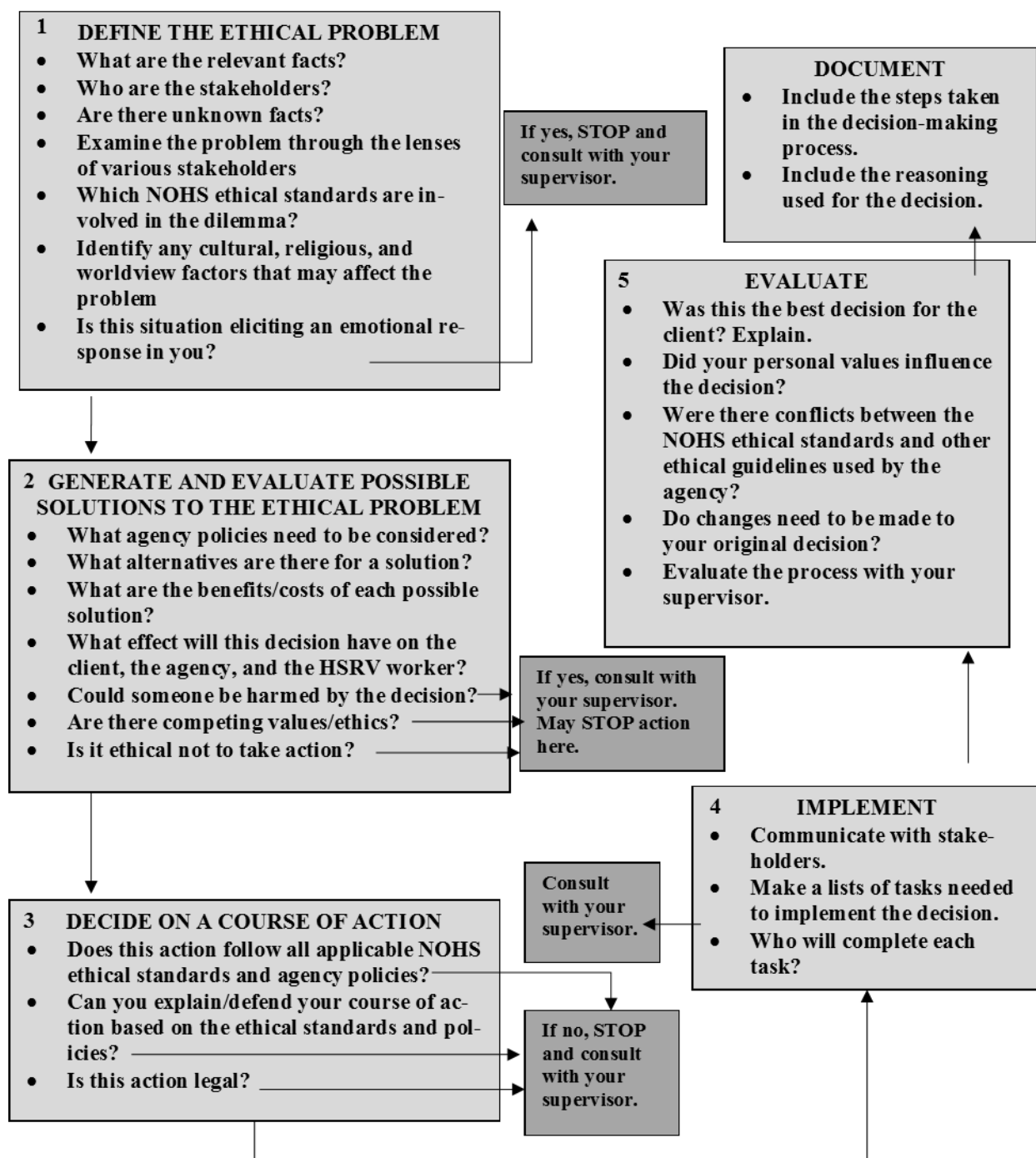
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Appendix

Human Services Ethical Decision Model
Active dialogue and supervision is necessary at each step for ethical decisions

1 DEFINE THE ETHICAL PROBLEM
- What are the relevant facts?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Are there unknown facts?
- Examine the problem through the lenses of various stakeholders
- Which NOHS ethical standards are involved in the dilemma?
- Identify any cultural, religious, and worldview factors that may affect the problem
- Is this situation eliciting an emotional response in you?

If yes, STOP and consult with your supervisor.

DOCUMENT
- Include the steps taken in the decision-making process.
- Include the reasoning used for the decision.

5 EVALUATE
- Was this the best decision for the client? Explain.
- Did your personal values influence the decision?
- Were there conflicts between the NOHS ethical standards and other ethical guidelines used by the agency?
- Do changes need to be made to your original decision?
- Evaluate the process with your supervisor.

2 GENERATE AND EVALUATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE ETHICAL PROBLEM
- What agency policies need to be considered?
- What alternatives are there for a solution?
- What are the benefits/costs of each possible solution?
- What effect will this decision have on the client, the agency, and the HSRV worker?
- Could someone be harmed by the decision?
- Are there competing values/ethics?
- Is it ethical not to take action?

If yes, consult with your supervisor. May STOP action here.

4 IMPLEMENT
- Communicate with stakeholders.
- Make a lists of tasks needed to implement the decision.
- Who will complete each task?

Consult with your supervisor.

3 DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION
- Does this action follow all applicable NOHS ethical standards and agency policies?
- Can you explain/defend your course of action based on the ethical standards and policies?
- Is this action legal?

If no, STOP and consult with your supervisor.

Examining Diversity in Human Service Practice through Engaging Game-Based Activities

Kirsten S. Ericksen
Assistant Professor, Norfolk State University

Abstract

There is growing diversity in the populations we serve as human services professionals. This workshop (presented during the 2017 National Organization of Human Services annual meeting) explored an effective method to educate and prepare students to work with different populations in a positive interactive learning environment. This suggested technique incorporated an engaging environment to promote diversity understanding and application. The impact of a game-based activity upon the perceived learning about diversity awareness and impact in human service practice is examined and discussed.

Introduction

As diversity increases and human services professionals are expected to work effectively with a variety of populations, educators and professionals need to offer opportunities to best prepare students for these changing environments. According to the established ethical standards and best practices, human services professionals need the skills to effectively communicate about diversity with clients (NOHS, 2015). This research presentation examines a game-based teaching technique created to develop awareness, respect, and sensitivity to diversity while practicing these skills through recognition and facilitation in an educational setting. The game-based learning activity, using an adaptation of a popular game (Apples to Apples), was structured to be presented and facilitated as an activity to enhance diversity awareness and practice in human service curriculums. The goals of the workshop included:

- Participants would be able to *describe* and *apply* the use of a game-based teaching activity to enhance *curricular experiences* related to diversity for Human Service course content.
- Participants would be able to *describe* and *apply* the use of a game-based activity to enhance *practice* related to diversity for Human Service course content.

Teaching methods, which engage students in an effective diversity awareness learning process contribute to their understanding. Engaged, experiential learning enhances students understanding (Kolb, 1984, Cramer, Ryosho, & Nguyen, 2012).

The Workshop Sample Game-Based Activity

Following a brief overview of the game-based activity, workshop participants were invited to participate in a demonstration of the activity. The game-based learning activity, used an adaptation of a popular game (Apples to Apples; Mattel, 2007), to enhance diversity awareness and practice in human services (abbreviated from course activity due to time). This adapted Apples to Apples card game is a game of comparisons and the goal is to "win" the most cards by anticipating which card the "judge" will select from each of the cards provided by the

participants. The game consists of two types of cards; cards with a noun (green), and cards with an adjective (red). During regular play, the "judge" selects one noun card and displays it so all players can see the word. Players then select the adjective card they feel best matches the noun card and they believe the "judge" will pick and place it face down in the middle of the table. The "judge" then reads the adjective cards offered by players and selects the one they feel best matches. The noun card is given to the person who offered the "winning" adjective card. Now, the role of judge rotates to the next person on the right and the game continues with the new judge selecting a new noun card and the players trying once again, to match it with a selected adjective card.

For the interactive workshop, participants were placed in small groups (4-5 people) and five adjective playing cards (red) from the Apples to Apples game were distributed to each participant. During the workshop, the facilitator coordinated three rounds of the game. During each round of the adapted version, a different rule guided the playing of the game, in order to highlight diversity. Also, each player had an opportunity to participate as the "judge" for each different round of the game (giving everyone an opportunity to experience each rule/situation). Following the "playing" of the adapted game, the participants reconvened to discuss and process the activity and application within the curriculum.

During "play," each Round provided areas of discussion related to diversity; **Round 1-** participants select an adjective card based on what they think is the best match that the "judge" will select. Diversity Discussion: Prejudices and stereotypes can influence how we perceive others. It is important to follow the code of ethics when working with others and recognize that the clients we work with also have their own preferences and stereo-types which are influenced by their own lived experience. Types of diversity are also discussed; gender, culture, race, religion, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, etc.

Round 2 -participants try to convince the "judge" why their adjective card is the best card to select. Through this activity players will share insights about themselves, their values, and perspectives. Diversity discussion: the more discussion you have with clients, the more you learn about their own perspective and therefore you can be a better helping professional.

Round 3- participants randomly select an adjective card, the noun card is not shared until after players have selected their adjective card. Diversity discussion: when you know nothing about the situation or person it is difficult to understand the best approach, intervention, or client. It is critical that human services professionals get to know their clients and their situations to best empower the individual.

Additional rounds include: 4- "judge" the adjective card based on the point of view of someone else (someone living in poverty, a child, older adult etc.). Diversity discussion: be aware of your own stereotypes and remember to consider the perspective of the client. In round 5- "judge" explains why each adjective card was not selected. Diversity discussion: exploration of self-awareness is evident; an examination of the human services professional is essential to understand our own perceptions and how this influences our interactions.

The workshop served as a simulation for the integration of the adapted game-based activity in the classroom setting. During the workshop, after participants experienced the adapted Apples to Apples game, simulation, and processing, the group discussed specific application to the classroom.

Previous Research

Student understanding and learning is enhanced through interactive game-based experiences (Ayling, 2012; Lichtenwalter & Baker, 2010). Including play in teaching is effective for students integrating knowledge and learning skills related to social work practice (Ayling, 2012). The research finds there is value in experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Cramer, Ryosho, & Nguyen, 2012). Practicing learned concepts through engaging activities helps students integrate, comprehend, and apply the course material/content and games are a natural fit as interactive tools.

Researchers assert it is essential to prepare students to work effectively with diverse populations (Chestang, 2004; Cramer, Ryosho, & Nguyen, 2012). While Morgan Consoli and Marin (2016) assert there is value in teaching diversity in higher education, other researchers suggest teaching diversity content continues to be a challenge (Snyder, Peeler & May, 2008). At times students struggle with topics that make them uncomfortable (Snyder, Peeler & May, 2008). It has been found that it is important to incorporate student reflection of activities for better comprehension (Cruz & Patterson, 2005, Kiili, 2007).

Present Research

Methodology

An exploratory research study examined the extent that a game-based teaching technique impacted students perceived learning about diversity. This pilot study was conducted at a Historically Black University or College with a group of undergraduate social work students enrolled in one section of the course Human Behavior in the Social Environment. The convenience sample of participants included thirteen (13) students who volunteered to participate out of a potential fourteen (14) students enrolled in the course. All participants were informed there would be no impact on their grade in the course, participation was voluntary.

Following the game-based teaching strategy (as described in detail about for the interactive simulated workshop) participants were asked to complete a brief survey during class time. The survey included six (6) Likert scale items and five (5) open ended questions. The five-point Likert scale items ranged from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* with statements such as "After today's class I feel I understand the importance of being aware of diversity". The open-ended questions included items such as "What was the most effective diversity teaching technique from today's class". Grounded theory was used to guide the data coding (Glaser and Strauss, 2011). The qualitative data was coded for emerging themes and patterns with consideration of frequency and significance.

Results

   This exploratory pilot study resulted in some valuable data. A number of themes emerged from the data. The prominent themes included, *positive learning environment, diverse environment knowledge/awareness*, and *group work appreciation*.

- *Positive learning environment*. For this research, a positive learning environment was reported by all the survey respondents. For the open-ended survey question "If I had to use one word to describe the learning environment today I would say it was:" all positive terms were used to describe the learning environment including: *Interesting, Helpful, Exciting, Fun, Impactful, Great, and Wonderful.*
- *Diverse environment knowledge/awareness* was another prominent emerging theme. Seven survey respondents reported an increase in their knowledge/awareness related to the impact of the diverse environment. One survey respondent clearly demonstrated the impact of the Apples to Apples game-based experience reporting that it changed "how you look at others point of view".
- *Respect for differences* was mentioned by five respondents including phrases such as "trying to be better at understanding other people's experiences without judgement".
- *Group work appreciation.* One area of value expressed by respondents was gaining an appreciation of working in groups as reflected in the statement "before class I had a negative look on group work, but now, it can be useful".

Discussion

   The adapted Apples to Apples teaching strategy was developed to improve student's awareness of diversity issues and enhance their experience in the classroom. The results as reported by participants indicate the adapted game-based teaching strategy offers a perceived positive learning environment. The interactive format of the activity supports the literature findings that experiential learning is beneficial (Kolb, 1984).

   Diverse environment knowledge/awareness was reported as a perceived gain by participants as well as respect for difference and appreciation for group work. This suggests, the adapted Apples to Apples game-based strategy is an effective introduction for discussion about diversity. Furthermore, it supports the National Organization of Human Services Ethical Standards for Human Services Professionals (2015) efforts and responsibility to ensure human professionals can effectively communicate with diverse populations.

   It is important to acknowledge that future research should examine actual knowledge gained, not only the perceived gains reported by participants. In addition, a larger sample size, across curriculum would provide more inclusive data.

Conclusion

   The findings from the pilot research study indicate participants found the game-based activity (adapted Apples to Apples) to be a positive learning experience. Through participation, participants gained knowledge and awareness about the impact of diversity in the human service profession.   Results offer a teaching strategy to engage students in exploring the impact of diversity awareness and practice through active participation in game-based instruction. This

teaching strategy, in its current format provides a good introduction to diversity awareness and needs additional discussion and processing with students to encourage higher level thinking.

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Ethical Dilemmas in International Study, Practice, and Research Settings

Shoshana D. Kerewsky, PsyD, HS-BCP
University of Oregon

Abstract

This paper identifies major ethical considerations for human services students and professionals who are engaged internationally, as well as resources for anticipating and decreasing ethical dilemmas associated with international activities. An international focus is particularly relevant because of scarce human and economic resources, which may result in students or professionals engaging in international experiences with inadequate knowledge, supervision, and support. In addition, its focus includes cross-cultural and other diversity factors that inform ethical human services practices.

Ethical Dilemmas in International Study, Practice, and Research Settings

Increasing numbers of human services students, faculty, and professionals study, complete placements, work, volunteer, teach, conduct research, and consult internationally. This creates an obligation to consider the ethical features of international human services work major. Further, it is important that students, practitioners, researchers, and educators working in international contexts explore resources for anticipating and decreasing the impact of, or minimizing the chances of, ethical dilemmas and conflicts.

Professional Ethical Standards

NOHS Ethical Standards (National Organization for Human Services, 2015) provide some guidance to the student or professional in an international setting, but have been formulated in relation to broader standards of law and conduct that reflect U.S. majority culture. Similarly, the Human Services—Board Certified Practitioner Code of Ethics (Center for Credentialing and Education, 2009) is intended to guide national rather than international practice, and, in fact, its scope of application is even narrower than that of the NOHS standards, applying only to practicing professionals in human services roles.

Dilemmas in International Settings

Students, faculty, and human services professionals may find themselves at a disadvantage when engaged in international experiences. For example, students may be placed in rural settings with poor communication with their programs, inadequate supervision, low peer support opportunities, and preparation that addresses culture, but may not provide guidance

about ethical behavior or responding to ethical dilemmas. Practitioners, faculty, and researchers may encounter similar situations and understand that with their greater power comes greater responsibility to behave and intervene ethically in a culturally-proficient manner.

Major ethical challenges arising in international settings

Ethical questions occur in multiple domains when students and professionals travel for purposes of training or studying, practice or consultation, instruction, or conducting research. They may even arise during tourist activities; for example, observing an instance of child abuse at a museum in another country.

There may be times when you are in another country but not functioning in your professional role, such as in the museum example above. In these situations, it may be necessary to clarify your role and scope of practice.

Although any situation may produce novel challenges, the settings most frequently reported to the author as a consultant to students and professionals in international are
- Field placements/practica/internship
- University study
- Work settings
- Volunteer settings
- Research activities

The issues most typically reported include
- Determining and advocating for the welfare of clients, research participants, students, and community members, including non-majority populations
- Responding to unfair, illegal, or discriminatory practices at placements, schools and agencies, and research and work sites
- Breaches of privacy that may or may not be associated with cultural differences
- Cross-cultural conflicts between personal and professional values systems
- Lack of local legal knowledge, or the absence of, or failure of enforcement of, relevant laws and protections
- Injustice

Our Ethical Standards Travel with Us

It is important to remember that ethics and the law are distinct. Although laws change with jurisdiction, we remain beholden to our ethical standards:

The NOHS Ethical Standards are not geographically limited. If you have agreed to follow them, you will use their guidance no matter where you are. It would be useful to show these standards to your supervisor or a local consultant in order to learn which are

similar to local ethical standards and agency practice, which might be somewhat different, and which may lead to differences between your typical practices and those of the agency or locale. It is important to have this conversation before there is a misunderstanding or problem. For example, the standards may hold you to a higher degree of confidentiality than the country's laws do. It is your job to negotiate these differences with your supervisor….

During your [INTERNATIONAL] internship, you will still be a student. If your academic program requires students to adhere to NOHS's Ethical Standards for Human Service Professionals, you will be expected to do so. Remember that no matter where you are, your supervisor is responsible for your actions, so make sure you understand the worldview, laws, and ethics relevant to your internship.

As a graduated practitioner, you will be responsible for following the ethics of your professional organization(s) and the laws related to your license, certificate, role, and agency. Since you may not receive supervision, it is very important to have credible consultants who can help you make sure your practice is ethical and legal. This is true whether you have a job or you are volunteering for a day. It benefits and protects you and the people for whom you are providing services if you are as informed as possible (Kerewsky, 2013).

Additionally, researchers and research assistants are expected to follow the legal standards of the host country, their own country where relevant, and multi-country consortium agreements that protect human subjects/participants. This is the case whether or not one's ethics code addresses research, or your host agency does not impose restrictions.

Avenues for Exploring Challenges

Even if you are not a certificant or licensee of a related profession (e.g., AAMFT, ACA, NASP, NASW, NAADAC, or others), those organizations' ethical standards and best practices statements may provide guidance in areas where the NOHS or HS-BCP codes are silent or unclear. Of course, it is essential to bear in mind scope of practice issues. These additional codes are a resource for your decision-making, not an alternative to your professional ethics code. For example, the American Psychological Association's ethics code (2010) includes much more information on research ethics, aspects of which may be helpful or irrelevant. Similarly, AAMFT's code (2015) provides much more detailed exploration of intervention with families, which may help you to sort out ethical quandaries as long as your actions are still consonant with your own professional ethics.

An Ethical Decision-making Tool

        Almost all ethics textbooks include a model for ethics decision-making. However, these models rarely account for factors other than ethics, even though ethics questions never arise without a much broader context that includes personal values, laws, agency policy, and diversity considerations. Cultural factors also must be considered when working in international settings. This model is very helpful as a preliminary step in ethical decision-making, after which other models may be used to evaluate potential plans of action and follow-up activities.

Figure 1: Representation of intersecting and diverging factors affecting ethical and professional decision-making

Influences on
Professional Decision-Making
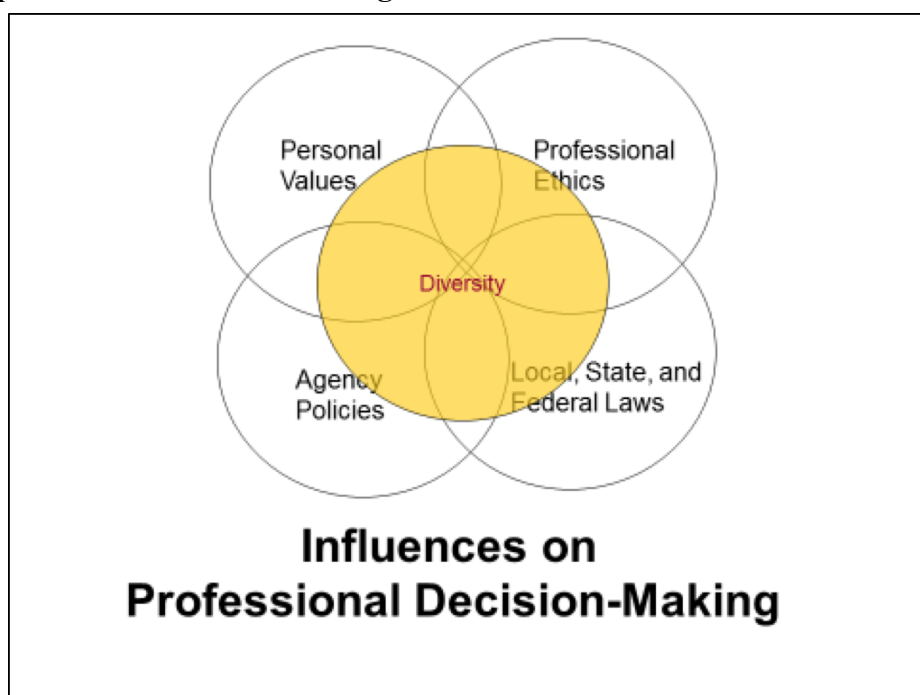
Figure 2: Ethical decision-making worksheet
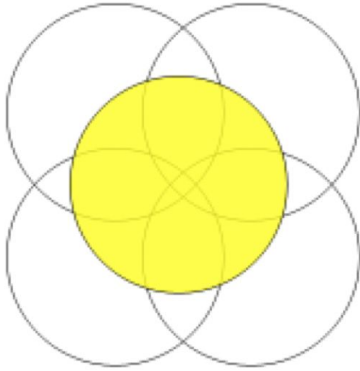
In international settings, the question of how diversity influences other factors in your decision-making should be foregrounded.

Resources and Further Exploration

These materials are recommended as starting points for your exploration of ethical issues in international human services settings, as well as domestic settings that may inform these decisions.

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Related ethics codes may be found at:
· ACA Ethics: http://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf
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· NASP Ethics: http://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/professional-ethics
· NASW Ethics: http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp
· NAADAC Code of Ethics: https://www.naadac.org/code-of-ethics

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Place Called Home: Community, College, Collaboration

Catherine Flynn
Kaplan University

Abstract

Place Called Home is a small nonprofit agency serving low-income, working families in Fremont County, Colorado, who are seeking affordable rental housing. The grassroots labor of love emerged from a collaboration of a college, a community, and a passion to help. Homelessness and the affordable housing crisis affect millions of families nationwide. A third of all American households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Even more staggering, 25% of families spend more than half of their income on housing, with no end in sight (Chaviano, 2016). Fremont County, Colorado, shares in the access and affordability crisis and Place Called Home emerged to help address the problem. This paper presents the process of growing and establishing a small agency with affordable housing as its mission. A university program called Gift of Knowledge provided college coursework and faculty expertise, a community offered support, and collaboration brought the elements together to establish Place Called Home.

Homelessness is a social issue impacting children, families, communities, and the country as a whole. Despite reductions in overall unemployment rates in this country, those living below the poverty level continue to grow and include single mothers and their children, and little affordable housing (Bassuk, DeCandia, Tsertsvadze, & Richard, 2014). Programs to address homelessness must be conducted on multiple levels, and Place Called Home seeks to serve its community in providing safe, affordable housing. Homelessness is a social problem that can be eradicated; while homelessness has numerous contributing issues, it is fundamentally about providing people with safe, affordable housing so they may live their lives, work their jobs, raise their children, pay their taxes, and contribute to society.

A university's Gift of Knowledge program provided opportunity for a resident of one county in Colorado to envision a means to address homelessness. Benefits that permit employees to expand their knowledge base are an increasingly effective means of retaining talent, and these benefits afford employees opportunity to explore interests and passions. Graduate coursework in Human Services allowed Place Called Home's co-director to envision and advance the agency, which became a reality in June 2017. Community wrap-around services

further leveraged the ability of Place Called Home co-directors to reduce the affordable housing shortage in Fremont County, Colorado. Efforts to address homelessness on a national scale have been woefully inadequate to meet the demand (Velasco, 2016), making community-based efforts like Place Called Home vital to ensuring all families have access to a place to call home.

Background Statement

Place Called Home addresses the co-occurring social problems of homelessness and affordable housing. A multitude of societal factors contribute to the social problem and make solutions difficult to put into place. Implementing both short- and long-term solutions requires shifting the mindset of many Americans about homelessness. Much stigma surrounds the homeless: they are lazy, alcoholic, drug-addicted loafers who just want to collect government checks and be free of responsibilities. The reality is, poverty is virtually always the predecessor to homelessness. It is an economic problem, not a character problem, not a personal defect, and rarely is due to actions on the part of those who are homeless (Bassuk et al., 2014).

Application of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory to the issue of homelessness shows key patterns of influence impacting those families struggling with affordable housing. On the microsystem level, home defines one's immediate environment in terms of relationships with parents, peers, and as families grow older, with an increasingly larger immediate environment. When a family has a place to call home they are able to put down roots and connect in a meaningful way with their community. Homelessness disrupts key proximal processes making it difficult for the individual to establish meaningful relationships as often fundamental struggles for food, warmth, and safety occupy the family's processes (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory further expands the circle of connections the family struggling with homelessness will engage with. Homeless families may be in contact with human services, health services, school administration and other agencies concerned with welfare of individuals and families. Support from neighbors, schools, churches, and other community services could impact the family in positive ways. The mesosystem encompasses the interaction of the micro systems, providing linkage between the home and other influences like school, churches, neighborhood, and friends (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

The macrosystem level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model involves the larger subcultural and cultural contexts that surround the microsystems and mesosystems. According to Sigelman and Shaffer (1995), macrosystems have the most pervasive level of influence on social activities. Cultural myths surrounding the homeless are one of the most damaging influences for working families unable to find affordable housing. Their situation is an economic one, not a character flaw. Historical events surrounding homelessness bring to mind Projects established in poverty-ridden areas to house the homeless, elevating their condition only

marginally. Today the demand for affordable housing – even project-style – far exceeds availability.

Political, religious, and cultural values all impact the homeless population, both historically and today. On any given night in the United States, more than half a million people are homeless; of those, almost half are families. Further, almost 100,000 of these people are considered chronically homeless (Snapshot of Homelessness, 2016). The numbers are staggering. Homelessness is a public health problem that affects us all. Because homelessness is an economic problem, those without homes are high consumers of public resources and they generate expenses rather than income for our communities (Rogers, Bobich, & Heppell, 2016). Further, the homeless are a population held in disdain by many community members, making it difficult at times to both educate the community and advocate for change.

Literature Review

Economic decisions are made by families on a daily basis. More affluent families choose between discretionary purchases at varying levels, whereas low-income families may struggle with meeting base necessities. Because housing is often a significant percentage of the low-income family's monthly budget, it is often the first expense to be removed when health costs emerge, or a significant change in income takes place (Chaviano, 2016). Affordable housing that provides low-income families with safe, comfortable accommodations is at a crisis shortage nationwide, and realistic, timely programs to address the problem are not on the horizon (Bassuk et al., 2014; Charette, Herbert, Jakabovics, Marya, & McCue, 2015; Newton, 2016).

A review of the literature on the issues of homelessness and affordable housing reveals myriad overlapping and co-existing challenges. At one point in history, homelessness was seen as "transient and situational" (Bassuk et al., 2014) but today is recognized as a substantial and growing public health problem. The issue has escaped easy solutions. Interventions abound and yet the problem continues to escalate due in part to the companion issues of economics and availability. Minimum wage is slowly increasing in this country, but until a living wage and, ultimately, a just wage are fully implemented in our economy, low-income families will struggle to meet basic living conditions (Velasco, 2016). The Living Wage Action Coalition (n.d.) defines a living wage as funds that allow the earner the most basic costs of living without need for government support or poverty programs. A just wage allows the wage earner to move beyond basics and enjoy some level of discretionary spending funds.

Regrettably, neither a living wage nor a just wage is on the horizon for severely burdened low-income renters. Charette et al. (2015) outline a frame of despair in the availability of affordable housing in the next decade. They argue that without significant intervention, the problem will persist at increasingly worsening rates. A dire prediction is that without significant prioritization and preservation of affordable rental housing, rent percentages for low-income

families will continue to rise, exacerbating all associated issues: mental illness, substance abuse, educational performance, and job acquisition (Charette et al., 2015).

The Problem

Availability of affordable housing is a compelling and real problem. Safe, affordable rental units do not exist to meet the demands of the millions of Americans who are paying more than half of their income in rental costs. Place Called Home addresses the co-occurring social problems of homelessness and affordable housing in its corner of the world. The agency is meeting a real need that exists, a gap in available housing to support local residents.

Social and economic costs related to homelessness are staggering and often escape the perspective of middle- and upper-class populations. Frequently the question arises: Why are people with jobs homeless? To afford a two-bedroom apartment in the U.S., you need, on average an annual income of $39,360 or a full-time job with an hourly rate of $18.92 or 2.6 full-time jobs at minimum wage. The estimated mean renter wage in the United States is $14.64 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). A single mother earning minimum wage cannot cover the cost of a two-bedroom apartment on her salary, and that is without beginning to calculate daycare costs if her children require care.

Homelessness is an economic problem that has other contributing factors, but none of the issues is beyond solving. Educating the community on the economic realities of homelessness is vital to successful adoption of change initiatives. Without a doubt, domestic violence, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy contribute to issues of homelessness, as well as social causes like institutionalized racism, oppression, and structural causes relating to our volatile economic situation (Bassuk et al., 2014). But through a combined effort within our communities, we can provide shelter, hope, and stability to homeless individuals.

Funding to support the homeless nationwide is substantial. According to endhomelessness.org, our country currently spends $40,000 annually for each homeless person when calculating shelters, health care costs, the costs associated with incarceration, and other support systems. Critics sometimes profess "It's not MY problem," but in reality, it IS our problem because each homeless person in the US costs taxpayers $40,000 annually. The homeless fill prisons, emergency rooms, and public parks (Rogers et al, 2016).

The Program

Place Called Home is a small nonprofit agency supported by local volunteer groups, and expanding through partnerships with Loaves & Fishes Ministry, Department of Human Services, and the local Housing Authority. Donations are acquired through private donors, local construction companies and demolition teams. Volunteers support the agency in completion of property renovations. Currently the agency has two properties being rented to low income

families who could not locate safe, affordable housing prior to their engagement with Place Called Home. The agency has plans to purchase additional properties, renovate them, and make them available to low income families being threatened with homelessness. Their volunteer team of renovators in the community come together to support what they see as a worthwhile, laudable project.

The agency co-directors of Place Called Home, Fremont County, bring personal experience to the issue of affordable housing and homelessness in their community. The family began fostering in 2005. They cared for 27 children over a dozen years and witnessed first-hand the struggle of families to find affordable housing. In 2007, they met a special family through foster care with whom they established a long-term relationship. Recently, the family found themselves in dire straits when their housing became cost-prohibitive. Their friends stepped in to find affordable housing for them, and found themselves face-to-face with the reality that a single mom working full-time did not make enough money to qualify for any housing in their community. The friends purchased a mobile home, renovated, and moved the family in. This experience led the couple to think about other families unable to find safe, affordable housing. Place Called Home was born.

The Gift of Knowledge

The concept of Place Called Home dovetailed perfectly with an opportunity afforded one of the directors through her employer, an online university. The university has in place a program called Gift of Knowledge (GOK) to benefit employees in pursuit of both personal and professional enrichment. Employees may complete academic programs offered through the university free of charge for undergraduate programs, and with a small payment each term for graduate programs. The university established its GOK program to support employee academic development as they pursued careers at the institution. The secondary objective of the program was to provide a first-hand view into the student experience with the intent of leveraging that insight to improve overall customer service. The university asserts that investment in its employees and their education is an important component in the success of the community of professionals.

The opportunity to gain knowledge about human services from experienced, credentialed professors teaching in the program fit elegantly into the development of Place Called Home. As a GOK student, the co-director was able to garner a great deal of information and insight into the process of establishing a nonprofit agency. The Capstone Project in the Master's in Human Services degree requires students to develop a plan to implement a full program in human services. The student was able to develop the focus, mission, and objectives of Place Called Home, with the assistance of experienced, gifted educators at the university. The guidance was invaluable in directing the development of the agency.

During the time the co-director was enrolled in the Master's in Human Services Program with the university, Place Called Home came into its own. Applying knowledge gained through a grant writing course at the university, the co-director developed documents to file for grant funding. Place Called Home continues to seek funds to expand its inventory of affordable housing units. The funds will permit the agency to purchase low cost properties, renovate them, and make them available to low-income families. The objective is to continue expanding options for safe, affordable housing using funds generated through rent payments and grants to support purchases. Initial goals are to add 2-3 properties per year for the first 3-4 years, establishing a community of 10 mobile homes.

The key to continuously thriving as a company in a competitive business sector rests on having a sound strategy for hiring, developing, and retaining talent. The university maximizes its talent development through its emphasis on employee engagement and retention to sustain staffing levels in growing times, and to ensure key talent with critical knowledge base do not take their talents elsewhere. The university's Gift of Knowledge program provides employees with resources for professional and personal development, which in turn improves overall performance. This strategy reduces the cost and time for recruitment and improves overall employee morale and retention rates.

Benefits

The return on investment for companies that contribute to furthering their employees' education can be substantial, a win-win for employer and employees. Whether it helps employees to become more proficient in their current position or it prepares them for a better chance at promotion, acquiring additional skills and knowledge benefits employees in many ways. A well-trained and well-educated workforce helps companies to achieve long-term viability and profitability (McCann, 2015). Benefits for employers who support employees' education include acquisition of a highly skilled workforce with updated technology skills and awareness of current trends. Studies also support the contention that companies who invest in their employees retain happy workers with high levels of morale and job satisfaction. Happy employees are often loyal employees with high levels of productivity. Employees who pursue additional skill sets also position themselves for advancement and promotion (McCann, 2015).

Place Called Home Logic Model

The university's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Human Services. The capstone project in the Master of Science program is a culminating experience leveraging skills and knowledge acquired throughout the program. Integration and synthesis of program content is applied to development of a human services

program or project. Place Called Home evolved throughout the Master's program coursework, bringing the program to a close with a logic model and set of program parameters.

Figure 1. Place Called Home Logic Model

Place Called Home Logic Model		
Mission/Goal: Place Called Home will provide safe, affordable housing to low-income working families in Fremont County.		
Problem/Situation: Safe, affordable housing is not available to meet the demands of low-income working families in Fremont County.		
Program Process		
Inputs	Activities/Interventions	Objectives
Staff	Provides affordable housing options for low-income working families	Will provide affordable housing for 5 families in the first year.
Volunteers	Connects clients with support services in the community	Will connect 75% of clients with support services in first 30 days.
Resources	Establishes resources to purchase property and supplies	Will fund raise and grant write to establish resources of $50,000 in the first two years to purchase land and initial properties.

Intervention: Place Called Home will provide safe, affordable housing to low-income working families in Fremont County, Colorado.

Purpose: Place Called Home will join a network of nonprofit agencies in Fremont County focused on making safe, affordable housing available to low-income working families. Without a place to call homes, families are challenged to meet daily activities like personal hygiene, food preparation, rest needs, and work and school obligations.

Objective: Within its first 12 months, Place Called Home will make safe, affordable housing available to five families in Fremont County. Long-term objectives include subsequent growth at 2-3 homes per year for the next 3-4 years, culminating in a community of 10 homes.

Intervention: Families served by Place Called Home will be assessed upon enrollment and connected to additional support services as needed.

Purpose: Place Called Home is part of a network of nonprofit agencies in Fremont County that includes mental health, addiction, and health services. Once families are safely housed, they are able to begin addressing other co-existing issues that may be complicating their lives, including mental illness, physical illness, and addiction.

Objective: Families will be assessed and connected with support services within the first 30 days of being served by Place Called Home, with 75% of families being successfully connected and served within those 30 days.

Intervention: Initial resources through fundraising and grant writing will support purchase of land, mobile homes for renovation, and materials. Following initial funding, the agency will be self-sustaining through housing vouchers and tenant contributions.

Purpose: Place Called Home seeks to establish a self-sustaining community of affordable housing units. Initial grants and donations will fund property purchases and materials. Following initial grant contributions and donations, the agency will be self-sustaining through housing vouchers and tenant contributions.

Objective: Place Called Home will establish a self-sustaining community.

Application of Theoretical Perspective on Interventions

Intervention 1

Place Called Home will provide safe, affordable housing to low-income working families in Fremont County, Colorado. This intervention supports Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, developed in 1943 as a "theory of human motivation" (Maslow, 2000, p. 3). The five sets of goals, what Maslow called basic needs, are arranged in a "hierarchy of prepotency," meaning they build on one another. Only when the foundational goals have been met – specifically physiological and safety - can the individual pursue higher goal sets, including love, esteem, and self-actualization. If hunger, thirst, clothing, and shelter have not been provided, the individual uses all energy and effort in pursuit of those basic needs. With respect to the family unit, love, caring, and building of esteem are secondary to ensuring the family is fed and safe. Application of Maslow's Theory to the program intervention for Place Called Home demands recognition of the base need to first provide permanent, supportive housing to remove the need to constantly search for stability and safety.

Intervention 2

Families served by Place Called Home will be assessed upon enrollment and connected with additional support services. Bandura's Social Learning Theory, and particularly his idea of self-efficacy, supports this intervention (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). The objective of any intervention plan to is to change the direction the family is going to a positive, productive course. In order to redirect energies and efforts and overcome social disparities, the family must address existing obstacles like mental illness, physical illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Bandura understands people as conscious, thinking beings who can affect their environment. Contact with mental health professionals, substance abuse experts, family counselors, and other professionals will provide the family with the guidance they need to recover and move forward.

Intervention 3

Families served by Place Called Home will be part of a community and will provide community service in the maintenance and upkeep of their surroundings on a monthly basis. Social Exchange Theory applies to an intervention that requires an exchange of effort for the benefit of being part of a community. Social Exchange Theory in part argues that all elements of social existence involve an exchange of resources or rewards between individuals or groups of individuals (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010, p. 138). Peter Blau was engaged in examining the links between daily interactions individuals have and the structure of society, including economic systems and belief systems. Blau's social rewards included social acceptance, social approval, rest, and prestige. Contributing to the well-being of a community builds on Social Exchange Theory qualities of engagement and participation (Emerson, 1976).

Problem Approaches from the Micro, Meso, and Macro Perspective

Homeless families are consumed with meeting fundamental needs: a safe place to live. Preoccupation with meeting these demands requires the individual's full attention, leaving little else for the family. Meeting physiological needs addresses and corrects the problem on a micro level as it allows the family to move beyond the daily pursuit of shelter and safety.

Children have difficulty studying or paying attention in school when they are worried about hunger, concerned about their safety, fearful of the future, and helpless to offer support. The family's sense of security and belonging is at risk when days are filled with meeting basic needs. They are unable to pursue friendship, self-esteem, confidence, respect of and by others (Datta, 2010; McLeod, 2016). These higher levels involve relationships and engagement with the world from a Meso level including day care, school, and peer groups.

The macro system level involves social disparities that are multi-faceted and generational. Recognizing the levels and interconnectedness of social disparities allows for interventions to connect clients to services, to overcome obstacles of single parent households, lack of education, and subsequent poverty. By working with families and communities to meet basic human needs, they are given the tools they need to build their own lives and well-being, and to then engage with the world on a much broader, more encompassing way.

Funding Place Called Home

Place Called Home is initially being self-funded by its co-founders. Purchase and renovation of homes has been a labor of love as the program works toward small business licensure and nonprofit status. Ongoing funding is currently being generated through housing payments made by current residents. The agency prepared and submitted grants for capital funding and launched a fund-raising endeavor November 2017. The agency will seek both public and private funding sources.

Grant funding opportunities specifically in Colorado for affordable housing are numerous. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs HOME Program (2017) provides grants to nonprofits and private developers to support affordable housing for residents. Place Called Home would qualify for grants as an agency that rehabilitates homes for rental to low-income families. HOME lists as one of its priorities to increase the availability of safe, affordable housing in Colorado. The site also notes, "We assist developers and local governments in creating more affordable housing through gap funding for acquisition, rehabilitation and new construction projects to prevent homelessness and provide rental assistance" (CO Department of Local Affairs, 2017).

The Daniels Fund (2017) is a significant grants program in the four-state region in the West – Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. Homelessness and disadvantaged families is one of the grant program areas of focus, a good fit for Place Called Home. Guidelines include the need to engage in quality work to achieve significant results. The nonprofit agency has had solid initial results with the purchase of three low-income housing locations and bringing together low-income working families with these property opportunities. Daniels noted that he had great compassion for people struggling to meet basic human needs, and his desire was to help them get back on their feet. Placed Called Home meets his criteria of transitional housing & supportive services. The agency is also located in a rural area, which is special area of concern for Daniels.

Place Called Home is a small, family-owned and operated nonprofit agency in its infancy. Obstacles will be credibility and history. Although a track record of two existing affordable housing properties exists, it is a small portfolio. Grants are highly competitive and Place Called Home is a neophyte in the grant writing process, but willing to learn and to take advice from veterans of the grant writing world. Seed money and support is essential for building

the portfolio of homes as each project is labor and cost intensive. Place Called Home is staffed by individuals working part-time on the program at this point, a limited number of hours. Long-term goal is to have the team work full-time on building and expanding Place Called Home.

Projected Results and Outcomes

In its first year, Place Called Home will make safe, affordable housing available to five families in Fremont County. Families will be assessed and connected with services within the first 30 days of being served by the agency. Long term, the program will continue to establish and maintain affordable housing in the County working in partnership with Loaves & Fishes, Department of Human Services, and the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments, administrators of Section 8 housing. Ideally the agency will have a steady source of funding through rental payments via residents and housing vouchers. No less than 75% of funding received from existing properties will be reinvested in the agency's purchase and renovation of new properties. Place Called Home will continue applying for grants and soliciting funding sources to expand its inventory of affordable homes and maintain the existing ones. The ultimate goal for the program is to establish a community of 10 mobile homes over a period of 3-4 years.

The mission of Place Called Home is to provide affordable, safe housing to low-income working families in Fremont County. Secondary goals are to connect families with support services, and to establish a sense of belonging in the community. The most effective evaluation design would be a posttest-only approach for all three of the proposed interventions. The posttest only design is simple and straightforward, and can be facilitated with one group (no comparison group) or with two groups (including a comparison group) of participants. Program directors will complete the evaluation design with one group. Using the posttest-only design participants receive an intervention and are tested afterwards. Posttest-only approaches are an "elegant modification" of the basic experimental design and can be advantageous (Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, 2010).

Type of Evaluation

Program evaluations are conducted in nonprofits to determine if the program is proving to be useful to its constituents. Three interventions will guide Place Called Home: the agency will provide safe, affordable housing to low-income working families in Fremont County, Colorado; families served will be assessed upon enrollment and connected to support services as needed; families will participate in community service activities to support the agency. The effectiveness of the proposed interventions for the program will be evaluated using goals-based evaluation to determine how well the agency is doing in its ongoing operations, and

outcomes-based evaluation to ensure the co-Directors and the Board of Directors are making the right choices in pursuit of the agency's mission. Needs assessment will be applied to prioritize demand for services among clients and to measure client satisfaction.

Evaluation for intervention 1: Place Called Home will provide safe, affordable housing to low-income working families in Fremont County. A goals-based evaluation will be used to determine if the program meets the objective of providing affordable housing to five families in the first year of operation. A goals-based evaluation for this intervention would be more useful than others because it allows agencies to evaluate the degree to which the program is meeting predetermined goals or objectives (McNamara, 2005).

Evaluation for intervention 2: Families served by Place Called Home will be assessed upon enrollment and connected to support services as needed. The agency will use a needs assessment to evaluate the demand for support services among clients and to determine if the agency has met its goal of connecting 75% of our families with support services in the first 30 days. The agency directors acknowledge they are making some assumptions that clients of Place Called Home require support services. A needs assessment would provide information for program planning, including what services are most in demand by clients and how the agency can best connect clients with support services (Royse et al., 2010). The agency's primary interest in evaluating this intervention is to determine if the goal of connecting all client families with necessary support services has been achieved.

Evaluation for intervention 3: Families will participate in a community service program to support the agency, participating in fundraising activities. A qualitative method of evaluation will be used to collect data on the validity of a community service hour program to build a sense of camaraderie. The intervention of service hours is intended to build a sense of camaraderie and community among the agency clients. The philosophy behind the intervention is that clients of Place Called Home are residents within communities and supporting those communities builds a sense of civic pride and belonging. A qualitative method of evaluation would allow for interviews, case studies, and narrative analysis. Qualitative methods are effective for formative evaluation, which applies to Place Called Home where the primary goal is to gather information to improve the program before engaging in full implementation (Royse et al., 2010).

Evaluation Design

The mission of Place Called Home is to provide affordable, safe housing to low-income families in Fremont County. Secondary goals are to connect families with support services, and to establish a sense of belonging in the housing community through service hours. The most

effective evaluation design for all three interventions would be a posttest-only approach. The posttest only design is simple, straightforward, and can be facilitated with one group (no comparison group) or with two groups (including a comparison group) of participants. We would complete our evaluation design with one group. Using the posttest-only design participants receive an intervention and are tested afterwards. Posttest-only approaches are an "elegant modification" of the basic experimental design and can serve as advantageous when matching pretests with posttests is not desired (Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, 2010).

Place Called Home wants to know if the families served benefitted from the housing intervention provided, and what changes should be made to the program to improve efficiency. A narrow group of clients will receive agency services, low-income families in Fremont County seeking affordable housing. At least initially all of families will come through local agencies, and all will have been approved for housing vouchers through nonprofit sources. This may change moving forward, but the agency's initial plan is to serve only this narrow group to ensure a source of income for the agency through housing stipends, and to reduce the substantial backlog of approved Section 8 families that cannot locate suitable housing. The data collected will guide is how the agency can improve processes in working with families, and the status of support services accessed by the families.

Conclusion

Place Called Home seeks to address the issue of homelessness and lack of affordable housing within its corner of the world. The agency's five-year plan is to establish a community of 10 mobile homes providing safe, affordable housing to low-income working families. Additional interventions for agency clients will include connection to support services, and opportunities to build a sense of community and pay-it-forward. A plan for program evaluation, data collection, and funding is in place. Ultimately, clients will be part of movement to ensure everyone has a place to call home. Community members, a college program, and a collaborative approach to affordable housing in one corner of the world bridge the gaps and offer hope and stability to clients and their families.

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Building Connections: Preparing Students and Agencies for a Better Internship Experience

Tara K. Hammar, PhD, LMFT and Angela Furney, MA
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Abstract

In the context of a well-established baccalaureate degree program in Human Services, this paper describes a three-semester sequence of field coursework that supports students in their academic progression. Instructor-led activities include readiness assessment, professional development endeavors, and supported conversations around maintaining a successful placement. Students benefit most when academic departments creatively engage community partners, intentionally grow and develop successful internship sites, and fully support students and supervisors along the way. This paper provides examples and ideas for academic departments to prepare students for success in the Human Services field.

Introduction

Certain academic interventions create optimal learning environments for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Kuh (2008) describes high-impact activities instructors can use in the classroom as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE). These activities include internships, learning communities, service learning, study abroad opportunities, and senior-level culminating experiences (Kuh, 2008).

Human Services degree programs expect that students will connect their learning in the classroom to practical experiences in the field. The National Organization for Human Services (2015) and the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (2013) provide guidance and direction to departments regarding the various responsibilities to clients, students, and employers as students engage in field experiences. More specifically, faculty and educators should use tailored interventions and activities to support students along their academic journeys vis-a-vis their field experiences in the community. As such, the authors describe the three semester sequence of field progression in a well-established baccalaureate program. In addition, the authors articulate strategies to improve connections with local agencies that impact the experience of students and strengthen the relationships between academia and the local community.

University at a Glance

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) is a thriving and diverse campus. The university, located in the heart of Denver, Colorado, serves over 19,000 students. According to the Metropolitan State University of Denver Fact Sheet (2017), the University recently achieved the designation of "Hispanic Serving Institution" by the federal government, a key breakthrough that occurred after the Latino enrollment exceeded 26%. With 86 bachelor's and 5 master's programs, the University is home to a diverse student body, 29% of which are students of color and the average student age is 25.

With over 400 majors and minors, the Department of Human Services & Counseling at Metropolitan State University of Denver prepares students to make an immediate impact in the fields of Addiction Studies, Mental Health Counseling, Fire and Emergency Response, High-Risk Youth and Nonprofit Studies. At the core of the curriculum is an emphasis on experiential learning both in the classroom and through intensive field experience.

Field Progression

In the Department of Human Services and Counseling at MSU Denver, students take three sequential fieldwork courses before graduation. Each course has specific and well-articulated learning objectives (see Table 1). All three courses require that students demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Department of Human Services and Counseling Field Manual for Students (2018). In addition, each of the three courses use the same textbook, *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic Development in Experiential Learning* (Sweitzer & King, 2014). This decision was made intentionally by the field faculty to provide a common thread for all field courses, regardless of instructor.

The first course, Pre-Field Placement Seminar, is a one-credit experience taught by the Field Coordinator in the department which focuses on the theme of discovery. The second course, Practicum, is an eight-credit experience taught by various field faculty in the department which allows students opportunities to practice skills learned in the classroom. The final course, Professional Internship, is a 12-credit experience based on the expectation that students are now able to demonstrate the skills obtained throughout their degree progression.

Pre-Field Placement Seminar

In the one-credit Pre-Field Placement Seminar, the Field Coordinator creates an academic environment in which students begin to discover how their personal qualities translate into successful professional behaviors. The activities in this class include readiness assessment, classroom instruction, and guidance on selecting appropriate learning environments. The course assesses students on various job readiness skills and provides instruction on the various core

competencies articulated in the Department of Human Services and Counseling Field Manual for Students (2018).

In the Pre-Field Placement Seminar, the Field Coordinator employs a variety of learning strategies to engage students in course topics. Classroom lecture covers department policies, professionalism in the workplace, and an overview of the field. The Field Coordinator sets the expectation that, to be successful, a student will secure the right agency and the right supervisor at the right time. Students are tasked with updating their resume and writing an effective cover letter stating their professional qualifications and personal interests in the agency. Interviewing skills are taught and refined through experiential activities, including engagement with the Office of Career Services for a videotaped mock interview. Students are introduced to the concept of a learning contract, the document that serves to guide all intentional learning activities throughout each semester. Embedded in each class meeting is a commitment that each student becomes more self-aware about how their individual interests and experiences may impact their success in the field.

Practicum

The second class in the field progression is an eight-credit Practicum course that creates opportunities for students to practice the knowledge gained in the classroom under the supervision of experienced professionals in the field. In addition to working an average of 20 hours a week at their approved agency, students meet as a class to learn about relevant topics in the field and engage in group discussions about various professional topics. The classroom atmosphere is best described as a casual seminar-style format in which students' weekly concerns inform the discussion alongside selected topics taught by university field faculty.

Topics addressed include conflict management, supervision, termination, and self-care. While the assigned textbook (Sweitzer & King, 2014) serves as the primary source of information, additional resources supplement classroom discussion (e.g., Woodside, 2017). In an effort to foster professional development, students are expected to provide one another with feedback and support as the various topics are explored. It is important to note that the topics/conversations discussed in each class meeting provide a foundation for students to write a reflective paper to be submitted in the subsequent class meeting.

Professional Internship

The capstone 12-credit Professional Internship course expects students to demonstrate their proficiency in delivering quality services to the community. This course builds upon the emergent skills developed in Practicum. One unique feature of this course is the increased role that students play in their own learning. For example, rather than the instructor providing content about professional topics, students pair up to co-facilitate class discussions on important issues in the field. Topics covered include issues of social justice, burnout and compassion fatigue, ethical considerations, and trauma-informed care. In addition, by the end of the

450-hour internship, students have created a meaningful plan for post-secondary success including entry-level job negotiation skills and graduate school planning.

Building Connections in the Community

The Department of Human Services and Counseling faculty at MSU Denver are committed to engaging agencies and site supervisors beyond their traditional roles. The importance of collaborative partnerships and their impact on successful internships is documented in the literature (King & Sweitzer, 2014). It is important for departments to utilize all available resources and strategies for developing connections between local community agencies and the university. For example, our faculty engages site supervisors by routinely inviting them to serve as panel members and guest speakers in the classroom. Our advisory board membership often includes site supervisors who have demonstrated a particular interest in or commitment to our department. Finally, the adjunct instructor pool in the department is comprised largely of professionals with connections that directly benefit our students searching for appropriate field opportunities.

Another unique feature of the department is the commitment to providing free, on-going training for community practitioners and students alike. The Providers for Youth Partnership was established to boost the community's knowledge and expertise regarding relevant topics that impact clients and agencies in the community. Recent topics include Trauma-Informed Care, opioid addiction, and suicidality in youth. During the trainings, students cultivate professional connections and agencies are able to highlight their programs and recruit new staff and interns. Over the years, many participants have evolved from student to intern, intern to employee, and employee to supervisor.

The department has a unique advantage in that it employs a full-time Field Coordinator who supports students, faculty, and community agencies equally. A significant portion of the role involves the development and management of relationships between students and agencies. Yet, the Field Coordinator also engages directly with the field faculty to discern how students are actively performing at any given point of the semester. This information is then utilized to inform the practice of on-going development and cultivation of site relationships. Without the Field Coordinator, it would be impossible for the department to deliver on the promise of high quality experiential education.

Conclusion

Diverse and meaningful baccalaureate field experiences differentiate Human Services students from other related majors. It is critical for Human Services departments to maintain a commitment to supporting students as they transition from the classroom to fieldwork. Therefore, it behooves departments to allocate resources to the field experience and remain committed to engaging students, faculty, and community partners is the pursuit of successful field experiences.

Table 1
Student Learning Objectives

Course: Pre-Field *Discover*	Course: Practicum *Practice*	Course: Internship *Demonstrate*
1. Identify departmental policies and procedures relating to field placement	1. Apply the social/political/economic context for their field placement site and the effectiveness of the agency in supporting the mission and goals established by that agency	1. Formulate learning goals and execute a learning plan/contract
2. Describe the attitudes, behaviors, and qualities of a human service professional	2. Formulate learning goals and a learning plan/contract	2. Understand various professional development concepts and relationships within the organization required for participation in community fieldwork
3. Explain a learning goal with related learning activities and assessment methods	3. Assess their own performance in comparison with the standards established for the field of Human Services	3. Analyze and resolve conflicts between role requirements and ethical considerations arising from field placement
4. Design a resume for the field of human services	4. Demonstrate a plan to effectively engage with their supervisor to enhance their learning experience	4. Assess and understand the role of supervision in community field word
5. Apply professional interviewing skills and dress codes	5. Interpret the ethical appropriateness of their own decisions and actions as well as those of their colleagues	5. Evaluate and choose the appropriate methods of intervention and/or problem solving
6. Identify potential placement sites that match individual learning goals	6. Examine the impact of diversity on the experiences of individual clients and the agency as a whole	6. Value and appreciate cultural diversity in professional workplace settings
7. Conduct informational interviews with potential placement sites	7. Evaluate their own performance in relation to the learning contract and expectations of the agency	7. Conduct informational interviews with potential placement sites
	8. Demonstrate actions and attitudes that will successfully facilitate the completion of their placement	

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**Community Collaborations with a Local Housing and Redevelopment Authority
and Human Service Professionals in Training**

Robert Jay Palmer
Associate Professor Department of Social Work Winona State University
James Kirk
Associate Professor Department of Special Education Winona State University

Abstract

Children living in low income communities often lack the resources that promote positive life outcomes. This may be particularly true for children who live in subsidized housing communities. University students who are entering the human service field and intend to work with children need to understand the conditions that support positive outcomes for these children. This paper discusses how two university academic programs, Special Education and Social Work, have joined with a subsidized housing community to promote positive youth outcomes in that community. We describe how we are using an afterschool program and the creation of a community garden to teach university students how to promote positive youth development.

Introduction

This paper describes a collaboration between two Winona State University academic programs, Special Education and Social Work, and the Winona Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA). The purpose of this collaboration is to support the children living in low income housing and provide meaningful learning experiences for Winona State students. Winona State University, part of the Minnesota state college system, is a midsized university with an average enrollment of 8,000 students. Located in the rural community of Winona Minnesota, the school and its students have a large impact on the community through faculty research and volunteering, student internships, and course projects. The Winona Housing Redevelopment Authority is a HUD funded agency that provides public housing in Winona County MN. It owns four public housing sites with a capacity of 300 housing units. The project discussed in this paper takes place at one of these sites, Maplewood Townhomes.

Since 2007 the Winona State University Special Education Department has operated Kids First, a free after school program at Maplewood Townhomes. Kids First is assisted by university students as part of their requirement in an Introduction to Special Education course, and it offers a variety of education-based programing. Kids First offers a much-needed service to the children at Maplewood Townhomes and in vivo experiences for university students who want a career in working with children.

Our project consists of Bird Club, a reading program within Kids First, and the development of a community garden on the Maplewood property. The project goals are twofold: to increase the developmental supports available to youth living at Maplewood and to provide meaningful and enriching learning opportunities for university students. In this paper we briefly discuss the theory that has guided our thinking, and the progress of the project to date.

Literature Review

Children and adolescents living in low-income housing are often exposed to multiple stressors including crowded housing, food insecurity, and a lack of adequate medical care (Wright, Chau, & Aratani, 2010). The cumulative effect of these and other stressors have been shown to be significant risk factors for behavioral disorders and academic struggles (Tornquist, Mastropieri, Scruggs, Berry, & Halloran, 2009). These struggles, in turn, positively correlate with involvement with the juvenile justice system (Stevens & Wilkerson, 2010). Addressing these risk factors is important to successful youth development.

Starting in the 1990s, the intervention models created to address these problems have been shifting from a deficit approach focused on preventing negative outcomes, to a strengths approach focused on enhancing individual and community assets (Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). An outgrowth of this shift is the Positive Youth Model Development Model(PYD). Drawing from the ecological and strengths perspectives, the goal of PYD is enhancing the natural talents, interests and self-agency that youth bring to their lives (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). When an environment offers what Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) refer to as the 5 c's of PYD (competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring), youth are more likely to successfully navigate their world. Programs that take a PYD approach to serving youth are more successful when they include skill building activities, positive adult interaction, and opportunities for youth to make meaningful contributions to their community (Lerner, 2004).

Based on the five C's of PYD and their own research, the Search Institute developed a list of 40 developmental assets that provide the foundation for healthy development of children and adolescents. These assets are comprised of both internal assets such as personal characteristics, and external assets such as family and community resources and support. The following chart lists these developmental assets.

Support	Family support, positive family communication, adult relationships, caring neighborhood, caring school climate, parent involvement in schooling.
Empowerment	Community values youth, youth as resources, service to others, safety.
Boundaries and expectations	Family boundaries, school boundaries, neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, high expectations.

Positive values	Caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint.
Social competencies	Planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution.
Positive identity	Personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future.
Constructive use of time	Creative activities, youth programs, religious community, time at home.
Commitment to learning	Achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, bonding to school, reading for pleasure.

Search Institute (2010).

After school programs

Children who attend well-supervised afterschool programs often display better work habits, task persistence, social skills, pro-social behaviors, academic performance, and less aggressive behavior at the end of the school year, (Durlack, & Weissberg, 2007; Wong, 2009). To help address the issues associated with growing up in poverty, many afterschool programs are located in low-income neighborhoods to allow at-risk youth to access academic support and participate in recreational activities commonly afforded to their wealthier peers (Halpern, 1999). Fox and Newman (1997) found quality afterschool programs for low-income children provide a benefit in that they create a safe haven from negative influences. Many after school programs utilize a PYD model in their programming. These programs provide developmental assets such as constructive use of time, positive adult relationships, and academic enrichment while helping children develop the positive values and interpersonal competence they need to become contributing citizens in society (Fox, & Newman, 1997). Although after school programs are only one of the many community resources that can provide developmental assets, they may be particularly important in low income communities where other resources are limited.

Community gardens

Children living in low income neighborhoods face environmental conditions that restrict their access to developmental assets. Among these are limited recreational resources such as safe parks, recreation centers, and organized sports (Allen, Alaimo, Elam & Perry, 2008). Many of these children also face food insecurity. Children who experience food insecurity have fewer

developmental assets such as good health, strong family connections, and socially engaged adults (Shtasel-Gottlieb, Deepak, Yang & Goodman, 2014). Developing community gardens in these neighborhoods can address some of these developmental asset deficits. For example, working in a community garden can offer youth opportunities to constructively use their time, engage in planning and decision-making, interact with caring adults, and make contributions to their family and community. Community gardens can also strengthen community bonding. Shinew, Glover, and Parry (2004) found that a community "garden fosters greater social trust among diverse groups, forms norms of reciprocity, and strengthens social networks within the neighborhood" (p. 336).

There is a large body of literature supporting the efficacy of using asset-based approaches when working with economically disadvantaged youth (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Both after school programs and community gardens have the potential to enhance positive youth development through providing specific developmental assets. Our project aims to combine after school curriculum with a community garden in a manner that synergizes their ability to offer developmental assets while providing valuable experiential learning opportunities for university students who run these programs.

Project Development

The first phase of this project began in 2015 with the development of Bird Club. Bird Club is a unique collaboration between the Winona State Department of Special Education and Maplewood Townhomes, a HRA public housing site. This is a group that meets once a week at an after-school program located at Maplewood. Membership is voluntary with an average attendance of 15-25 children who are in grades 1- 5. The demographics are roughly 50% African American and 50% Hmong. Almost all of these students attend a STEM elementary school. University students work with these children to help build literacy skills and greater appreciation of birds through the vehicle of the group. Bird Club curriculum is intended to promote the developmental assets of constructive use of time, achievement and motivation, and reading for pleasure. Bird Club is an entity that exists within the overall structure of Kids First, the after-school program at Maplewood Townhomes. There are other clubs in this program including math club and book club. Since attendance is voluntary it is important to make these programs fun and engaging.

Students in the Introduction to Special Course are required to spend two hours a week at Kids First. Students who participate in this practicum are recruited to help facilitate Bird Club. The intervention that we use is the Read Adapt Answer and Comprehend (RAAC) (Therrien, Kirk, Woods-Graves, 2012). The practicum students learn how to choose the grade level passage that they feel is the appropriate level for the child that they were working with. Students also incorporate hands-on activities as well as engaging in as many conversations about birds as possible. This multi-sensory approach is an attempt to help deepen comprehension of the bird

passages as well as instill in the children a deeper understanding and appreciation of the birds that they see on a regular basis.

Target birds are identified and are studied throughout the semester. Activities such as coloring and word searches are also done with the students. In addition to these activities, bird feeders are filled every week while a bird list is updated to show what types of birds have visited the feeders. The combination of the reading passages and activities is designed to support the developmental assets of creative activities and youth programs.

Individuals who may struggle academically often have a limited repertoire of leisure activities. Expanding leisure skills by helping to promote understanding and appreciation of local birds helps to expand the participants' options of leisure activities. Birding is a relatively inexpensive and an intellectually engaging activity that, for many individuals, ends up being a lifelong leisure activity. There are over 40 million Americans who are birders but unfortunately there is a disproportionately low participation rate of African Americans and Asians (US DEPT of Wildlife, 2014). A benefit of this project for the university students as well as the children is the development of a greater appreciation of local birds. Together, we were all engaged as we tried to spot various types of birds. The excitement and pride on the children's faces is evidence that we have found a topic that could eventually lead to a life-long source of leisure and intellectual curiosity, and thus promoting achievement and motivation as well as creative activities.

University students involved in the project reported a substantial impact on their university experience. The Winona State University students have had greater opportunities to develop friendships with children and other university students. As part of this project, the university students have had many opportunities to practice teaching skills and supporting developmental assets. The university students have developed relationships with children who are often from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds as themselves. The group of children at Bird Club represents a broad array, which gives the university students the opportunity to work with all types of exceptional learners. As part of their involvement in this project the university students have had many opportunities to reflect on their decision to work with children. The university students have also begun to foster a greater understanding of the impact that poverty has on children's lives and the role that developmental assets can play in supporting children.

Phase two of the project began in Spring 2017 when social work students interviewed the residents of Maplewood to promote awareness and involvement in Kids First/Bird Club, and to assess their interest in starting a community garden on the property. In April 2017, social work students went door to door and were able to interview 28 of the 93 adult residents (30%). Eighty-three percent (n=23) of residents interviewed knew of the Kids First after school program. Eighty-six percent (n=24) responded that they supported having a community garden on the property. Sixty-two percent (n=17) stated that they thought that having a community garden would add to the Kids First and Bird Club programing. Thirty two percent (n=9) were

interested in having a garden plot for their family.

University students involved in this phase of the project stated that they developed a better understanding of the lives of Maplewood residents and a greater appreciation of the barriers they face. For some students, interacting with the residents and spending time in Maplewood reduced some of the stereotypes they had about subsidized housing residents. They also stated that their investment in the course assignment was higher than usual because they felt the project could have long term beneficial effects.

The next step in phase two began in the fall semester of 2017, when a social work community practice course created three projects from the resident survey data conducted the previous semester. Because residents supported integrating the garden into Bird Club programing, a group of students worked with the leader of Bird club and wrote 11 reading passages that added sustainability and gardening content into the reading curriculum of Bird Club. As with the previous reading passages, these were written to promote the developmental assets of achievement and motivation and reading for pleasure.

A second group of students worked with the leader of Bird Club to hold "Fall Feather Fest." This was a one day event at the Maplewood Community Center where residents were invited to attend with their children. The festival included games, activities, and food. The activities were centered on bird identification, gardening, and sustainability. The intention was to promote Bird Club, celebrate Bird Club members and increase interest in the community garden. Our goal through these activities was to provide developmental asset opportunities. Among these were family support, positive family communication, adult relationships, caring neighborhood, and parent involvement in schooling. In spite of a torrential rain during the event, it was successful in that 60 children and five adults attended.

A third cluster of students worked with a group of residents to create policies and procedures for the garden. Students contacted residents who expressed interest on the survey as well as adults who attended Fall Feather Fest. The group convened to create rules and procedures for the garden. The goal was to increase ownership of the garden and promote the developmental assets of family support, adult relationships, and a caring neighborhood.

As part of the project, social work students applied for and received a $2,642.00 sustainability grant from the university to cover the cost of the garden. Now with the additional funding we will work to improve the grounds at Maplewood Townhomes. This will provide the opportunity for enhancing university coursework related to sustainability and science courses at WSU.

The students involved in this phase of the project reported learning outcomes similar to those in the previous phase. Students reported that the "real world experience" made course content less abstract and easier to understand. Students stated that they see the value of using a developmental asset approach and had already begun incorporating it into their work outside of the classroom.

The next phase of our project begins in the spring semester of 2018, the project faculty leaders will work with the Winona County Restorative Justice Program, and additional community partners to build the garden. In the fall of the 2018 semester, a group of social work students will evaluate the effectiveness of the project through interviews with garden participants, and the children and university students attending Bird Club. Based on those evaluations, we will make curricular and program changes and additions. During this phase, we will begin formally researching whether our program is increasing the developmental assets for the Maplewood community

We intend to expand our partnerships both on and off campus. For example, students studying sustainability issues could do soil samples and provide consultation, or Greek Organizations or student clubs could be involved in the maintenance and continuation of the gardens and bird habitats. As for community partners, the local food Co-Op could offer cooking classes on site. The Winona County Master Gardeners could offer gardening advice. All of these activities serve the potential of increasing children's access to interested and caring adults.

Conclusion

This paper describes the beginning stages of a project designed to promote strong developmental assets in the community of Maplewood Townhomes while providing meaningful learning opportunities for university students. Although we are still in the early stages of the project, the responses we have received to date suggest that we have the potential to foster relationships that will benefit both university students and the Maplewood community. Conducting research on the impact of the program will allow us to examine its efficacy and make program improvements as we progress in the process.

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**Integrating Mindfulness Practices into a Jail-Based Substance Abuse Curriculum:
Suggestions for Successful Inclusion**

John Paulson ACSW, LCSW, MAC, LCAC, HS-BCP

Dr. Veronica Huggins, PhD, LSW
Assistant Professor, Social Work Department, University of Southern Indiana

Abstract

Mindfulness practices are now a common and established component of a variety of behavioral health interventions. Human Services practitioners utilize these skills in a variety of settings with a multitude of different conditions and populations. This includes the application of mindfulness skills for addressing substance use disorders, both for the recipients of services living in the community and for those receiving services while incarcerated. This article reviews efforts to integrate mindfulness practices into an established Substance Abuse Program (SAP) in a county jail through coordinating academic and community partners with Human Services practitioners. It also provides suggestions and recommendations for successful inclusion of mindfulness skills into such programs.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Mindfulness is a type of attentive, nonjudgmental awareness. It is a way of noticing experiences (physical sensations, emotions, thoughts) that helps to counteract the tendency to quickly and habitually label, evaluate, judge and struggle with and against such experiences, especially when they are unpleasant. By intentionally staying open to and preset with one's actual, lived experience in the moment, one counteracts the tendency to operate out of an *automatic pilot* mode of being that sustains habitual, conditioned reactions and allows room for the development of more adaptive, skillful and productive behavioral responses. This quality of awareness is cultivated and strengthened by engaging in specific practices that direct and focus attention on areas of moment-to-moment experiences, such as the breath, sensations in the body, the sense of hearing, the process of thinking, or to physical activities, including stretching, walking, and eating (Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

Mindfulness skills are now an established component of several contemporary behavioral health interventions, including Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Dialectical Behavior Therapy

(DBT). These approaches have proven to be beneficial with different populations across a variety of physical and psychological health conditions (Holt & Cottone, 2014; Sears, Tirch & Denton, 20111). These various psychotherapeutic approaches integrate mindfulness skills into their intervention, which would make them applicable only to master-degree Human Services practitioners working as mental health or addiction counselors. The skills themselves, however, can be taught and facilitated by generalist Human Services practitioners with an associate or bachelor degree or even by non-degreed paraprofessionals. This wide utility and applicability has led to a growing emphasis on mindfulness skills in Human Services practice (Holt & Cottone, 2014; Paulson, 2015) and in Human Services education (Banks, Burch & Woodside, 2016; Lahikainen & Soysa, 2014).

Most of these approaches, including MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 2013), MBCT (Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2012), MBRP (Bowen, Chawla, & Marlatt, 2011) and other derivative protocols introduce these practices in a multi-week, structured curriculum. During the course of several weeks, typically eight weeks, the facilitator introduces the exercises in a prescriptive order. Most often, the enrollment for these groups is closed, and a commonly suggested length for the group meetings is two hours. Participants are asked to engage in daily between-session practice of the specified technique (often using digital recordings to guide practice) and to log their practice. Since these programs suggest a very specific structure, one that might not always be amendable to their utilization in a fluid corrections setting, the current effort explores the adaptation of these practices to such an environment.

The Program

General Characteristics

This current project takes place at a county jail in rural Western Kentucky. Many county jails serve as Department of Corrections holding facilities, meaning that in addition to housing local residents with shorter-term sentences, they also house individuals with offenses that are more serious and with longer sentences for the state. Most county jails in Kentucky have in-house Substance Abuse Programs (SAP). These SAP programs run for six months, and inmates accepted into the program typically have offenses related to issues with substance use and addiction. Participants earn reduced sentences or reduced length of sentence (i.e. time cuts) for successfully completing the SAP program.

In the facility where this project takes place there are fifty men enrolled in the SAP program. The SAP program utilizes a therapeutic community model (De Leon, 2000). The participants are housed together separate from other inmates, they wear different uniforms than other inmates, and they have peer leaders and mentors within their cells. Two counselors facilitate the program. Both of these counselors have bachelor degrees in Human Services and addiction counseling. All SAP participants engage in a set treatment curriculum derived from

Twelve-Step Facilitation (Nowinski & Baker, 2006) and Cognitive-Behavioral Relapse Prevention (Monti, Kadden, Rohsenow, Cooney & Abrams, 2002) approaches to treatment. Connecting academia and community partners

In addition to the established SAP curriculum, the counselors in this particular program, with the encouragement of the jailer, have developed additional offerings for the participants to expand and strengthen their recovery. Some of these opportunities include anger management, parenting, and financial literacy courses. In addition to GED educational services, the jailer also secured funding to purchase tablets for program participants so that while they are in the program they can maintain and improve their use of technology. The jailer and the SAP counselors see this as necessary, especially given the increase presence of technology expectations and requirements in occupations.

Approximately eighteen months ago, several program participants expressed an interest to the SAP counselors in exploring mindfulness and meditation practices. Since the counselors were not able to identify any meditation teachers or centers in their area, they reached out to a larger community 49 miles north of the jail. This put them in contact with the primary author, who works for a regional university and who has personal and professional experiences working with and teaching mindfulness skills. Since this initial contact, the primary author travels several times a month, weekly when scheduling allows, to the jail to teach mindfulness skills.

Adapting Mindfulness to the SAP Curriculum

During the course of these months, the mindfulness skills class is now a consistent component of the SAP program. Experiences surrounding the development and implementation of this mindfulness class suggest five general categories to consider for successfully integrating mindfulness skills into the curriculum at a facility such as this one. Table 1 summarizes these considerations.

Table 1

Points to Consider for Successful inclusion of Mindfulness Practices into SAP Curricula

1. Adapting mindfulness program protocols (MBSR, MBCT, MBRP, etc.)
2. How to introduce the practices
3. Training considerations for leading mindfulness practices
4. Institutional structure, support and latitude
5. Investment and response of participants

Adapting Mindfulness Program Protocols

As mentioned previously, most mindfulness-based programs recommend a set number of sessions, extensive meeting times to cover material and engage in practice (ex. two hours), only allow participants to start at the beginning of the curriculum, and expect extensive between-meeting practice. These expectations, unfortunately, do not work in the current setting. The current project has adapted these protocols in several ways. First, the groups are shortened to an hour. Second, the group meets most weeks. Ideally, it meets once weekly, but this schedule is not always possible given the schedule of the jail, the SAP counselors, and the primary author. A third adaptation is the techniques used and the order in which they are introduced. While the current project utilizes techniques from established MBSR, MBCT and MBRP curricula, it does not follow a defined order. The techniques for the day's class are chosen based on the experience level of attendees that particular day.

The final adaptation has to do with the length of the program and participation expectations. Attendance for most mindfulness programs is required, since the content of the current week builds upon previous weeks. The SAP community is a fluid one. New participants begin, others graduate, and still others are removed from the program for violating SAP policies. Given this dynamic, it did not seem practical to make this class a closed group. Participants can start the group any time they wish during their involvement in the SAP program. SAP participants are also not required to attend the mindfulness class. While they must participate in other aspects of the SAP curriculum, this class is a voluntary one. Because the program lasts for six months, participants can also engage in mindfulness longer than the typical eight weeks. How to introduce the practices

Trying to introduce mindfulness practices into and establishing a class in a facility, especially a corrections facility can be challenging. Often administrators are reluctant to endorse practices with which they are not familiar. This can be especially true when such practices have a religious or spiritual connotation, such as mindfulness skills. While there is now a well-established literature and research base supporting the utilization of mindfulness skills in therapeutic interventions, there can still be a reluctance to these practices given their Buddhist origins.

The Prison Mindfulness Institute (Crisp & Maull, 2009) suggests two routes for introducing these practices into facilities. The first is as a religious offering, and the other is as psychological coping skills and stress management practices . The current project adopts the latter approach. The primary author introduces these practices to administrators and participants as psychological coping skills that can be practiced by anyone without the need to identify with a particular tradition. While efforts are made to answer questions and to assure participants that these practices do not conflict with any self-identified faith heritage they might have, it is also important for facilitators of these techniques to respect participant hesitancies on religious grounds and not to force participants to engage in these practices against their will (Paulson,

2015; Sears, 2015). This coincides well with the before mentioned characteristic of the program that the mindfulness class is voluntary.

Training considerations for leading mindfulness practices

One of the primary considerations for a program is determining who will lead the classes and facilitate the mindfulness training. This could be a community volunteer. Such a volunteer could be one who has a background in mindfulness practices, such as a yoga or meditation teacher. This person might not necessarily be a clinician or have any training in mental health and addiction issues. The volunteer could also possibly be a clinician from the community who has a background in these practices and who has a background working in behavioral health (as is the case with the primary author). A program could also decide that the counselor might lead the practices and facilitate the class if they are trained specifically in these approaches. Over the course of the past year, one of the SAP counselors for this particular program has consistently sat in on and participated during the group to develop competency with these practices.

This raises an important issue concerning training considerations for whoever is leading the mindfulness practices. It is essential for the competent use of these approaches that the leader have their own established, consistent mindfulness practice. This allows the facilitator to be familiar with mindfulness, to be able to explain and guide participants through practices, to recognize and help participants work through common struggles, and to speak from a place of experiential wisdom regarding these practices (Sears, 2015). With the popularity and proliferation of mindfulness, there are a wide variety of workbooks on the topic, most of which either come with audio CDs with guided recordings of the practices or links to download or stream MP3 files online. Although this is a wonderful resource, the facilitator of these practices cannot merely pick up a book or turn on a recording and expect participants to be successful with these practices.

Institutional Structure, Support, and Latitude

There are several beneficial aspects present in the current program that facilitate successful cooperation between the jail, the SAP program, and the primary author's university, ones which might not be replicable in other similar settings. The jailer, for example, is supportive of treatment and rehabilitative efforts and encourages the SAP counselors to be innovative. This might not always be the case with administrators. The jailer and the correctional officers also have a great deal of familiarity with, as well as trust and confidence in the SAP counselors. Both of the SAP counselors prior to earning their degrees were not only correctional officers themselves, but both had worked at this particular facility. I f jail administrators or correctional officers are not accepting and supportive of the program, it has little chance of being successful.

Another issue has to do with the facilitator and if or how to reimburse the facilitator for the service they provide or to expect them to be volunteers. The primary author does not receive any financial compensation for travel or for facilitating the mindfulness class. The primary

author's academic department and university, however, are not only supportive of community service and engagement, but such activities are required for tenure and promotion. Therefore, traveling to the jail and leading the group provides personal, academic and career dividends rather than financial ones. Not all institutions might offer this latitude. Some programs might not have the funds to pay for an external facilitator. In such cases, either the facilitator would need to be a community volunteer or the counselor of other facility staff would need to lead the practices.

Investment and response of participants

Ultimately, any program's success depends on the response of participants. This is especially true for practices such as mindfulness, which are often foreign and unfamiliar to participants. If participants see the applicability of the practices to their lives and to their recovery, and if they experience positive benefits from the practices, they will not only continue to attend but will recruit other participants to join as well. It is important to provide a context for helping participants to connect how they can apply the practices in their lives to address the issues (such as difficulties with substance use, aggression, depression and anxiety) with which they struggle.

In the past, the primary author met once every four to six months with all SAP participants to explain the class and to invite participants to attend. Now that the program is established this is no longer necessary. The participants attending the mindfulness class promote it to other SAP participants. It is also important for participants to recognize themselves and their lives in the practices. In addition to working with mindfulness techniques, participants in the mindfulness class also view a series of documentaries where they are able to see individuals with histories and circumstances similar to theirs not only working with these practices, but also doing so while incarcerated. Table 2 provides an overview of some of these documentaries.

Table 2

Documentaries on Mindfulness while Incarcerated

The Dhamma Brothers (Phillips, Stein, & Kukura, 2010)	This documentary follows a mindfulness program instituted at a correctional facility in Alabama. It includes first-hand descriptions and accounts from the participants, other staff and discusses challenges the participants experienced in continuing to practice without institutional support
Doing Time, Doing Vipassana (Menahemi & Ariel, 1997)	This documentary examines a mindfulness program instituted in an Indian prison
Changing from Inside (Donnenfield, 1998)	This documentary follows a pilot mindfulness program at a jail in Seattle, Washington. Unlike the previous two documentaries, this

	one shows women engaging in the practices and providing accounts of their experiences
Meditate and Destroy (Fisher, 2007)	This documentary explores the life of noted meditation teacher, author and punk rocker Noah Levine. Noah shares his experiences in his adolescence with substance use, behavior problems, incarceration, and how mindfulness and meditation practices helped him to address his issues and to change his life

Conclusion

Mindfulness practices have an ever-increasing presence in healthcare. A variety of helping professionals utilize mindfulness techniques, including Human Services Practitioners. The application of mindfulness interventions continues to expand into a multitude of areas, such as correctional facilities. These settings present unique challenges that require creativity and persistence on the part of the Human Services practitioner. Attention must be paid to how mindfulness practices are introduced to facilities and participants, how or if such programs are funded, and how to ensure the successful training and competency of facilitators teaching mindfulness skills practices. Collaboration between academic entities, community systems and Human Services practitioners can help to ensure that a variety of skills and resources become available to those who are trying to change their lives. These practices offer a novel approach to assisting incarcerated individuals with addressing the challenges and difficulties they experience, to find a sense of freedom from their pasts and to discover new directions and opportunities for their futures.

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Interdisciplinary Service Learning Strategies

Stephanie L. Schindel, MA
Geneva College
Jeffrey C. Schindel, MA, MS
Geneva College

Abstract

Interdepartmental service learning can be used to effectively bridge the gap between academia and the human services profession. Both students and agencies benefit from a cooperative relationship in which resources are shared. The interdisciplinary partnership between Geneva College and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Beaver County has resulted in the opportunity for students to practice competencies in their respective disciplines while providing services to a non-profit agency with limited resources. Human service students develop and implement programs for Littles waiting to be matched. Public relations students and human service students work cooperatively to develop communication solutions to increase volunteer participation.

Introduction

A current trend in higher education involves the increased utilization of service learning strategies. Proponents argue that experiential assignments enable students to better understand and apply theories being studied. Experiential learning also allows students to assess the match between their skills and interests and the competencies required in their respective fields. The utilization of experiential learning in the classroom has evidenced improvements in terms of student interest and perceived value of course material (Clements, 1995). In addition, service learning has been found to enhance performance on traditional measures of learning, the development of more effective problem-solving skills, and increased interest in course content. Moreover, these student outcomes benefit faculty as teaching becomes more gratifying when student motivation and interest is fostered (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

Service learning allows students to not only gain a more in depth understanding of course content and a greater appreciation of their disciplines, but it can also enhance a sense of civic responsibility. While service learning components offer college credits, service learning programs do not simply focus on the development of student skills and professional competencies. Effectual service learning experiences emphasize the importance of service within the community. Partnerships with colleges and universities can provide social service agencies valuable resources such as students, faculty, technology, and research expertise (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

Defining Social Learning

Service learning is different from other types of experiential learning such as internships, practicums, and volunteer positions. Bringle and Hatcher (2011) assert that service learning should be characterized as "a course-based, credit bearing, educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the disciplines, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility" (p. 112). Schwartzman (2002) suggests that service learning even transforms the relationship between student and teacher. The traditional bidirectional relationship in the classroom evolves into a student-teacher-community partnership. While social service agencies provide experiences that allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to community based experiences, Schwartzman further asserts that service learning encourages the "ivory towers" of academia to be removed, increasing outreach to surrounding communities.

Service learning partnerships involve reciprocal relationships between academia and social service agencies. The needs of the institution, the students, and the agency must each be considered in order to create an organic network. Such networks are characterized by consideration of each participant's needs rather than the formation of a clear "authority." The organized nature of a network allows for an enhanced spirit of collaboration while working with community partners. A collaborative network promotes outcomes in which the contribution of the whole is greater than the sum of each participant's specific contribution (Malm, Prete, Calamia, & Eberle, 2012). Collaborative relationships exceed mere economic or transactional exchanges. Service learning partnerships are synergistic with mutually beneficial outcomes (Berry & Workman, 2007). The reciprocity of service learning programs permits the academy to become a more active partner in the community. The academy is challenged to actively address social, civic, economic, and moral problems (Malm et al., 2012). Students are simultaneously challenged to develop academically and professionally while becoming more aware of social issues. Additionally, students develop a greater understanding of social service opportunities and an increased concern for the challenges that social service agencies experience (Berry & Workman, 2007).

Outcomes of Service Learning Program

Berry and Workman (2007), identify four outcomes that can be applied to effective service learning programs:

- Reality - Service learning allows course content to be applied to settings outside of the controlled classroom thus exposing students to the complexities of social problems. Such engagement can allow outcomes that introduce a positive as well as a potentially sustainable difference in those being served by human service agencies.

- Reciprocity - Service learning allows for mutual influence over the learning process. Both the student and the social service partner contribute to the relationship. This allows the experience to be transformational to both parties. Students are more likely perceive their work to involve meaningful contributions to communities.
- Reflection – The use of reflective journals and class discussions encourage students to process service learning experiences as a means of promoting increased personal and societal awareness. Such reflection challenges students to think critically about how their actions can influence the lives of those being served by the agency.
- Responsibility – Service learning should promote civic awareness and social responsibility. Students and social service agencies have a moral imperative to use their skills, knowledge, and services to improve their communities. Service learning experiences can contribute to a life-long commitment of civic engagement.

Because outcomes include both reciprocity and responsibility, assessment of service learning programs must include the impact made on the community partner. Evaluative methods should examine if the service learning was mutually beneficial to the agency. Therefore, assessment data must include both course and community outcomes (Lin & Bloomquist, 2015).

The implication is that cross-disciplinary service learning opportunities in human service agencies can promote a sense of increased social awareness and accountability. One of the important outcomes of service learning should be an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. By utilizing both traditional learning and community service, service learning is designed to promote academic understanding while promoting civic engagement (Lin & Bloomquist, 2015). Students majoring in disciplines outside of human services such as business, marketing, and public relations can testify to the positive impact of contributing their skills and knowledge to resource limited social service agencies. Such meaningful experiences can promote motivation for civic engagement post-graduation. Hence, the gap between the community, academia and the human service profession can be reduced.

The civic engagement of colleges and universities requires the establishment of long-term relationships. Such partnerships require continued attention, a commitment to the community relationship, flexibility, and mutual support. Service learning relationships involve diverse stakeholders from both the academic institution as well as the agency. A complex array of policies, organizational structures and resources must be navigated (Ray, 2016). The sustainability of the relationship can be challenged by the academic calendar. The frequency of course offerings and student schedules can create potential challenges. It is imperative that the needs of community partners are equally valued and are not ignored in order to accommodate the academy (Malm et.al., 2012). When developing service learning programs, community agencies often expect sustainable and reliable relationships with the academic institution. The creation of curricular and co-curricular networks can help to minimize potential disruptions in the relationship (Ray, 2016).

Numerous models of service learning have been developed. Faculty must choose the model(s) which are most appropriate for the course and the specific needs of the community partner being addressed. Some models allow for the service learning component to be optional while others require that every student in the course participate in the service learning component. While some service learning is designed to be more of an orientation to the institution's location, other forms of service learning can service as capstone experiences. Some service learning is focused upon actual field work in the community while other models are more focused on research within the community (Jacoby, 1996).

The Geneva Program

The Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Beaver County and Geneva College relationship involves service learning models in two academic disciplines – human services and communication. Students who are majoring in one of these two disciplines are able to choose BBBS for their service learning experience. This dual discipline service learning approach began in 2012 with human service students. The success of the program provided opportunities for communication students in 2013 to serve BBBS with communication and public relations (PR) support.

Students in HSV 303 (Agency Field Experience) engage in the fieldwork service learning model. All human service students in HSV 303 are involved in a required service learning component with BBBS. The HSV 303 service learning component resulted from a different model of service learning, community based research. Students in HSV 301 (Agencies and Policies) were supervised by a faculty member and engaged in research with BBBS. The goal was to develop a program which could potentially benefit the community partner while also teaching students how to complete community needs assessments, practice program development and develop fundraising skills. BBBS was involved not only in the initial stages of the research, but also in the subsequent revisions made to the original program recommendations. The result was a permanent service learning experience which is a mandatory component of the course. The students complete a 10-hour rotation involving BBBS of Beaver County. Students are challenged to integrate and apply theoretical constructs with their field observations.

This service learning component has a unique history. In 2012, BBBS of Beaver County and Geneva College partnered to begin offering an innovative program to kids waiting to be matched. Although BBBS had been matching Littles with Geneva students for many years, the waitlist for community matches had been growing. In response to a course assignment, a group of Geneva students developed a program proposal designed to address the needs of those waitlisted kids. After a meeting between the staff at BBBS and Geneva College faculty and students, revisions to the proposal were made. Due to the cooperative relationship between

BBBS and Geneva, the program was implemented and integrated into HSV 303 as a permanent field rotation.

Students in HSV 303 plan and execute three different evening events each semester. Students in the course recruit volunteers to assist with the events and to swipe their meal cards to cover the cost of supper for each of the Littles. The event schedule is coordinated with the co-curricular BBBS Geneva program on Tuesday evenings. HSV 303 students recruit other students volunteers so that each Little can be paired with one mentor for the evening. Participation in the events exposes those volunteers to the benefits of mentoring the Littles. This experience has encouraged some students to volunteer as Bigs for the traditional BBBS program.

Following supper, the Littles get to participate in different activities. The events have included "Amazing Races" across campus, themed holiday parties, fun crafts, energizing relay races, and a variety of games designed to promote cooperation and teamwork. The students consider the unique interests of the kids in planning their events as the objective of the program is to help the Littles "feel special" as they wait to be matched.

Because BBBS incurs the costs of transporting the kids to Geneva, the HSV 303 class also plans and executes a fundraiser each semester to help offset the cost of busing the kids to campus. This not only teaches students valuable skills needed to effectively fundraise, but it also serves to assist BBBS in offsetting the cost of the program. The fundraising component was added after meeting with BBBS staff and being informed of their financial challenges related to transporting the Littles to campus.

In fall of 2017, BBBS of Beaver County currently had 53 children waiting to be matched with 11 in queue to be interviewed and processed. Tiffany Thayer (personal communication, September 5, 2017), BBBS Program Director, summarized the benefits of the Geneva Programs as follows:

> The HSV 303 program has helped us greatly to get to know the children on our waiting list and better match them in our Geneva Program and also in our Community based program because we're able to get to know their personalities during the waiting list meetings. We get to see them in their most natural forms, at play, interacting with their peers, and it's really helped out staff find suitable and long lasting mentors for them based on their compatibility. The program has also helped children who haven't been matched feel like they're a part of BBBS while they wait. They feel like they know Geneva and BBBS and that they belong. They don't just feel like they're waiting on a list forever. It's meant a lot to them. (BBBS, 2017)

The design of the program is mutually beneficial to both Geneva College and BBBS. The Psychology and Social Service Department appreciates the willingness of BBBS in offering HSV students the opportunity to practice essential human service competencies outside of the classroom, and in return, Littles who are waiting to be matched can be mentored. Students have discovered the importance of building on the strengths of the Littles, the need for flexibility yet detailed planning in program development, and the rewards of addressing a gap in community

services. Student evaluation involves papers and presentations that require the integration of course content with observations and experiences related to the BBBS rotation. Agency evaluation involves a review of the events with the BBBS Campus Program Director in order to ensure agency objectives are being achieved.

The success of this learning experience between human service students and BBBS' Littles established a strong partnership that attracted the interest of a faculty member in Geneva's Communication Department. Like all agencies, BBBS has communication needs that require strategies and solutions that will clearly convey key messages to diverse audiences. The positive collaborative experience between the college and BBBS provided a strong foundation to add another service learning project for the Communication Department.

The communication curriculum is grounded in rhetoric and uses an Aristotelian approach to the practice of PR. Since Aristotle defined rhetoric as, "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (p. 13), students learn to hone their observation skills to notice reason (*logos*), character (*ethos*), and emotions (*pathos*) in situations. Students further aim to employ all three means of persuasion to develop messages that will move a given audience to action in a truthful and civil manner.

The public relations students engage in a problem-based service learning model via a consulting type of relationship with BBBS. The students work with the agency to identify and understand particular problems and needs. The assumption of the problem-based service learning model is that the students are able to apply their classroom knowledge to make recommendations and/or to develop potential solutions for the agency (Heffernan, 2001). An example of applying classroom knowledge is the consistency to which students rely on the "rhetorical situation", a theoretical framework to resolve concerns by communicating appropriately. Hauser (1986) adapts Lloyd Bitzer's rhetorical situation framework by articulating his three constituent elements (exigence, constraints, and audience) in a more accessible manner for students. Exigence is "an imperfection marked by urgency" (p. 36), and constraints "are both the limitations and the opportunities present in a situation that bear on what may or may not be said to the audience about the imperfection they are being asked to redress" (p. 37-38). This straightforward framework assists students in learning about the challenges (exigencies) BBBS experiences and the hurdles (constraints) that BBBS encounters when seeking solutions to those challenges. These three categories have proven indispensable to the students as they learn about BBBS and develop key messages that bridge communication gaps between BBBS and its various audiences. Although the consulting approach is employed by students in COM 205 (Introduction to PR), COM 202 (PR Practicum), and COM 380 (Advanced PR) as they develop PR plans for organizations, subsequent PR service learning internships are then developed to address the needs identified during the problem-based component.

As competition for scarce resources increases among nonprofits, it is essential that agencies develop a distinctive identity to which their targeted publics can identify. Messaging must clearly communicate the meaningfulness of those services. Recruitment and fundraising

efforts are more effective when publics who identify closely with the agency are identified and targeted. Tailoring the message to targeted groups can be more effective than generalized efforts. (Hou, Eason, & Zhang, 2014). Public relations students help BBBS to better identify its publics and streamline recruitment and fundraising efforts. Such strategies assist the small nonprofit in utilizing limiting resources in a more effective manner.

Conclusion

Although these programs are different from the traditional BBBS format, the willingness of BBBS to partner with academia to creatively address its need has resulted in the lives of both Geneva College students and BBBS Littles being changed. The Geneva Program demonstrates the sustainable relationships that can be developed between academia, the human service profession, and the community. BBBS modifies its program schedule to accommodate the semester based time frame of the academy, and Geneva College has approved a permanent position in the Center for Student Engagement (CSE) who helps to coordinate both the traditional and the HSV 303 BBBS programs. In addition, the CSE hires many communication students who are familiar with BBBS through their own experience, a classmate's PR presentation, being a BIG, and/or friends who are human service students. These internal relationships at the college and the support offered by the co-curricular side of Geneva has helped to ensure the sustainability of the relationship.

Service learning models allow for creativity within and outside of the classroom. Both the academy and the social service field benefit from the cooperative relationships. Student learning is enhanced, and agencies receive needed assistance. Most importantly, a sense of lifelong civic responsibility can be fostered extending the student-agency relationship well beyond the undergraduate years.

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TRANSformation: Affecting Transgender Prejudice in the Classroom

Dr. William R. Garris LMFT, HS-BCP, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor Human Services East Tennessee State University

Dr. Bethany Novotny, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor Human Services East Tennessee State University

Abstract

Social discrimination is a common experience with measurable consequences for those affected. The effects include poorer mental health and poverty, issues which are commonly addressed by human service professionals. People who are transgender are particular targets of discrimination and, as such, find themselves in need of human service assistance at levels disproportionate to the larger population. Research from social psychology suggests that intergroup contact reduces prejudice. This quasi-experiment explored the effect a transgender speaker, followed by informal social interaction, had on measures of transgender prejudice in a sample of college students.

Transgender Prejudice and Its Consequences

Prejudice is a common problem and many people, regardless of identity, believe they are targets of prejudice. Intriguing research from Pew (2014) finds that each group surveyed believes their group experiences the most social discrimination. This particular finding is further corroborated in polling conducted by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (2017). Gallup (2016) reports that racism, in particular, is widespread and is viewed to have increased between 2008 and 2016. Objectively, the issue of prejudice is nuanced, somewhat difficult to define and measure, and specific to groups whose status can change across time and particular news events. However, despite progressive social change in the past fifty years in the United States, prejudice continues to be a problem.

While prejudice continues to be a widespread problem for many, one group in particular has experienced an inordinate amount of prejudice and violence in recent years: the transgender community. In 2011 the The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality published its seminal work, The National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) (2011). The survey aimed to depict the realities of living as a transgender person in the United States. Over 6,000 transgender and gender non-conforming study

participants completed survey which, as a whole, depicted pervasive discrimination, especially for transgender people of color.

Discrimination was not the only problem; people who were transgender have frequently been subjected to harassment and violence. An online survey of 402 transgender people found that 25% had been victims of violence (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002). School and work were particularly dangerous settings. A majority of young people who identified as gender non-conforming or transgender during their school years were harassed in school. Thirty-five percent reported physical assault. The pattern of harassment and abuse continued into adulthood. Ninety percent reported they either experienced harassment, mistreatment or discrimination at work, while others concealed their gender while at the workplace to avoid repercussions (National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 2011).

Prejudice created problems for transgender people in public spheres, contexts where fairness and civility might suggest accommodations. Frequently, people experienced denial of treatment or harassment as they used public transportation, visited stores, or sought help with social security (James et al., 2016). Public restrooms have become a political flashpoint. Although the James et al., study was conducted before bathrooms became politicized in state legislatures, nearly one in ten respondents indicated they had been denied access to a restroom in the preceding year, while 12% reported having been verbally harassed. Fifty-nine percent avoided using a public restroom during the past year for fear of confrontations or harassment. About a third of respondents limited what they drank to avoid dealing with restrooms, and 8% reported having a urinary tract infection or other kidney-related health issue because of avoiding bathrooms and the harassment that occurs (James et al., 2016).

Transphobia and prejudice affected transgender people in ways beyond the workplace and the restroom. Some of the personal effects were captured by survey research conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality, which built upon the earlier NTDS work. The study detailed some of the indirect consequences of prejudice and discrimination: effects on economic well-being and health. In their survey James et al. (2016) found that 29% of transgender individuals fell below the poverty line, compared to 14% of cisgender individuals. Fifteen percent of transgender people were unemployed, compared with only 5% of the cisgender population. Homelessness was a problem. James et al. (2016) found that 30% of transgender respondents had been homeless previously, 12% during the preceding year. Further, it appeared that prejudice and economic hardship also evoked a psychological toll. Thirty-nine percent of transgender individuals, compared with 5% of the cisgender population, reported severe psychological anguish within the past year. Forty percent of transgender individuals, compared with 4.6% of cisgender individuals, have attempted suicide.

Although the evidence was strong that transgender people are being harmed, the size of the transgender population in the United States, and thus the breadth of the problem, has been difficult to ascertain. The US census has not included information on gender identity. Population studies have only recently begun to collect transgender-inclusive data when asking

about gender. Yet for treatment purposes, research dollars, planning, and advocacy, it is important to have an idea of the population size.

To address the issue of population size, Meerwijk and Sevelius (2017) used a meta-regression model based upon 12 surveys conducted between 2007 and 2015. Generalizing from their findings to a US population, they estimated that about 390 adults of 100,000 are transgender. This represented about .39% of the population, or nearly a million people in the United States. Younger adults were more than 50% of the respondents in the surveys considered. Given increasing social acceptance of gender non-conformity, Meerwijk and Sevelius (2017) suggested that the number of people who identify with a non-binary, gender identity may increase in future surveys.

The number of people who are transgender is not large on an absolute basis. However, the effects of prejudice, harassment, and violence on their economic well-being, relationships, and mental health (James et al., 2016), has resulted in people who are transgender being overrepresented amid the populations served by human service professionals. It is, therefore, important that human service professionals are informed concerning the needs of the transgender community and active in addressing the social forces that bring them harm.

Factors Associated with Transgender Prejudice

Several studies have considered the factors that contribute to prejudice against transgender individuals. Norton and Herek (2013) drew from a representative sample of heterosexual U.S. adults ($N = 2281$) and matched various demographic and psychological characteristics with participants' prejudice toward people who were transgender. Greater prejudice was predicted by the following: subscribing to a binary conception of gender, being a heterosexual male, psychological authoritarianism, anti-egalitarianism, and political conservatism. Religiosity increased transgender prejudice among women, but did not affect prejudice among heterosexual men. Research on transgender prejudice sometimes has drawn from studies that explored prejudice against the gay and lesbian communities. This has been not careless blurring, but reflected the finding that there was a strong correlation ($r = .66$ to $.8$) between transgender prejudice and bias against other sexual minorities (Norton & Herek, 2013).

Trait aggression was a relatively stable personality characteristic that predisposed a person to respond to situations with aggression; it was also linked to transgender prejudice. Several studies have found that trait aggression was correlated with transphobia and homophobia in heterosexual men, but not women (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Warriner, Nagoshi, & Nagoshi, 2013). Recent research suggested trait aggression was also provoked by the politically stoked issue of bathroom and gender. Callahan and Zukowksi (2017) had 158 participants complete two measures and read a hypothetical scenario. One measure gauged essentialism, the view that gender is a fixed and unchanging quality of being. The second measure assessed trait aggressiveness. Participants then visualized a transgender person using the restroom that aligned

with their identity and not their birth sex. Essentialism and trait aggressiveness, separately predicted negative reactions to people not using bathrooms that align with their natal sex.

Of note, lack of contact with sexual minorities has been found to be related to homophobia and transgender prejudice in multiple studies. Telephone survey research from Herek and Glunt (1993) identified that if respondent affirmed a friend or relative had "let them know they were homosexual," regression analysis revealed that they were also more likely to have positive attitudes toward gay men. A follow-up study noted that these positive attitudes were contingent upon three factors: amount of contact with sexual minorities, more intimate relationships with this group, and being the recipient of direct disclosure concerning sexual orientation (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). Related, 24% of the variance in homophobia in one study was attributable very simply to personal contact with homosexual individuals (Walch, Orlostky, Sinkanen, & Stevens, 2010). More contact with sexual minorities was associated with a reduction in prejudice.

More Contact, Less Prejudice

A prominent theory, spawning hundreds of studies, has suggested that prejudice can be reduced through contact with target populations. Gordon Allport (1954) has been commonly credited for developing Intergroup Contact Theory. This theory rose to prominence during an era of racial segregation, though the foundations for the model were laid in the previous decade when World War II when combat situations provided a natural experiment in integration. According to Allport, prejudice was caused by inaccurate information about a target population. Prejudice reduction, then, resulted from cognitive changes: learning more about a group of people (Allport, 1954). Allport believed that prejudice could be reduced through interpersonal contact. However, his model and research posited that five stringent conditions governing the social interactions must be met (Forsyth, 2009).

Allport was wrong about a few things, and this has turned out to be good news. Hundreds of studies have supported the proposition that intergroup contact is associated with reduced prejudice. This research finds, however, that Allport's five conditions were, in fact, not required. Mere contact was sufficient. Further, Allport seemed to have placed unwarranted emphasis on cognitions; the change appeared to be more emotional than cerebral (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2015; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Pettigrew explains, "your stereotypes about the other group don't necessarily change; but you grow to like them anyway" (APA, 2001, para. 4).

Prejudice has also been commonly assumed to be deeply ingrained and resistant to efforts to change it. It turned out that this, too, may not be correct. In December 2014, the Miami-Dade County Commission passed a law to protect transgender people from discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment. When similar non-discrimination ordinances had been passed in other communities (e.g., Charlotte, NC) a fierce backlash ensued, and included the politically contrived bogeymen that alleged transgender women would have opportunity to

sexually assault young girls in bathrooms. Anticipating this reactionary backlash, a local LGBT organization teamed with volunteers and staff from a similar group in Los Angeles to go door to door and speak with residents. The conversation included attempts to have targets engage in "analogic perspective-taking" in which the residents were asked to talk about a time when they were judged for being different and then to imagine how their experience might relate to the experience of a transgender person's experience. Subsequent measures of attitude found increased positivity toward transgender people equal to the change in attitude toward gay men and lesbian women in the United States that occurred between 1998 and 2012. In short, the change was significant and it was lasting (Brockman & Kalla, 2016).

Other research from a classroom has also underscored the effect that perspective taking may have on reducing transphobia. Tompkins, Shields, Hillman, and White (2015) explained research in which they had a class perform one of two actions: describe the features of gender dysphoria based upon diagnostic criteria (education task) or write a letter to parents and loved ones as though they were disclosing that they were transgender (humanizing task). Compared to those who were assigned to the education task, those who wrote the letter desired more contact with transgender people at the post-test and evinced a decrease in transphobia.

Across the past few decades research has shown that prejudice, discrimination, and harassment are addressable public health concerns. The harms caused by prejudice against the transgender community include economic inflictions and psychological distress. Although certain beliefs and demographic factors may incline someone toward prejudice, research also suggests interpersonal contact, empathy, and perspective-taking can result in a meaningful, positive improvement in how one views a target population. This current study sought to extend this current line of research.

Methods

Institutional Review Board approval for the study was obtained from the university. Students were administered the Transgender Prejudice Scale (TPS), but no identifying information was collected from participants.

Design and Participants

This present study was a natural field experiment. Across three semesters students enrolled in either research methods, which served as a control condition, or a course in human development. There were three classes and a total of 50 students in the control condition and three classes, totaling 58 students, in the experimental condition. The control group and experimental group were both comprised of human service students enrolled in two different required courses. While the groups were not created through random assignment, are reasonably assumed to be similar demographically. A pre-test supports the view that both groups were

similar demographically on the variable of transgender prejudice. Participants were observed to be predominantly White undergraduate students aged 19 to 22, approximately 75% were female and a majority of the participants hail from the Southern Appalachian region.

Instrument

The dependent variable was transgender prejudice, assessed by the TPS. The TPS (Davis, 2014) is a 25 item scale that measures prejudice arising from two component constructs: sex essentialism and discomfort. Sex essentialism is the view that sex is an essential, binary quality fixed from birth. Discomfort measures the unease the respondent may have when in contact with transgender individuals. This scale was selected because of the rigorous process used in its construction, compared to other instruments available at the time, and because it measured prejudice using a relatively small number of items. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .98; Discomfort and Sex Essentialism were.94 and .98, respectively.

Each semester, students in the control class and the human development class were administered the TPS as a pre-test. By show of hands, a majority of students in the class indicated that they had never met someone who was transgender. In the human development class, occurring during the section on gender identity development, students participated in a presentation and question-answer session that was led by a friend of the faculty member teaching the course, a local transwoman. The transwoman, who had served as an advocate in the region, was relaxed and comfortable sharing from her journey and was imminently relatable, drawing attention to the characteristics and interests she shared in common with the class. The ensuing conversation covered universally familiar topics, from love and relationships, issues with parents, hobbies such as cooking, and shared cultural interests like Star Wars. The discussion was more personal than political. It was humanizing and not hostile. Forty-eight hours after this guest speaker, the TPS was administered to the human development class and the control class. A second post-test was administered to both groups four weeks later.

In our coding, Group 1 was the control group. Group 2 was the experimental group. Table 1, below, identifies the results from the pre-test. The two groups are not statistically different from one another.

Figure 1. The pretest

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	1.00	50	89.8000	33.52489	4.74114
	2.00	58	88.6897	27.92296	3.66646

The TPS was administered to students in both classes after the guest speaker and discussion event, at time intervals 48 hours and 4 weeks.   Figure 2 shows the results. Transgender prejudice decreased in the experimental condition and remained lower four weeks after the guest speaker. There was no statistically significant change for the group in the control condition. The results were statistically significant at the level of $p < .05$.

Figure 2. The posttest

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest1	1.00	50	89.3400	34.04535	4.81474
	2.00	58	76.9828	26.31289	3.45505
Posttest2	1.00	50	90.1200	34.00399	4.80889
	2.00	58	75.5862	26.37053	3.46262

**Representing the data in a line graph provides another view of the change.
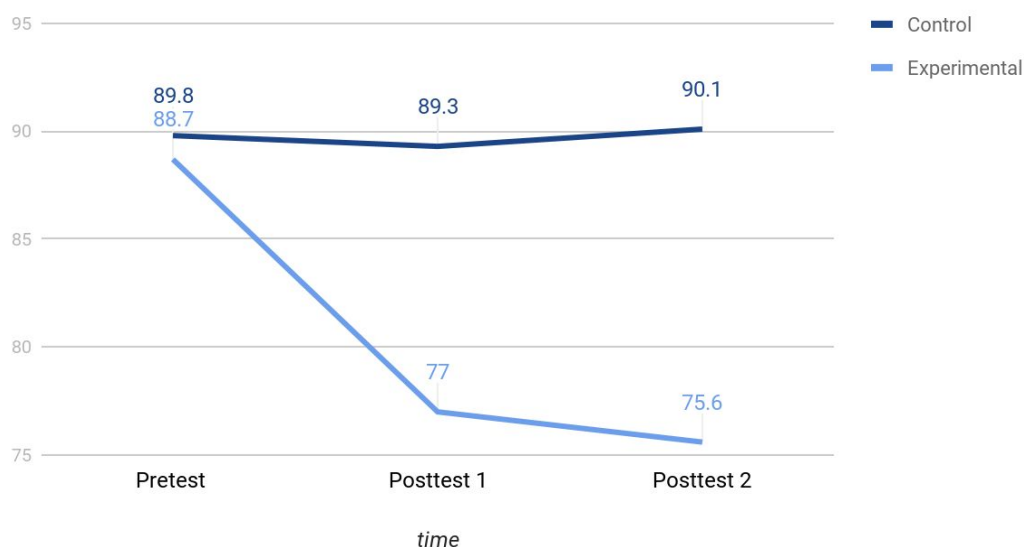

Scores on Transgender Prejudice Scale

Figure 3. Scores on prejudice scale.
**Transgender prejudice decreased and remained lowered a month later.

Discussion

      This study contributes to the literature on prejudice in several different ways. First, more narrowly, it supports a growing body of literature that finds relatively brief, interpersonal encounters can affect prejudice. It affirms the social value that emerges from sharing common, humanizing experiences. Drawing attention to shared humanity may have evoked perspective-taking, which other research suggests may reduce prejudice. This research also raises the prospect of the classroom as an incubator for civic discourse. The study suggests, along with other research, that discussions which emphasize the human dimension of political issues and promote interactions may reduce prejudice. These interactions may not otherwise occur in a community and are not generally modeled on cable news. Consequently, the classroom remains a tool that can be harnessed toward a social good, to promote understanding, civil discourse based on empathy and, ultimately, a kinder, less prejudiced and more inclusive democracy. Finally, human service practitioners and educators are change agents. This study invites us to consider the classroom as venue for human service educators and students to explore prejudices and affect change.

Limitations

      There are several ways that this study, and its conclusions, could be improved. First, additional posttests could have been administered to assess the durability of the decrease in prejudice. Although it was useful to observe the near-term effect of a 60-90 minute encounter, it would have been further illuminating to explore what happened to this effect over a longer time through a longitudinal design. Second, it would have been helpful to have constructed the research as a mixed-method design. Adding interviews to the research process would have provided insight into what more precisely changed in participants as they interacted with someone who was transgender.

      Early prejudice researchers, coming from a more social-cognitive tradition, subscribed to the view that the change was largely cognitive. More recent findings suggest that the change in prejudice is due to something more emotional or relational. Other studies suggest perspective-taking by participants is an important ingredient. This study design did not explore the mechanisms of change and the researchers are limited to speculation. Third, project was a natural experiment; the independent variable was not standardized. The speaker's script varied. The interactions with the classes were also different, depending upon spontaneous factors that emerged. As such, exact replications are not possible and conclusions should be tentative. Finally, the speaker addressed classes of approximately 22 students. It would have been interesting to assess the effect of the speaker-class interaction, at varying class sizes. Might the effect be more pronounced with a small group of eight? Would the effect still hold with a class size of 150?

Conclusion

Many of the issues addressed by human service professionals are exacerbated by prejudice. Although prejudice may be widely regarded as a difficult and largely intractable problem, recent research suggests otherwise. Instructional design in human services curricula can use our emerging understanding of the roles of emotion and perspective taking in prejudice, and include guest speakers from marginalized groups, including the transgender community. The literature suggests the format should be one that promotes a consideration of shared experiences and perspective-taking. This study, along with others, suggests the classroom may present an opportunity for human service faculty to intervene to reduce prejudice in a student population.

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Think Small! Nurturing NPO Vision in Turbulent Times for At-Risk Youth

Alice Walters, LMSW, MATS
Walden University

Dedication in Memory of Dr. Cassandra McDonald

Abstract

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) are the foundation for many human services practices.

Often, the role of small NPOs is over-looked. Small NPOs meet needs and bridge gaps left by other human services providers. Small NPOs have many benefits including the flexibility to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Small NPOs start with a founder's vision. This vision requires a series of steps to establish the NPO and accomplish its mission. Understanding the process and stages of small NPO development prepares human services professionals to support these organizations and consider their applicability to many settings. This article reviews common stages and "real world" experiences in NPO development serving at-risk youth. Its purpose is to illustrate the NPO process and allow human services practitioners to consider alternatives found in small NPOs for meeting needs they find in practice.

Introduction

This year's conference theme, "Community Connections - Bridging the Gaps Between the Community, Academia, and the Human Services Profession" highlights the need for informed and integrated practice to address the complex needs in human services. The theme also recognizes the value of developing resources from new approaches and emergent trends. This article addresses the conference theme by providing a unique perspective on the often over-looked role of small non-profit organizations (NPOs) in human services. The article merges academic, practitioner, and community perspectives for understanding NPO development. Small NPOs and the practices that sustain them are adaptable to many settings and provide a model for future human services provision in turbulent times of increasing need.

NPOs are the bread and butter of human services. NPOs remain a growth sector despite downturns in other economic areas (Pettijohn, Boris, DeVita, & Fyffe, 2013). Many of the largest NPOs started with a simple vision and small beginnings. This article aims to increase practitioner understanding of the processes, phases, and practices to launch and sustain a small NPO. Explored is the value of a small NPO serving at-risk youth in a marginalized community through case study examples. The article seeks to empower human service practitioners to

accomplish vision for services through even the smallest human services organizations. Discussed below are the significance of NPOs and four stages of NPO development.

<div align="center">**NPO Significance**</div>

Definition and Categories

NPOs are present in nearly every community and represent diverse missions. The definition of an NPO derives from its tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines its exemption requirements in Section 501(c)(3) for organizations as:

> Be <u>organized</u> and <u>operated</u> exclusively for <u>exempt purposes</u> set forth in section 501(c)(3), and none of its earnings may <u>inure</u> to any private shareholder or individual. In addition, it may not be an <u>action organization</u>, i.e., it may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities and it may not participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates. (IRS, 2017)

Organizations meeting this definition are exempt from taxes due to the public benefit they provide. Known generally as "public charities," there are many types of NPOs in eight general categories including arts, education, environment and animals, health, human services, international, public, and religious organizations (National Council of Nonprofits, 2018). Human services comprise the largest percentage at 35.5 percent of charitable nonprofits (National Council of Nonprofits, 2018). These statistics and governmental exemption from taxes demonstrate the important work of human services NPOs in supporting communities across the nation. Additional statistics illustrate the scope of NPO influence in our communities.

Scope

The National Center for Charitable Statistics (2016) provided the following statistics on NPOs:

- **1,571,056 total tax-exempt organizations** (2016)

- **312,373 religious congregations** (2016)

- **25.3% of Americans** over the age of 16 volunteer annually (2016)

- Nonprofits accounted for **9.2% of all wages and salaries** paid in the United States (2010)

The number of NPO organizations, including religious organizations, reflects the crucial service provided by NPOs to support areas of community need. It is also apparent that many community members value NPOs by contributing their volunteer service to support these missions. Lastly, NPOs contribute economically to communities beyond service provision through staff employment. These facts underscore the positive influence that NPOs exert within their

communities. Understanding the definition, types, and scope of NPOs may lead human services professionals to consider the possibility of realizing a vision of service through NPO development. The first step in NPO development entails an examination of both the benefits and challenges to founding a human service NPO.

NPO Benefits and Challenges

Beginning an NPO is an expression of a human service professional's assessment of gaps in service provision. Typically, a founder sees a need and has a vision to address that need through NPO services. There are several benefits to establishing an NPO. First, the tax exemption helps in the financial planning of the organization. Second, potential donors to the organization are encouraged by the tax-deductible nature of their donations. Less tangible perhaps, the flexibility of structuring the NPO to address specific community needs is a significant benefit for founders. Lastly, the personal satisfaction of managing an NPO is vital to NPO development. These benefits must outweigh the many challenges of NPO management, however.

The challenges of NPO development are many. First, NPOs are businesses and require a commitment to business practices to succeed. Founders must have the time commitment to start-up and sustain the NPO. This may require learning new skills and the ability to remain persistent through potential obstacles. The management of people and resources to operate the NPO will be a continuing need. Lastly, interpreting the vision of service in the face of many needs can sometimes be overwhelming. Despite such challenges, NPO founders believe a unique organization is necessary to fulfill a vision for meeting needs in their community. The stages for developing an NPO will unfold as they proceed to bring their vision to fulfillment.

Stages of NPO Development

The stages of NPO development may vary greatly based on context. A challenge in recent research has been investigating NPO development to discover helpful models and trends. Valeau (2015) provided a useful summary based on a meta-analysis of 19 cases of NPO development. This model identified start-up, expansion, growth tensions, and resolution as the four major stages of NPO development (Valeau, 2015). Next, I briefly discuss Valeau's description of each stage with examples from the case study of a small NPO serving at-risk youth.

Start-up

The start-up of an NPO is a response to a recognized need. Valeau (2015) describes this stage as community driven with informal organization. A founder or group of individuals come together to provide the same service or support the same cause.

Initial questions may include:
- What need or gap in services exists?
- How might an NPO provide a solution?
- Who will be involved?
- What first steps need to be done?
- What plans are there for future sustainability?

Case Example:

The founder of an NPO serving at-risk youth in Appalachia provided an example of start-up considerations. The community experienced a high rate of high school dropouts. Thirty percent of all individuals 17 years of age and older did not have a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate in the Appalachian Ohio county (Kids Count Data Center, 2011). The founder's vision was to provide comprehensive educational interventions spanning the arts, culture, and business to address deficits in the poverty-stricken community. The founder recognized gaps in existing services that did not account for a community culture that valued paid employment for adolescents over educational goals. Additionally, the founder's mission was to establish relational interventions to overcome barriers of self-defeating youth behaviors. The NPO began with periodic summer music camps and after-school enrichment programs.

Expansion

The next stage of NPO development is expansion. Valeau (2015) termed this phase professionalization and described processes where NPOs identified a need to become more organized or professional in operation. This stage was often a response to increasing quality or quantity of services (Valeau, 2015). Expansion is a natural outgrowth of NPOs that strive to increase their positive impact on communities.

Questions may develop:
- Are there new emergent needs?
- Is our client base expanding?
- What resources are missing?
- How can programming expand to meet recognized needs?

> Case Example:
> Expansion also occurred in the case study example serving at-risk youth. Occasional summer music camps and after-school programs transitioned into more permanent programming. For example, "Keep Kids in School" (KKIS) developed as an initiative focusing on literacy, high school completion, and reducing juvenile delinquency. Most recently, expansion into an academy serving autistic children developed. The academy required hiring special education teachers, social workers, and support staff. It also required grant funding and governmental contract negotiation.

Growth Tensions

Expansion in NPO services produces the next stage of growth tensions. Valeau (2015) found a crisis emerged at this stage between initial grassroots support and movement toward professionalization. Values and goals often contradicted between initial vision and professional provision requirements. Tensions appeared in both progressive conflicts over time and sudden developing crises (Valeau, 2015). The tension between informal and flexible response to community needs was in opposition to more rigid and inflexible program structures. NPO expansion generates such inevitable tensions.

At this stage, common questions are:

- How do we stay true to our initial vision and mission?
- What choices need to be made with limited resources – when you can't do it all?
- What future direction are we heading?
- What changes do we need to make?

> Case Example:
> The NPO that began with periodic educational interventions for high school dropouts had developed into a school serving autistic children and their families. The school expansion was a response to an emergent need. It required greater professionalization from the NPO through governmental requirements. The founder made the choice to focus on school development while other previous interventions remained more flexible with less attention.

Resolution and Cycles

Resolution occurs when the NPO decides on a plan of action to resolve the crisis. Valeau (2015) noted that NPOs reach resolution when they commit toward a future orientation. The NPO is unlikely to remain in homeostasis, however. NPOs cycle through growth tensions and resolution as they continue to evaluate community needs, their vision, their mission, and their

resources (Valeau, 2015). The cyclic phases of resolution and growth tensions require that NPOs continually evaluate their services and their place in the community.

During resolution, questions include:

- Is our direction in line with our: vision, mission, resources?
- Do we need to revisit procedures, programs, stakeholder input?
- What future dilemmas might we anticipate?
- How can we learn from past experience?

Case Example:

For the founder of the NPO serving at-risk youth, decisions included committing to the more formal and regulated autistic school. Remaining true to the initial vision, relational interventions remained primary. Additionally, the foundation built in previous music camps became part of the autistic school curriculum. The founder addressed questions on initial mission by combining that vision with an expanding scope of service.

Conclusion

NPOs are viable and essential contributors to community stabilization. Despite the diversity across NPOs, their mission for public benefit unifies them. Human services NPOs outnumber all other types of NPOs (National Council of Nonprofits, 2018). Their positive impact on communities and their foundation for the human services profession is far-reaching. Understanding the processes and phases of NPO development positions human service professionals to support and benefit from these organizations.

Small NPOs, in particular, offer specialized benefits for human services provision. The grassroots support and flexibility characterizing small NPOs place them advantageously to quickly adapt to community changes. In the current context of reduced human services resources, small NPOs provide alternatives for meeting service provision gaps.

Human services professionals considering a small NPO start-up require knowledge to guide their efforts. Stages of NPO development offer insight into common tasks and challenges confronting NPOs as they grow. Case study examples demonstrate that the process of start-up, expansion, growth tensions, and cycles of resolution may present difficult choices for NPO founders. The case study reveals it is possible to remain true to initial NPO vision even while incorporating new directions in service. Small NPOs remain a potential resource for human services professionals to meet service gaps. "Thinking small" with NPO startup may represent a big step for accomplishing a human services mission.

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**Professional Self-Awareness: Teaching Students, Trainees, and Professionals
to Evaluate Their Risk and Resilience Factors**

Shoshana D. Kerewsky, PsyD, HS-BCP
University of Oregon

Abstract

This paper takes workplace risk as its starting point, including scarce funds, overworked professionals in under-resourced agencies, and a cultural climate of indifference to the needs of diverse and vulnerable populations. It provides tools to help professionals articulate how issues such as these affect their own sense of vulnerability, exhaustion, inadequacy, or other risk factors. Taking a positive perspective, it then encourages readers to consider how their strengths and areas of resilience may be useful for their professional self-care and as a tool to assist clients and communities. Sample resources are provided.

Overview

To be available and helpful to our clients, human services professionals must be aware of, and responsive to, the sources of personal, workplace, and cultural stress that decrease our competence, job satisfaction, and ability to focus on service to clients and communities. This paper provides several person-in-context and diversity-related tools to help students, trainees, and human services workers to identify their unique stressors. It also provides assistance for developing positive, solution-focused responses to these areas of professional vulnerability. For brevity, the term professionals appears throughout this article to underscore the applicability of these tools for work-related self-awareness. In addition, these tools may be useful with clients as is appropriate for their needs.

The tools presented include diversity- and identity-related models, a worksheet that captures aspects of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model to become aware of and articulate one's own risk and resilience factors in human services learning or work contexts, and solution-focused self-intervention questions to promote wellness, robustness, and competence in our often under-resourced and stressful profession. Used in tandem, these tools help create a relatively detailed portrait of ourselves, our stressors and areas of risk and resilience, and some preliminary strategies for decreasing or ameliorating sources of risk.

The ADDRESSING Framework and the Social Matrix
The ADDRESSING Framework (Hays, 2016; see also Oral & Watson, 2012) helps us to remember that it is not useful to conceptualize clients or ourselves unidimensionally. Everyone has multiple cultures and group memberships that influence our risk and resilience and provide points of congruence or disjunction between self and systems, such as the workplace.

Hays's mnemonic is ADDRESSING:
- **A**ge
- **D**evelopmental disabilities
- **D**isabilities, acquired
- **R**eligion
- **E**thnicity
- **S**ocioeconomic status
- **S**exual orientation
- **I**ndigenous heritage
- **N**ational origin
- **G**ender

Of course, this heuristic does not capture all dimensions of human diversity. A more detailed model, the Social Matrix (Kliman, 2010) is a visual tool designed to explore how one's intersecting identities may affect personal and professional relationships. Personal use of the Social Matrix may increase professionals' personal awareness and areas of their relative privilege and marginalization, graphically shown by connecting the points to form a figure depicting relative areas of privilege. Awareness of these areas may again suggest strategies for bolstering areas of marginalization and lack of resources.

Additional details and instructions for completing and discussing the social matrix can be found in Kliman's (2010) article.

BASIC ID

Lazarus's BASIC ID model (Lazarus, 2014) provides a beginning framework for increasing our self-awareness and identifying potential areas in need of intervention in service to professional competence. BASIC ID is an acronym:

- **B**ehavior
- **A**ffect
- **S**ensation
- **I**magery
- **C**ognition
- **I**nterpersonal
- **D**rugs and physiology

This model provides a quick and easy way to characterize oneself in relation to workplace stressors. It does not account for diversity-related considerations, so beginning with the ADDRESSING Framework or Social Matrix will suggest areas where issues such as minority stress may be incorporated in BASIC ID. Examples may be found at Lazarus (2014) and Anonymous (n.d.).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

The Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) builds on the previously-explored identity factors as well as potential areas of change. The material in this section is adapted from Kerewsky (2009).

Bronfenbrenner developed the "ecological model" as a way to describe how social and societal contexts influence a child's development (cf. Chronister, McWhirter, & Kerewsky, 2004; Kerewsky, 2004, 2007, 2009). The term "ecological" is used because it describes people in their interpersonal and cultural contexts, or "levels of the ecology." This model can be used clinically in addition to a standard clinical interview. It may also be used for self-examination of a professional's own risk and resilience factors in a particular context, such as a workplace.

Components of the Ecological Model
Many theories of psychology only focus on the person in isolation. In Bronfenbrenner's model, this system is called the *individual* level of the ecology and refers solely to health, temperament, and physical characteristics. Although other systems models existed before Bronfenbrenner, they tended to focus only on the person's family, school, and local community contexts. Bronfenbrenner calls these *microsystems,* with *mesosystem* referring to the areas of intersection or divergence between microsystems (and other systems).

Bronfenbrenner's model also includes more distant systems that affect the person. These include the *exosystem:* Factors that act on the person, but that the person cannot influence directly (for example, television, laws, funding for health care); and the *macrosystem:* Cultural ideas, religious beliefs, grand narratives, and society's values (for example, the effects of being a Buddhist, or living in a traditional society).

Chronosystem refers to changes in all of the systems over time (for example, obtaining medical treatment, or improved schools).

Using the model
An adaptation of this model includes identification of risk and resilience or strength factors in each level of the person's ecology (Chronister, McWhirter, & Kerewsky, 2004). This makes it possible to understand clients' or one's own risks and strengths at different levels of the ecology. An interview based on this model reveals information about the person's culture, beliefs, and identity, and illuminates both close and distant systems. These important aspects of a person's life, and the risks and strengths associated with them, are often missing in a standard clinical interview or self-evaluation. We often become very focused on the problem and forget that every person has strengths as well. Knowing these influences helps us to see the whole person.

Using this model reminds us to ask questions about how our own cultures and beliefs relate to our areas of workplace vulnerability, and suggest strengths that can form the basis of our strength-based self-care options.

Worksheet and case example

A completed Ecological Model worksheet, based on a composite Vietnamese woman with Type II diabetes, and a blank worksheet, are included in Appendices A and B.

Working from a Solution-focused Perspective

Solution-focused intervention emphasizes switching from a problem-oriented focus to one that is oriented to solutions. It uses the strategies of looking to previously effective solutions, exceptions to the general description or experience of the obstacle, and emphasizing current experience and future predictions rather than dwelling on past experience (Institute for Solution-Focused Therapy, accessed 1/15/2018). These strategies may include:

- Identifying what is already going right (even if it is just a little bit; even if it is in a different context)
- Determining how to increase aspects of the solution that are going right
- Emphasizing the positive and the person's abilities and autonomy (without minimizing negatives or realistic barriers, such as attempting to make changes in the context of a racist environment)

To increase professional self-awareness and apply a solution focus to one's own work, the professional may ask
- What is an area of my work, life, relationships, etc. that I want to focus on?
- What is already going right in this area of my life, even just a little bit?
- How could I increase the things that are going right in this area of my life?
- What is going right in other areas of my life?
- How can I apply what is going right in other areas to this area of my life, even just a little bit?

Stress and Solutions

In addition to the tools above, we may turn our professional competence to asking ourselves questions about our relationship to stressors. Some of these questions may reflect the use and focus of the tools described in this article, or may express one's own theoretical approach to intervention.

Good questions to reflect on or write about include:

- In what areas of my work and personal life am I stressed?
- Where am I particularly vulnerable?
- In what areas can I support myself?
- Where can I bring in more assistance?
- How does taking care of myself improve my
  - Quality of life?
  - Competence at work?
  - Job satisfaction?
  - Ability to focus on my clients' needs?

Students, trainees, and human services workers may find it helpful to bring their observations to an appropriate instructor, colleague, supervisor, or counselor for further discussion and ideas.

Appendix A: Ecological Model Case Study (Kerewsky, 2009)

The fictional client is a 45-year-old Vietnamese woman with Type II diabetes who lives in a rural area in Vietnam.

Ecological level	Risk factors	Resilience factors
Chronosystem Changes in the systems over time	Introduction of KFC *(Gà Rán Kentucky);* Western dietary habits	Economic improvement in her community; successful family business
Macrosystem Cultural ideas, religious beliefs, and society's values	The cultural importance of rice (example: *"ăn cơm");* Western medicine *(thuốc tây)* is hot and toxic *(độc)*	She believes that Western medicine can be effective
Exosystem Factors that act on the person, but that the person cannot influence	Meat is more expensive than rice; instructions for medicine are in French	Posters at the pharmacy explain her medicine; public health education
Mesosystem The interaction and connections between systems	Astrologer *(nhà chiêm tinh)* and neighbors disagree about the causes of her diabetes	Husband comes to her medical appointments and helps her ask questions
Microsystem Family, school, and local community	Husband wants traditional food; husband's mother criticizes her cooking	Oldest son reminds her to take medicine; daughter practices *khí công* (qi gong) with her
Individual Health, temperament, and physical characteristics	Female; Gestational diabetes; Type II diabetes; nerve problems in feet	No heart disease; strong; intelligent

Appendix B: Ecological Model Worksheet (Kerewsky, 2004)

Ecological level	Risk factors	Resilience factors
Chronosystem *the system's changes over time*	● ●	● ●
Macrosystem *culture, beliefs, grand narratives, social unconscious*	● ●	● ●
Exosystem *media, service delivery structures, public policy*	● ●	● ●
Mesosystem *connections and communication between micro- and exosystems*	● ●	● ●
Microsystem *people and communities in direct contact with person*	● ●	● ●
Individual *genetics, temperament, biology, innate characteristics*	● ●	● ●

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