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The New “Realities” in America: Preparing for the Challenges Ahead

In every sense of the word, America is a much more complex society than ever before. From diminishing funding sources to new measures of evaluating the use of those funds, from increased workloads with fewer professionals in the field to greater accountability expected of workers, from a more diverse client population in terms of ethnicity, age, lifestyle and socioeconomic status, to name a few, to newly-imposed limits on what can be provided to these clients, human service workers face challenges that they have never experienced.

This coming year’s conference is dedicated to examining many of these topics in an attempt to understand their dynamics and how they impact the human service profession, as well as attempt to uncover new and emerging issues so that the profession may be prepared for them.

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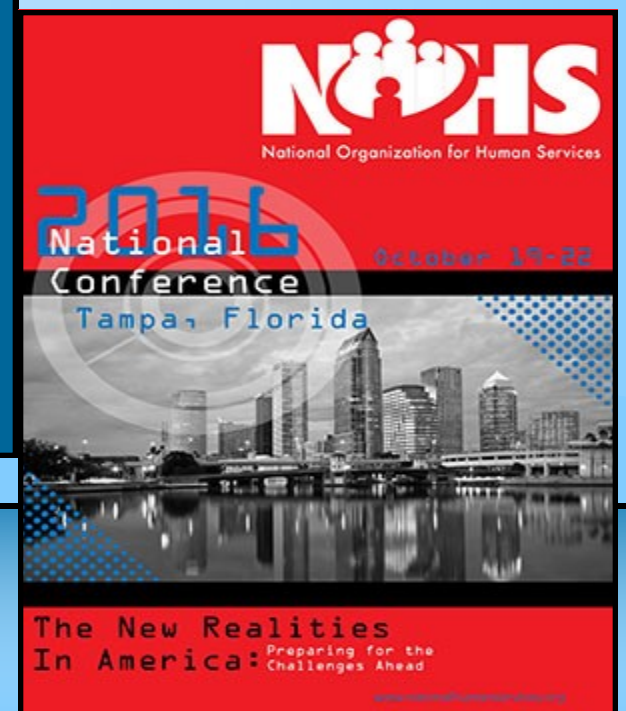
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Would You Hire You?

John Paulson

One day I saw an advertisement at my university for a workshop offered by career services called *Would You Hire You?* The title intrigued me, and I began thinking about the professional competencies and qualities that we as human services educators should be emphasizing and developing in the classroom to help our students be employable. Sadly, there has been an ever widening gap between what is emphasized in academia and what is expected by industry, and many employers continue to voice their frustration that college graduates are often not prepared for the workplace (Johnson, 2011).

Gatekeeping

Social service and behavioral health agencies have always looked to universities and human services programs to produce competent practitioners ready for direct practice. Obviously, there is still a great deal of learning, training, and development that occurs beyond graduation, but employers expect their new human service practitioners to already have an established knowledge and skills base (Elpers & FitzGerald, 2013; Evenson & Holloway, 2003).

Within the helping professions, there has always been an established practice of what has come to be called *gatekeeping*. Gatekeeping refers to establishing standards and practices that delineate the requirements for admittance to the profession and how best to determine who should or should not be allowed into the profession. These practices are sometimes very formal such as admission standards and processes for limited-enrollment social work programs. Even in human service programs, which historically have tended to be open enrollment, there is still an expectation of some degree of gatekeeping, whether that is at the process of admission, in assessing performance in courses or during field placements, or in graduation requirements (Elpers & FitzGerald, 2013; Miller & Koerin, 2001).

In establishing these standards, human services programs have often focused on two distinct yet interdependent skill sets in their education and training, those being not only technical knowledge and skills but also professional values. This relationship parallels the importance of both content and process in the helping relationship. While content knowledge is easily definable, process-based skills that represent a sense of professionalism are more elusive. Despite being challenging to specify, these professional priorities are often defined as commitments with regards to ethical practice, sharing values consistent with those of the human service profession, and behaving in ways that promote the safety and success of clients specifically, but also of the human service profession generally (Elpers & FitzGerald, 2013; Evenson & Holloway, 2003; Miller & Koerin, 2001).

Making the Less Tangible More Tangible

This principle of professional priorities and behavior is often difficult for human service students to understand. It is important to convey to students that their learning and development is not just about the specific course content they learn or the grade they may get, but that equally important is how they present themselves and how they act. Unfortunately, this emphasis on professionalism is often either underemphasized, overlooked, or intentionally left out of human service curricula. In my courses, I provide students with a sheet called *Would You Hire You*, and I discuss how course expectations are connected to and help promote the development of professionalism, including the following:

Professional Standard	Academic Expectation
Being consistently present <i>for</i> clients and employers	Show up to class or field placement consistently; show up on time and stay the entire time, and if not able to be present or stay the entire time display responsibility and initiative by communicating and collaborating with professors or field instructors
Listening to and being present <i>with</i> clients and employers	Pay attention during lectures, meetings and trainings (even, and especially when difficult); participate in class activities and exercises; refrain from texting and other non-academic use of technology during class or field placement
Ability to follow directions and complete work duties	Complete coursework and duties at field placement as assigned, when assigned, and by due date (even, and especially when those might change), if not finishing work early, and if unclear of requirements display responsibility and initiative by communicating and collaborating with professors and field instructors
Ability to accept direction and feedback from supervisors	Be willing to accept corrective feedback and constructive criticism from professors and field instructors
Ability to collaborate with colleagues	Interact and work with classmates, professors, and colleagues at field placements in a productive and respectable manner
Ability to clearly and effectively communicate	How well one clearly and effectively communicates in written work, oral presentations, and in electronic messages to professors or field instructors
Appropriate boundaries	What to disclose, and not to disclose, either during class or with clients during field placements, as well as the rationale for sharing or not sharing
Ethical behavior	Not cheating on tests or assignments, not violating agency policies at placements

Some students take issue with these standards, insisting that *school* is not *work* and that they should only be evaluated on acquired knowledge. They do not see expectations about their behavior and priorities as relevant or appropriate to their education. While post-secondary education in the helping professions is not purely the world of work, it is also not purely school, as it is meant to be a bridge between these two roles of *student* and *human service practitioner*.

The Changing Classroom and Challenges to Contemporary Education

Within the past several years, the *classroom* for all college students, including human services, has drastically changed. There has been a proliferation of online degree programs. Many human service students may never set foot in a traditional classroom, and there is an ever growing desire and demand for increased online education opportunities. While some prospective students prefer technology over the traditional educational environment, often these students are working adults who want online options as they attempt to complete their degree while also still working, either full or part-time, and while maintaining a family (Reh fuss, Kirk-Jenkins, & Milliken, 2015). This ever-changing nature of how education is delivered is forcing all colleges and programs to adapt and to reconsider what they offer and how they offer it.

These developments should be a cause for pause; inherent to any assets are also liabilities. It is a definite necessity that universities and human service programs need to adapt and make education more accessible to an ever expanding broad array of students. It is also necessary for human service educators to make sure that they are offering courses and coursework that are relevant and applicable to contemporary professional practice. Programs must make sure that they are scheduling and offering courses, especially those required for graduation, in a way that not only allows students to graduate in a timely manner, but also in ways that are accessible and accommodate various learning styles and preferences.

While adapting, universities generally and human service programs specifically still need to ensure that they are maintaining high standards. These transitions over the past several years have seemed to create an unfortunate race to the bottom, as many programs feel increased pressure from either their institution or external sources, like federal financial aid, to not only make sure that students graduate but that they graduate within defined timeframes.

The pressure to successfully and timely graduate people, coupled with an expanding competitive variety of online degree options with aggressive marketing campaigns, has seemed to skew expectations about higher education. A current prevailing message seems to be that it does not really matter what degree one obtains or from where they obtain it, only that they complete their degree and in as short of a time as possible. This places an overemphasis on simply obtaining the degree and not the quality of the knowledge or skills that are gained.

This message also communicates to potential students, either blatantly or inadvertently, that they can expect to get an advanced, post-secondary degree in their spare time with little to no disruption to their lives, at a time, place, and in a format that is completely convenient to them and meets their preferences, and all with little to no effort or sacrifice on their part. Such messages of convenience sadly prey on desperate, vulnerable adult learners who are not always informed consumers and who are only looking to improve their lives and better their circumstances.

Some advertising slogans for these institutions are now promising credit for life experience, seeming to imply that a college education does not really offer anything new or of value and that individuals already know what they need. While this is certainly applicable for some professions, it seems misguided for human service and other related helping professions. Some schools have even adopted marketing campaigns that *guarantee graduation in four years*. While schools need to make sure that their course offerings support the ability of students to graduate in four years and provide quality academic advising that assists students finishing successfully, this marketing tagline removes all accountability from the student and unfortunately conveys the message that as long as one enrolls and follows the defined classes, regardless of performance, that they are guaranteed to graduate.



Courtesy of www.cpp.edu

Post-secondary education, especially development in the human service profession, requires commitment, extensive hard work, and personal sacrifice. Expecting people to spend hours on projects and to change their life and work schedules to accommodate classes and field placements is part of the developmental process for becoming a helping professional. I acknowledge that these points are a hard sell in a current culture that demands effortless immediacy. Regardless, I believe to suggest that becoming a human service practitioner is fast and easy does a disservice to students, and more importantly, to our profession and the clients we serve. Many students have begun to believe that if they get a specific degree that they are guaranteed a particular job. I try to educate students that having a particular degree does not guarantee a job. Having a particular degree may get them an interview, and ultimately it may initially get them a job, but their knowledge, skills, and performance will keep the job, regardless of degree.

Who is the Customer?

Both statements are true - the human service profession has to adapt to accommodate an ever growing and diverse group of non-traditional trainees, **and** the human service profession needs to maintain high professional performance standards and expectations. Lowering standards for the sake of expanded enrollment and increased graduation rates ultimately poisons the well. Human service educators are in a difficult spot in deciding who their *client* is, because in addition to students, they have multiple clients. I often tell students that when I develop my standards, I am dedicated to supporting their success, but I also have to think beyond them to the agencies where they will work, the communities where they will practice, to the profession they will represent, and most importantly, to the clients they will serve. Those clients deserve high quality care and services, and it is part of my duty and responsibility as an educator to try and influence training standards in a way that honors this noble commitment.

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The Intersections of Sexuality and Substance Abuse

Linnea Bergvall

For thousands of years, humans have believed that substances can enhance sexual experience. Although current research is inconclusive, there remain strong beliefs about using substances as aphrodisiacs (Zaazaa, Bella, & Shamloul, 2013). Studies have found a positive relationship between substance use and sexual dysfunctions in both men and women (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2009; Zaazaa et al., 2013). In contrast, when researchers asked participants directly about how substances affected their sexual performance, men reported that substance use had a positive impact on their sexuality. Among men who used drugs or alcohol during their most recent sexual encounter, approximately 50% indicated that the substance had a positive effect on both them and their sexual partner (Calsyn et al., 2010; La Pera et al., 2008).

Interestingly, La Pera et al. (2008) discovered that among men in substance abuse treatment, sexual dysfunction contributed to initial substance use. They found that 50% of participants had used substances with the specific intention of enhancing their sexual performance. In addition, as many as 70% of participants reported having one or more sexual problems (premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, or low desire) *prior* to their first substance use. Among those men who reported one or more sexual difficulties prior to first drug use, 44.3% said that their sexual difficulties had contributed to their first substance use. The researchers also found that the severity of the sexual dysfunction prior to first substance use was positively associated with the men's belief that the sexual problem contributed to their decision to use substances for the first time. The researchers hypothesize that young men are particularly likely to self-medicate in order to enhance their sexual functioning.

Not only does there appear to be a relationship between sexual difficulties and first substance use, but sexual difficulties have also been shown to contribute to relapse in individuals who attempt to end their substance abuse (Kompf, 2010). Braun-Harvey, a licensed marriage and family therapist and sex therapist, specializes in sexual health in substance abuse recovery. He has written two books for clinicians, discussing how to include sexual health in substance abuse treatment programs, and he has created the treatment program *Discovering Sexual Health in Recovery* (Melby, 2012).

Braun-Harvey has argued that there is an increased chance of relapse if sexual issues are not addressed in substance abuse treatment facilities. Specifically, some individuals have a strong connection between substance use and sex, to the extent that it is difficult to separate the two (Knopf, 2010). Braun-Harvey (2011) named this phenomenon “sex/drug linked behavior” and has written that such behavior often interferes with successful treatment. The reality is that many individuals in substance abuse treatment have not had sex for a long time, if ever, without being under the influence. According to women in recovery, their sex lives were one of the areas of their lives which changed the most after recovery, and therefore, sexual experiences were often a significant relapse trigger (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2009; Knopf, 2010).

While implementing the sexual health relapse prevention curriculum developed at the Stepping Stone treatment program in San Diego, Braun-Harvey also conducted research to determine the efficacy of the program. He discovered that secrecy about sexual behavior was positively associated with shame and guilt, which in turn was associated with a higher relapse risk. One characteristic which set individuals with sex/drug linked behavior apart was their elevated feelings of shame. However, after participating in the *Discovering Sexual Health in Recovery* program, shame was significantly reduced (Knopf, 2010). Another benefit of the program was that it greatly increased client retention rates (Braun-Harvey, 2011).

Considering the research reviewed above, it is clear that incorporating the topic of sexual health in both prevention and treatment of substance abuse could be beneficial (Braun-Harvey, 2011; La Pera et al. 2008). While prevention would target teenagers and young adults who have not yet initiated drug use (La Pera et al. 2008), treatment would target both men and women attempting recovery (Braun-Harvey, 2011). Despite the promising results when incorporating sexual issues into substance use prevention and treatment, the inclusion of sexual issues is rare, which is why it is so important to educate professionals in the field of substance abuse (Braun-Harvey, 2011; Knopf, 2010). According to Braun-Harvey (2011), “many drug and alcohol treatment centers operate under significantly outdated, ineffective, and disapproving views about sex.” He also writes that a similar problem exists in the field of sex therapy. Most sex therapists, researchers, and educators know very little about substance addiction and recovery.



Courtesy of www.aamft.org

One question which remains unanswered is whether sexual difficulties contribute to the initiation of substance use in women. According to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (2009), one of women’s risk factors, both for initial substance use and for substance abuse, has been found to be past trauma. Indeed, one review found that among women who abuse substances, 55%-99% have experienced trauma during their lifetime (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2009). One might speculate that childhood and/or adult sexual abuse could have an impact on the likelihood that women would initiate substance use for the purpose of self-medication during sexual encounters, but apparently, no research has yet been conducted on this topic. However, in one study it was found that 39% of homeless women with a substance use disorder have experienced childhood sexual abuse (Sacks, McKendrick, & Banks, 2008). If sexual issues were found to be a motivator for drug initiation among women, researchers could begin to design and study possible early substance use interventions targeting sexuality.

Very little research can be found regarding interventions focused on sexual issues in substance abuse. La Pera et al. (2008) have written that, based on their findings, it may be helpful to provide information and treatment to young men with sexual dysfunctions so that they aren’t driven to resorting to self-medication. They argued that intervening when young males have sexual difficulties could potentially decrease substance use initiation. Even so, these interventions have yet to be developed, implemented, and assessed.

There is little overlap between the fields of substance abuse and sexuality (Braun-Harvey, 2011). Therefore, both fields would benefit from learning about the ways in which substance use and sexuality interact. Braun-Harvey argues that it is important to educate substance abuse treatment staff about how sexuality impacts recovery (Melby, 2012). Similarly, sex therapists, researchers, and educators need to be aware of how substance use impacts sexuality (Braun-Harvey, 2011). For instance, they may benefit from knowing that young males have a tendency to self-medicate to treat sexual dysfunctions (La Pera et al. 2008). It is also interesting to note that in *Principles and Practice of Sex Therapy* (2014), which is described by the publisher, Guilford Press, as addressing “the full range of sexual problems and concerns that lead men, women, and couples to seek help,” there is no mention of substance abuse other than in a list of illnesses that can affect sexual desire. However, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) includes, in the chapter concerning sexual dysfunctions, “substance-medication induced sexual dysfunction” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Despite the gap in the literature regarding interventions, more information is available concerning how to incorporate sexual health into substance abuse treatment. As mentioned, Braun-Harvey (2011; 2009) has written two books explaining how to implement the *Sexual Health Relapse Prevention* curriculum, one book for the use of professional counselors and the other for group facilitators. Based on Braun-Harvey’s (2009) research findings, his curriculum holds promise for effectively addressing sexual health in substance abuse settings. It is my hope that more such books and studies will emerge in the near future and that increasing attention will be given the interactions between sexuality and substance abuse.

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Misanthropy

Steve Cockerham

One of the things I dislike is being lumped into an identity that is not true. I live way back in the Appalachians Mountains so I get accused of being a hillbilly, yet I spent most of my life in other places where no one has lots of chickens in the yard or goats with shorter legs on one side. Well, free eggs and no poison ivy have really nice benefits. I speak with a Southern accent tinged with all the other places I've lived but still am assumed as having low intelligence and above average biases. I live in a low income area yet burglaries or muggings are very rare. I drive a Toyota truck, which means to some I must not love my country even though the company is one of the largest employers in this region. But my biggest problem lately is that because I'm a 63-year-old white man, I must be very angry, Republican, a sexist, a racist, someone with lots of guns, and certainly someone who will vote for Chump, no matter what he says or whatever anyone says about him. Let me state for the record that not all of us look and think alike. BTW, I am proud to be a hillbilly.

NBC News surveyed a representative sample of Americans recently and discovered that we are angry...and angrier now than we were last year. Whites were angrier than anyone else, even having more frequent instances of daily anger. The least angry households were those with the most and least incomes; middle incomers were the angriest. Interestingly, white households reported less problems economically yet somehow that made them angrier. Black Americans were more optimistic than ever and felt more confidence in the American Dream, that anyone can succeed regardless of background and wealth. Blacks were more likely to be angry about police violence, and the majority of people agreed with their right to be angry about this. As a group, they were also more accepting of affective orientation than other ethnicities. Whites, on the other hand, led the groups in anger at LGBT.

According to the results, women conveyed being angrier than men, and both sexes were angrier this past year than the one before. The same for non-white people, more women than men were angry, even though less angry than whites. Men were more upset about global warming than women while women were more distraught about police violence. Both were not happy about consumer fraud and equally concerned about Congressional dysfunction. While men stated greater disagreement for gay marriage being legal, they were not as concerned about billionaires buying elections. When considering political parties, the biggest beef of Republicans was Congress while Democrats were much more worried about police violence against black Americans. Democrats also decried big money in politics. Almost everyone seemed infuriated at school shootings.



When people were asked about their opinions of immigrants, a majority of Americans replied they strengthen our country. Of those with anti-immigration views, most believed that the Dream was gone, the US has become weak, and they have to struggle more to keep up. Over half of those surveyed indicated that the US was once the most powerful country but no longer. Financially, most people thought they were worse off than they expected to be at this time in their lives. One item a vast majority agreed upon was that the gap between the wealthy and the rest of the people was getting larger. The largest percentage blamed Wall Street and financial companies. The next largest condemned capitalism in general, which was matched by the belief that globalization, especially jobs going overseas, was the root cause.

I wonder what your reaction to these results are. NOHS members as a rule represent the broad array of diverse groups. The issues behind these survey results are grist for our mill. A few days ago, I was at a restaurant ordering a sandwich. I asked what kinds of bread were available. The server was attempting to explain the grains and, not being as important to her as it was to me, I ended our confusion by just saying that I didn't want white bread. I couldn't resist saying that I know I look like white bread, but I'm not. Some of us white folks are right angry that so many other white folks are making us look bad. It's not easy being the victim of prejudice! Don't look at me like I'm one of those!

It's embarrassing that people are angry about our current economic condition. Descriptively, the US is doing better economically than any other country, *not* getting worse internationally or internally as far as objective indicators are concerned. True, most of the wealth is going to the upper bracket, but we voted to change the tax code and create this imbalance, wanting to come in first place rather than our place. Yes, we can improve, but why do white people refuse to acknowledge that our economy is doing better than it has been and dramatically so, especially after the recession that was created before Obama took office. Indeed, we have challenges, but when identifying jobs overseas as a major cause for economic doom along with Wall Street and income inequality, then we've also hit upon the obvious problem and solution. Why are we angry when we've managed to get the rest of the world to make our stuff and do our chores? And we make money from this...we should be enormously grateful instead of angry, and then let guilt and shame continue to spur global empowerment. Didn't we learn to share in kindergarten?

How can anyone with any degree of enlightenment and love for humanity not be glad instead of angry that cities in America and in many other places around the world are much less segregated ethnically than they used to be. Southern cities are now less segregated than northern cities like Chicago and New York, even though these cities are becoming less so. Cities in the southwest like Phoenix and Las Vegas are even more integrated. Cities marred by crises in discrimination such as murders by police, profiling, or lead poisoning receive intense media coverage, which tends to promote less murder, harassment, and toxins regardless of the community reaction. It is reasonable to say that most people do not want to repeat the incidents in Baltimore, St Louis, and Flint, something which could occur in many other places and has happened in too many before.

The causes for this are quite pervasive and powerful. Non-whites are moving to the suburbs, and whites are moving to the cities, intermingling at work, at events, at sports, at shopping, and in neighborhoods, schools, and the arts/humanities. Racist housing regulations have largely been abolished. Immigration continues, despite the evil words of a politician who would probably dismantle the Statue of Liberty, and this is taking communities into novel, entertaining, and productive nodes of positive lifestyle experience. And perhaps the best explanation, love is conquering all. The rates of marriage between couples of mixed heritage is increasing at a dramatic rate. Move over, Romeo and Juliet. While America still remains racially divided based on residential status when compared to more advanced countries, progress is being made.

As far as I can tell, the reasons for the increasing rates of white anger emerge from the baser emotions of humans – jealousy, greed, and selfishness. Culture kills, when culture keeps us from generosity, caring, and sharing. What good is the Dream if only we can make it real for few of us. On the other hand, perhaps most of us, regardless of identity, are living the Dream yet seem to have forgotten its meaning. Do we remember what it was like just a few decades ago? Middle class used to be 40 acres and a mule. We were lucky to live to middle age. Few went to college. Now, we have so much stuff, we can't give it away. My colleagues cannot imagine sending their children to college without a car. The student parking area has nicer autos than those in faculty parking. A close friend of mine, who keeps a car until it dies, has one you better not get behind if you want to breath fresh air. One day, he was tooling around in new wheels and gave me a ride, so excited about his purchase. Recently, I noticed he was back driving his environmental hazard. Asking why, he replied that he let his son take it to college. Maybe this is why people are angry.

This has been one of the safest decades in history for loss of life during war. Crime has lessened considerably in our country. Juvenile delinquency is the lowest it has been in decades, both for arrests and murders. Just check FBI statistics. School shootings, though rare, more often happen in schools dominated by middle class whites while school resource officers are far more numerous in schools with mostly poor non-whites. Maybe white people are mad at themselves. And, making sure to insert the insistent refrain that not all people who lack sufficient skin color think alike, maybe we should stop for a moment, all of us, and take stock, realizing how good we have it, even though in a quick instance, it all could turn to the worst, e.g., if a comet hits the earth or Yellowstone erupts. Each day we live as Americans is a gift, a most fortunate privilege, and one where we should bask in appreciation, not anger.



The only anger morally justifiable is that which lets us share our wealth with each other rather than letting just the 1% have it all, that which gives freedom to travel by opening our borders, that which makes us build houses and neighborhoods safe and livable – without gates and with clean water, that which brings the commandment to love our neighbors as we do ourselves, that which grants the inalienable right to love who we choose, that which brings peace, not war, and keeps us from war after war after war and never solves anything, only bringing more pain and destruction, that which helps us heal addiction and mental illness with treatment instead of incarceration, that which helps motivate us to teach people rather than put more in jail than any other country, that which makes sure everyone gets quality health care and does not have to go bankrupt because of it. Yeah! There is a lot to be angry about, but it we cannot and must not let our anger get the best of us. Justifiable anger is righteous indignation with heart...

For myself, I'll keep being righteously indignant until everyone has it all – a good job, a fair wage, a nice home, clean water, organic food, great schools, safe neighborhoods, parks and recreation, media access, public transportation, a health clinic nearby, and, of course, effective human services. A good job is not just white collar, but whatever we enjoy and are good at...a fair wage is to let the minimum wage balance income inequality...a nice home is not a mansion unless it's a condo...clean water means clean industry...growing our food should not create gigantic dead zones and cause cancer...great schools mean to stop privatizing them to make a profit from taxpayers...any dangerous neighborhood should be a human service project...green space and having fun make life worth living...we love our movies and apps...our addiction to autos is matched by our addiction to oil...if only our health system was more like our educational system – universal and free. Life is a process of growth. It is not a vicious competition where the winner takes all. It is not living in a fortress with guards. It is not a contest where the winner wins by dying with the most stuff. We don't need our rich people. They need us.

Life is loving, where we help each other, enjoy one another, and look back while looking forward with our friends and family to all the ages and stages of our precious, miraculous existence. What makes living truly interesting and fascinating is that we are all very different, that we face and meet the challenges of growth and development, and that we can share our interests and perspectives. We can become happier and help others to become so by our kindness, not our anger, by our caring, not our hatred, and by our inclusion, not our exclusion. We are here for such a short time, really. Let's not take more than we give, hate more than we love, or destroy more than we create. Which is better? Which is more fun? Which gets us to heaven? It should be obvious. We can choose with our hearts, not with our anger. In the words of a human service practitioner, it's okay to be angry, but it's time now to let it go...just let it go. Now, don't you feel better!



Issues in Human Services

Anonymous



Generation after generation, domestic violence is still prevalent in our society. You cannot turn on the television or open a newspaper without stumbling upon yet another act of violence against women. Domestic violence is a worldwide epidemic (AHR, 2013). The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines domestic violence as “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another” (NCADV, 2016). Many people believe that physical abuse is the only aspect of domestic violence, when emotional, psychological and sexual abuse are also just as common. Likewise, domestic violence does not cater to one specific race, ethnicity or social class. Domestic violence is real and still raging in today's society.

When I was fifteen, my cousin came to stay with my family. I remember the day she moved in clearly; she walked into my home with a black eye, a busted lip and everything she owned shoved into a single trash bag. When she finally told me the entire story, there was much more than just physical abuse going on. She revealed to me that her fiancé would force her to perform sexual acts justifying sexual abuse and rape by saying that he *owned* her and if she *loved* him, she would make him happy. He would also take her car keys during the day so that she could not leave—she hadn't driven a car in six months when she came to stay with us. Her fiancé was a misogynistic, manipulative, and violent alcoholic who thrived off controlling women. After hearing my cousin's story and witnessing its effects first hand, domestic violence seemed so much more real to me. Domestic violence had been something I witnessed during Law and Order: SVU, not in my own family, but I still did not grasp that it could happen to me.

Shortly after my cousin moved in, I began dating a slightly older boy that I met through a mutual friend. This was my first “real” relationship, and I was just thrilled to have a significant other. I was oblivious to his uncontrollable urge for control and his unruly temper because he *loved* me, and I thought I loved him, too. I remember meeting his friends for the first time at one of his high school football games; after a few minutes of conversing with his classmates and trying to be sociable, my boyfriend yanked me up and let me know we were leaving with three quarters still left in the game. He then escorted me to his car, gripping my arm so tight it left a bruise in the shape of a handprint and proceeded to slap me across the face for “flirting with his friends” and “being a slut.” I was appalled and frightened by his behavior, yet I stayed in this relationship because I thought I could prove to him that I was worth keeping. He had turned every issue he had with himself into something I had done to make him that way. My friends finally got through to me, and I ended our toxic relationship. Hours after breaking up with him, I received picture messages of his torso and wrists adorned with cuts from a razor blade and a text message reading, “This is all your fault.”

Too many women base their worth from a man's opinion, leaving them vulnerable and easy targets for abuse. Domestic violence can be diminished with more education on the subject, as well as an outreach from local communities to help those who are being abused by their spouse. Everyone is worthy of love, but not everyone is capable of displaying it in a healthy way.

The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR). (2013). *Prevalence of Domestic Violence*. Retrieved from http://www.stopvaw.org/prevalence_of_domestic_violence
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). (2016). *What is Domestic Violence?* Retrieved from <http://www.ncadv.org/need-help/what-is-domestic-violence>

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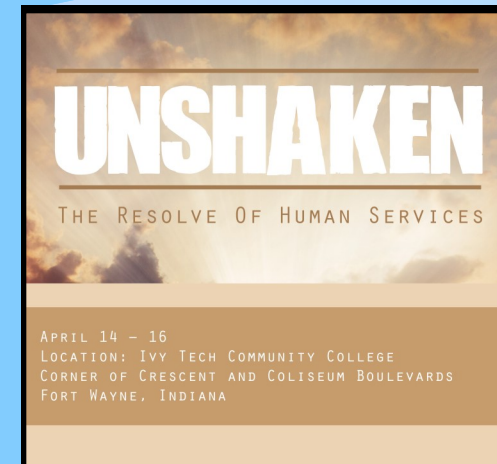
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What: MWOHS Regional Conference

When: April 14-16, 2016

Where: Ivy Tech Community College
 Corner of Crescent and Coliseum Boulevards
 Fort Wayne, Indiana

Hotel: Holiday Inn Ft Wayne - IPFW & Coliseum
 4111 Paul Shaffer Dr.
 Fort Wayne, IN 46825
 (260)-482-3800

*Please reference to the MOWHS conference event when making your hotel reservation.

Keynote: Shelley MacDermid
"Ten Things You Can Learn from Military and Veteran Families."

Shelley M. MacDermid Wadsworth is a professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Purdue University, where she also directs the Military Family Research Institute and the Center for Families. Dr. MacDermid Wadsworth holds an M.B.A. in Management and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Human Development and Family Studies from The Pennsylvania State University. Her research focuses on relationships between job conditions and family life, with special focus on military families and organizational policies, programs and practices. Her research has been published in scientific journals including the Journal of Marriage and Family and the Academy of Management Journal, and has been funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Henry A. Murray Center, the Department of Defense, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, the state of Indiana, and Lilly Endowment. Dr. MacDermid Wadsworth is a fellow of the National Council on Family Relations, and a recipient of the Work Life Legacy Award from the Families and Work Institute and the Violet Haas Award for Leadership on behalf of women at Purdue University. Dr. MacDermid Wadsworth served as the civilian co-chair of the Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, and also served on the Returning Veterans Committee of the Institute of Medicine, and the Psychological Health External Advisory Committee to the Defense Health Board. In 2012, Dr. MacDermid Wadsworth received the Morrill Award from Purdue University in recognition of outstanding career achievements that have had an impact on society.



What: SOHS 2016 Regional Conference

When: April 13-16, 2016

Where: Charleston, SC

Hotel: Charleston Marriott
170 Lockwood Boulevard
Charleston, SC 29403

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Keynote Speaker: Susan Alford

Susan Alford, Director of the SC Department of Social Services, has worked for nearly 40 years as a child and victim advocate in South Carolina. She most recently acted as Director of the Girls Center and Associate Executive Director for Operations at Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute, and as both Interim Chief of Staff, Deputy Director for Treatment Services, and Associate Director for Policy and Planning at the SC Department of Juvenile Justice. The recipient of numerous state and national awards, Ms. Alford is a recognized speaker and consultant on topics such as trauma-informed interventions, gender-responsive programming, strategic planning, continuous quality improvement in the public sector, and the development and evaluation of programs for at-risk youth. Ms. Alford holds a Diploma degree in Criminology from the University of Cambridge, England, and a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology from the University of South Carolina.

To register or book a hotel room, visit <http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/sohs>



What: MACHS Regional Conference

"The Integrated Whole: Systems of Community and Self"

When: April 1-3, 2016

Where: Brookdale Community College
Lincroft, New Jersey

Hotel: Courtyard Lincroft Red Bank
245 Half Mile Rd.
Red Bank, NJ 07701



Biographies

Opening Ceremony (Friday): DonnaLyn Giegerich, MBA, CIC, RYT, is a national keynote speaker, corporate trainer, adjunct professor and entrepreneur who integrates business and wellness knowledge to empower teams and individuals. Her clients have included AT&T, Campbells, Novo Nordisk and The National Kidney Registry. Today, DonnaLyn's work centers on helping people with diverse personal and professional goals to improve their resiliency and engagement skills.

Keynote (Saturday): Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini, MPA, represents the 11th Legislative District of the State of New Jersey. She sits on the Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee and the Assembly Human Services Committee. Assemblywoman Angelini is also a Certified Prevention Specialist, and President and CEO of Preferred Services of New Jersey, a non-profit, community behavioral health agency offering a wide array of professional services spanning outpatient treatment to substance abuse and bullying prevention programming.





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