2020 Virtual Symposium
Book of Abstracts

Social Work
in a Climate of Change
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Abstract:

Indigenous fathers play a central role in the lives of Indigenous children growing up strong. For Australia's Indigenous people, growing up strong includes access and equity in health and education, and the learning of Indigenous culture. This paper focuses on Indigenous fathers, their held worldview (inclusive of knowing, doing, and being), and how they understand the importance of sharing cultural activities with their children. From an Indigenous Standpoint we argue that the sharing of Indigenous cultural practices, and the subsequent telling of this narrative, are key enablers for Indigenous fathers to assist their families to flourish. We analyse qualitative data from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children to explore what components/aspects of Indigenous culture fathers perceive will assist their children to strongly mature, how culture is transmitted, and what barriers fathers face in this process. Results show that according to participants, learning about culture, family, and identity are components to helping children prosper, with collecting food the most common activity used to achieve this end. This is important for social work and social service programming because Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander fathers are sharing their worldview and telling us why Indigenous cultural should be integrated into service provisions.
The intersectionality of Indigeneity and gender in Australian social work

Author/s: Jacob Prehn¹, Jacynta Krakouer² and Todd Fernando²

¹University of Tasmania, ²University of Melbourne

Abstract:

This paper explores the intersection of gender and ethnicity for social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander¹ peoples in Australia. We argue that successfully navigating the intersection of these identities are paramount to effective social work practice with Indigenous Australians. To articulate this, we begin by challenging the dominant gender binary narrative. This social construction has dramatically shaped the provision of gendered services, which are often inadequate for meeting the needs of Indigenous peoples, let alone those further marginalised in specific ways by their intersecting gendered identity. We suggest that a means of alleviating these structural issues is through understanding, reflecting and employing an intersectional practice framework within the client-worker relationship as it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Although this intersectional practice framework lightens the inadequate provision of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their gendered requirements, structural change, inclusive of intersectional considerations, is ultimately needed.

¹Various terms, including Indigenous Australians, Indigenous, Aboriginal and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, are deliberately used throughout this paper to refer to Australia’s First Nations peoples. The use of diverse terms reflects the diversity within Australia’s First Nations peoples, including diverse preferences for terms of address.
Sorry your placement has ended due to COVID-19 - Now what?

Author/s: Dr Fotina Hardy, Sarah Gallagher, Ann Murcott, Sarah Sabit and Lorraine Dupree

Griffith University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

COVID-19 has impacted all facets of life for all people. One group affected were social work students on their field education placements. When the shut-down occurred many students were advised their placements had ended, often with no real warning, resulting in stress, anxiety and uncertainty. This presentation focuses on the experiences of three social work students on placement as they negotiated the challenges of a reconfigured placement, their external social work supervisor and an organisation that stepped in to support them. The importance of thinking outside the box, being creative, agile and being able to reconstruct a placement experience to ensure the learning opportunities necessary for emerging social workers is highlighted. We will share what the students have learnt in terms of taking opportunities for their own learning, coping with the uncertainty, being flexible and re-conceptualising our understanding of social work practice in its broadest sense during a pandemic. This is a good news story that shows how collaboration between the university and field and students can deliver positive learning outcomes, while also contributing a significant offering to the relevant organisation and sector to benefit our community in spite of times of crisis.
The Positioning of Service Users in Social Work Student Supervision

Author/s: Kate Duncanson

Curtin University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

While growing numbers of Australian universities are recognising the value of service user experience in social work education, this is yet to be mandated by the Australian Association of Social Work. Further, in the field, the involvement of services users in the design, delivery and evaluation of services is highly variable. Social work students may be exposed to ideas about the participation of service users at university but then find their experiences during field education differ significantly.

Through focus groups and individual interviews, this research explored the nature and degree to which service user experiences are integrated within social work student supervision in the field. Social work students, new graduates and field educators (n=16) with recent placement involvement were recruited through three West Australian universities. All were asked questions which aimed to elicit the ways in which service users are positioned or integrated in student supervision.

Thematic analysis indicated that the position of service users in social work student supervision is not commonly acknowledged or discussed. While students and new graduates indicated a strong connection with the theoretical concepts underpinning service user participation, they confirmed that the translation of these into field practice environments varied. This was reinforced by field educator responses to the concept of integrating service users into their student supervision. This raises questions about workplace supervision and how accountability to service users links with that activity.
Making student placements sustainable in Department for Child Protection (DCP) during COVID 19 - Developing and implementing a structured virtual learning program

Author/s: Jessica Pellegrino and Lyndon Gordon

Department for Child Protection, South Australia

Abstract:

This presentation describes the DCP Social Work Field Education (SWFE) Program’s response to the state’s COVID 19 restrictions and the impact on student placements within the agency. The challenge being to provide students with a high-quality field placement while DCP staff moved to a Team A/Team B rotation to enable provision of an essential service to clients.

Adopting a scaffolded learning approach which encompassed online training, virtual workshops, reflective workbooks, research-based activities, and role plays, made significant changes to a program traditionally run face to face within a classroom. The learning approach, needed to ensure that it incorporated students' learning goals (as outlined within learning plans), met AASW and university standards and create opportunities for students to demonstrate learning within a DCP environment, whilst working from home.

The workbook approach provided flexibility for students, field educators and university FELO’s, which in turn ensured the viability of placements in uncertain times. It also allowed staff and students to confidently navigate / manage placement in a busy and resource poor environment. Formal feedback gathered from students, field educators and the universities stated a reduced pressure and stress on both field educators and students, by offering placement activities that were aligned to the practice standards and provided clear evidence of learning. Students were able to demonstrate competence against all practice standards in an environment that had little to no face to face contact.

The structured virtual learning program demonstrated the unique field education initiative created by DCP a decade ago, can be sustained in a virtual environment and could, with further development, build capacity for future placements and provide a blended learning opportunity for country based students.
"Don’t flip out!!": Supporting student learning through flipped classrooms

Author/s: Susan Mapp

Elizabethtown College

Abstract:

The world has changed markedly as a result of the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 which caused almost all schools to stop their in-person instruction and switch to online or remote education. The uncertain state of progress against the disease together with a lack of clear treatment or vaccine means that many are uncertain how classes will look when universities start again, and whether another mid-semester switch in teaching format may be required.

A flipped classroom can be effective in addressing this uncertainty. A flipped classroom model reorganizes how material is taught, so that students are covering more introductory material on their own outside of class and covering more cognitively advanced material in class. Time together is typically utilized for more applied activities and active learning, rather than lecture. Thus, students are learning the simpler material on their own and then doing the more advanced work of applying that material when the instructor is with them to guide them. This approach can be used with online, hybrid, or in-person classrooms and can pivot between them, making it desirable during the current pandemic, as well as beyond.

From this session, participants will learn what flipped classrooms are, the benefits they can have, the theories on which they are based, and research assessing their effectiveness. This will be followed by an explanation of how to utilize them, together with the specifics of how it was used in teaching an introductory social work research methods class.
A Student Placement Activity Worth Banging On About: The Professional Value of DRUMBEAT as a Student-Led Groupwork Activity.

Author/s: Nicky Wright

Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (BHUDRH), The University of Sydney

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

In 2016, the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (BHUDRH) introduced Holyoake's DRUMBEAT program as a student-led groupwork activity within social work service-learning placements in far west New South Wales.

A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes was designed to explore the experience of social work students as DRUMBEAT facilitators and to determine its value for continuation as a placement activity. Twenty (BSW and MSW) social work students participated in the study.

A deductive analysis of the data established that students identified an alignment between the ethos and practice of DRUMBEAT, and social work professional values and practice standards defined by the AASW. While the student experiences were varied and influenced by organisational and other variables, they reflected real-world practice and contributed to work-readiness and development of a professional identity. Involvement in the program contributed to students achieving field education learning goals: exposure to an alternative, creative tool for engagement with service users; insights into non-verbal communication and self-expression; learning about groupwork, including the inherent challenges and the personal/professional skills necessary for success; development of skills and knowledge broadly applicable to their future practice; increased self-awareness through prompts for self-reflection: and participation in an enjoyable experience that contributed to personal wellbeing.

Based on these findings the BHUDRH can confidently continue to incorporate DRUMBEAT in its service-learning placements. These findings will provide field education staff, host organisations, and students valuable insight into designing, implementing, and participating in social work placements and groupwork activities.
Climate justice and the community sector

Author/s: Dr Naomi Joy Godden, Doreen Wijekoon Bandara, Katrina Tomaszek, Danielle Barry, Pam MacNish and Rebecca Starke

Edith Cowan University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

Climate change is a significant threat to people who experience disadvantage. It is well-documented that across Australia, climate events and slow onset climate change exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, and that the people who are most affected by climate change are those who are already disadvantaged and marginalised. The community sector has an important role to play in preventing and responding to the climate crisis through its work with communities and its advocacy.

In 2019, Edith Cowan University and Western Australian community sector organisations commenced a feminist participatory action research project regarding climate justice and the WA community sector. The project aims to directly inform and transform knowledge, practice and action regarding climate justice and the WA community sector by examining the social justice impacts of climate change in WA; developing strategies that can be undertaken to mainstream climate justice in community sector organisations and work; and identifying opportunities for collective advocacy and action. Guided by a Steering Committee of community sector representatives, the project is a practical intervention to prepare the sector for the current and future challenges of climate change and other environmental and economic shocks.

This presentation shares the first cycle of project findings and the collective work undertaken by ECU, community sector organisations and ECU social work students to develop a toolkit for community sector organisations to embed climate justice in their work. The toolkit covers areas such as governance, programming, staff development, finance, risk management and policies and procedures. The presentation shares the scope, opportunities and challenges for community sector organisations to mainstream climate justice in their work.
9 | Working with regional young people and violence during COVID-19: access, communication, safety

Author/s: Dr Tamara Blakemore, Dr Graeme Stuart, Dr Joel McGregor, Ms Louise Rak and Felicity Cocuzzoli

University of Newcastle

Theme 2: Regional, rural and remote and international social work

Abstract:

The rapid emergence of COVID-19 dramatically shifted the context and practice of practitioners who work with young people and violence in regional locations. In particular, practitioners had to swiftly discover new ways of connecting and engaging with young people and families in diverse geographic locations. Drawing on data from two focus groups with community practitioners, managers and government department representatives and one with Aboriginal community practitioners, Elders and community members, and number of individual interviews, this article explores the challenges of this shifting work environment and how practitioners responded. This research was conducted as part of the Name.Narrate.Navigate pilot program, a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive action research project addressing youth perpetrated family and domestic violence in the Hunter Region of NSW. The article investigates practitioner concerns about the wellbeing and safety of people at risk of being exposed to violence and the increased reliance on online technology to engage clients. It will explore the exclusion of some of the most at-risk young people due to the digital divide and a lack of connectivity. The paper will also examine the new challenges and opportunities introduced when it was possible to work online, and the implications for practitioners including changed expectations about availability and the blurring of personal and professional boundaries.
10 | International student experiences in Queensland during Covid-19: An educational response to international students in crisis – penetrating perceptions and fostering cultural connections

Author/s: Hilary Gallagher, Ainsley Doherty, Michael Obonyo

Griffith University

Theme 2: Regional, rural and remote and international social work

Abstract:

International students faced a particularly challenging time during Covid19 due to racism, starvation, homelessness, an inability to pay their tuition fees and isolation from their country of origin (Jeffrey, 2020). Staff and students in the School of Human Services and Social Work, at Griffith university, undertook a crisis management approach in the initial stages of the pandemic, which developed into concurrently adopting a case management and community development framework to address the specific issues faced by the international student cohort. The school has an ongoing and long teaching partnership with Central China Normal University (CCNU) in Wuhan. Staff quickly realised that the lock down in Wuhan on 23rd of January 2020 would impact the return of students after the Chinese New Year and their ability to access financial institutions to transfer their fees. Shortly afterwards, additional impacts, as a result of the pandemic, were felt from many other international students studying human services and social work on campus at Griffith university. This paper explores the emotional, financial, and psychological toll that Covid-19 took on international students and how the school responded using crisis intervention, case management and community development approaches. Additionally, new insights and learnings into structural discrimination and the challenges in adopting a top down and bottom up approach to adapt institutional systems will be discussed. The three presenters were actively involved in this process as students, academic staff members and professional social workers.
11 | Zooming into online learning: Digital technologies for skills-based learning in social work

Author/s: Bernadette Moorhead and Lynelle Osburn

Charles Sturt University

Theme 1 – Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

The global COVID-19 crisis led to unprecedented challenges for compulsory on-campus attendance for social work education programs. The crisis prompted the need to innovate and deliver skills-based subjects related to interpersonal communication and group work online for the first time. This paper outlines the educational dimensions and strategies that underpinned the development and delivery of two online skills-based learning programs, which took place over a two-week period in April 2020. The paper outlines a collaborative team approach that involved social work educators, practitioners and online teaching experts, who utilised digital technologies to ensure program design was accessible for students from diverse backgrounds, which impacted their capacity to participate in skills-based learning. Emphasis is placed on our University’s Wiradjuri ethos, social work values, crisis theory and adult learning principles that were drawn upon to: centralise student and staff well-being, maximise participation, learning and self-care. Key challenges and insights are outlined, as well as implications for future social work program delivery and research. Consideration is given to developing and implementing an evidence-informed approach to skills-based learning in a time of rapid global change. Despite the challenges COVID-19 has created, this paper argues that there are opportunities to critically evaluate taken for granted assumptions about education and implement new approaches that enhance student participation and their development as social workers, who can be at the forefront of rapid changes spearheaded by digital technologies.
12 | Anti-othering co-education

Author/s: Rohena Duncombe

Charles Sturt University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

This paper reports on three practices used in online social work education. People enrolled in online Social Work degrees commonly have families and work commitments in addition to their studies. Many are already working in the human services. These practices leverage the maturity and experience of the people enrolled.

The practices are: critical reflection tasks on the experiences of students as users of human services; connecting people in the same fields of practice across States through threads on subject discussion boards; and incorporating student specialist knowledge in subject presentations.

This approach enriches the connection of course material to the lived experience of people already in practice, and models inclusion and democratic practice by educators.

The approach has yet to be evaluated but responses from the people participating are encouraging. We are interested now to hear thoughts from other educators and to hear about similar strategies being used by others.

We see these practices as contributing to; bringing the service user into the class, discouraging an ‘us and them’ view, and of contributing to de-stigmatising. It incorporates the knowledge of the people in the class, elevating their role and the valuation of their own knowledge. It makes the limitations of the academic more transparent – I have knowledge and experience but I am not a specialist in all topic areas that I facilitate.

This approach contributes to epistemological justice, the inclusion of the ‘service user’ view, and brings critical social work practice into the classroom.
13 | Integrating perspectives from existential psychotherapy in clinical supervision

Author/s: Paul Andrews

St Vincent’s Hospital Sydney

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Clinical supervision provides a vital space for social workers and students to reflect on their practice, face challenges and learn new skills. Many of us will be familiar with the conceptualisation of supervision as having educative, supportive and administrative domains. Lately I have been interested in broadening the theoretical base of my supervision practice. I have been exploring how perspectives and ideas from existential psychotherapy can be integrated into my clinical supervision of social workers and students. I have taken up this particular approach because I work in a health care setting where we inevitably encounter situations and dilemmas that resonate with the so called “existential givens” such as death anxiety, freedom and responsibility, isolation and connectedness, emotions and embodiment. These encounters can be in direct work with patients and families or in response to team or organisational challenges.

This session will briefly outline key elements and practices of existential psychotherapy that can be adapted to clinical supervision. Ways to conceptualise common dilemmas brought to supervision will be explored. Examples from my supervision practice will illustrate key themes. I will also draw on my own experience of receiving “supervision of supervision” from an existential psychotherapist. Demonstration of the important existential tool known as phenomenological enquiry will be provided.
14 | Male students’ experiences of the social work and community welfare curriculum

Author/s: Dr Neil Hall and Elie El-Khoury Antonios

Western Sydney University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

There is a small amount of literature relating to the experience of males in the social work and community welfare professions, and even less related to the student experience. This study investigates the male student experience of the Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Community Welfare Curriculum at Western Sydney University (WSU). The study explores how the engagement with the social work and community welfare courses at WSU impacts on male students’ sense of professional identity, their emergent understanding of privilege and equity, and likely career pathways. The research firstly utilised an anonymous online survey with invitations sent to all students in social work and community welfare who identified as male in student records. The survey had 31 responses (roughly 20% of the cohort). Initial survey data was analysed and follow-up interviews were arranged with 7 participants who had indicated willingness to do so. Findings pointed to a number of significant experiences. For example, the impact of identifying as male on:

- placement task allocation and the supervisory experience;
- expectations about male participation in class;
- a sense of isolation and males being identified collectively as ‘the problem’;
- the importance of critically reflecting on gender-based privilege and
- the intersection of factors, not just gender alone, that contribute to the male experience of social work.

The study discusses the implications of this experience in relation to improving male enrolment and retention in a predominantly female course and profession. This research also seeks to help inform the development of a theoretical framework about the experiences of men and boys and how social work and community welfare curriculum can provide learning points for students of all genders.
15 | Examining How the Environment is Conceptualised and Represented Globally in Social Work Codes of Ethics

Author/s: Kang Liu

Monash University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

**Background:** The environment, as a holistic concept, is fundamental to the health, wellbeing and development of humankind. Despite a clear focus on ‘person in the environment’, social work's consideration of this concept to date has focused almost exclusively on the social context. This imbalanced focus has impeded the profession from recognising and engaging with some of the most critical challenges to human rights and social justice.

**Objective:** This study seeks to build an initial understanding of how the environment is conceptualised and represented globally in contemporary social work codes of ethics - the profession's foundational documents.

**Method:** An exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach was applied to analyse data extracted from 64 social work codes of ethics, collected from internet resources through convenience sampling.

**Result:** The environment is mentioned in 41 codes of ethics. The environment is considered to mean the social context in almost one-half of the overall sample (48%, n = 31), while physical aspects of the environment are noted in just over one-quarter of the documents (28%, n = 18). When examining the latter, notions of the physical context are more conceptual than practical, and focus predominantly on the natural world, to the exclusion of the built environment.

**Conclusion:** A more holistic understanding of the environment would enable Social Work to better fulfil its commitment to human rights and social justice.
(De)colonisation in praxis: Methodological possibilities and pitfalls of a photo-voice project with two LGBTQ+ civil society organisations in Uganda

Author/s: Tanja Dittfeld and Ruth Phillips

The University of Sydney

Theme 3: Indigenous knowledge, methodologies and perspectives

Abstract:

Social work as a profession is a product of colonialism and a continued instrument of coloniality. In settler-colonial contexts like Australia, the need to decolonise social work curriculum, practice and pedagogy is increasingly acknowledged. Yet, scholarship on decolonisation in praxis remains scant. This paper offers learnings about the methodological possibilities and pitfalls of a decolonial research approach in a collaborative photovoice project with two LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations in Uganda from March to September 2020.

Within an under-researched field of social science such as LGBTIQ+ activism, innovative research can affect the field as a whole and shape future approaches. Decolonising research offers the possibility of identifying and disrupting universalised ideas about being human and creating spaces for historically overlooked and deliberately marginalised voices to be heard. For this study, the approach counteracts colonialism, dependency, and racism underpinning the relationship between Africa and the West, and the imperial and colonial practices characterising mainstream research.

Although this study was based in Uganda, the outcomes of the study as innovative decolonial social research in praxis are highly relevant to the Australian settler-colonial context. For social work generally, research into social movements, activism and grass roots organisations aimed at social transformation are important sites for understanding welfare and social change practice contexts. With social justice as its mandate, social work has an obligation not to recolonise in its practice, education and research. This paper correspondingly contributes to the emerging field of scholarship about the translation of the critical theory of decolonisation into praxis.
17 | ‘Domestic Security’: reframing DV policy in the National Plan

Author/s: Ruth Phillips and Susan Heward-Belle

The University of Sydney

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

This paper reports on the methodology and data from a 2020 pilot study for a nationwide audit of policy implementation of the Australian government's 3rd National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2016-2018). Focusing on two states and the Australian government, research analysed and documented how and to what extent three core principles of the National Plan were implemented through analysing political commentary in parliaments, budgetary allocations, legislation and program delivery. The three principles in focus were:

- Recognising children and young people as victims of violence against women.
- Holding perpetrators to account for their actions and supporting them to change.
- Providing trauma-informed responses to violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The analytic methods used for the audit included a detailed content analysis of all references to the National Plan (and related issues) during 2016-2018 recorded in Commonwealth, Victorian and NSW government's Hansards and related media releases and speeches; a ‘follow the money’ audit of the federal and Victorian & NSW budgets with analysis of media responses to budget announcements; an analysis of non-governmental service and advocacy organisations in Victoria related programs. The second phase of the research was a set of interviews with key actors, specifically related to initiatives and/or responses linked to the core principles.

After a comprehensive thematic content analysis, the findings demonstrated a mismatch between political framing of the National Plan and the needs and objectives of those directly involved in supporting women and their children who have experienced domestic violence.
18 | The local & the global: Making connections beyond the classroom in human services and social work education

Author/s: Rob Townsend

Federation University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and the classroom

Abstract:

Human services and social work education programs across the world tend now to focus on vocational outcomes rather than broad learning of liberal arts or civics. Vocational learning and work-integrated learning requires skills that are cross-platform, freelance, flexible, local and global (Lindsay, 2019). Therefore, adult based education processes in a university context are now being challenged by new learning ecologies; the need to facilitate participation, passion and purpose for individuals. Human services and social work students need knowledge and skills to investigate the world, weigh different perspectives, communicate ideas, act and apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise. This presentation will reveal how human services and social work education programs in Australia are an example of how these new forms of learning ecologies can be achieved locally and globally for a professional services sector that is now the most rapidly growing vocational sector.
Evolving stigma constructs: implications of dominant discourses surrounding teenage pregnancy on social adjustment across the lifespan

Author/s: Jemma Hamley

James Cook University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

This presentation discusses emerging findings from a PhD project about the social adjustment of former teenage mothers as they transition into later phases of adulthood. Findings from this qualitative study include implications of dominant social discourses on the social and emotional adjustment of participants across the lifespan. Literature suggests that stigma has long permeated the social landscape surrounding teenage motherhood. Stigma constructs have evolved from the mid twentieth century, from discourses related to Christian concepts of ‘sin’ related to pre-marital sex, to ‘moral underclass’ discourses over recent decades.

Findings to date reveal that during their time as teenage mothers, participants were acutely aware of ways they were socially stereotyped as unsuitable mothers. Participants were overwhelmingly told by family and friends that ‘their lives were ruined’ by virtue of adolescent pregnancy, and many reported hostile treatment during antenatal care, or they felt shunned by older mothers at playgroups and when taking their children to school. The impact of experiences of stigma on participants personal and social adjustment across the lifespan were revealed, including the ripple effects of adverse experiences - for example impacts on teenage mothers’ confidence in subsequent life stages. Teenage motherhood is associated with significant disadvantage in Australia. Understanding factors associated with adverse long-term outcomes for teenage mothers across the lifespan, such as stigma, are important for social work practitioners. The benefits of anti-oppressive practice with this population are discussed.
20 | Disrupting the perpetuation of white power: A critique of cultural competency in the human services.

Author/s: Dr Lobna Yassine¹ and Dr Emma Tseris²

¹Australian Catholic University, ²University of Sydney

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

Writing in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement, which is highlighting the real-life material impacts of systemic and institutional racism, this paper aims to disrupt the popular concept of “cultural competency” and its deployment in human service organisations. Although the social work profession has been called to account for its inherent whiteness numerous times, and oftentimes by Indigenous scholars, ostensibly progressive concepts such as “cultural competency” are continuing to disguise how whiteness readjusts to an environment, in order to ensure its continued domination.

This paper draws inspiration from a recent special edition of Social Work and Policy Studies: Social Justice, Theory and Practice journal that placed “cultural competency” under the microscope. The impetus for the special issue came from a desire to problematize simplistic attempts by social workers to “understand culture” or to gain mastery regarding “how to work with the Other” and to instead redirect attention towards interrupting the Western gaze (Beck, Charania, Abed-Rabo Al-Issa & Wahab, 2017), including its influence in both pathologizing the perspectives and experiences of First Nations people and people of colour, and in concealing the role of whiteness in social work knowledge and practice. What the special edition brought to light was the significant gap between the level of interest in anti-racist ideals, and efforts to apply them on an operational level.

Through a questioning of what is a relatively well-accepted concept, this paper aims to disrupt the dangerous narrative that resisting white privilege and racialized oppression is simplistic, and that “cultural competency” will address the deeply entrenched racialized violence that lingers within the human services.
How digital technologies supported wellbeing for school families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Author/s: Scott Gartshore

University of New England

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Social work field education was impacted heavily in early 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many social work student's placements across Australia were suspended or terminated, however University of New England (UNE) field education placements in NSW public schools prospered. The UNE Social Work in School (SWiS) program had 10 students placed in schools when forced government health lockdowns meant all school children & young people (SCYP) remained isolated at home. School staff moved to teaching in online classrooms and social work students engaged in innovative, online wellbeing initiatives. The social work students engaged with digital technologies in this time of unprecedented change with positive outcomes for school families. This paper discusses some examples of social work field education practice via digital technologies, and how these succeeded where school families had access to digital technologies. Examples are the design and use of weekly wellbeing themes posted to Facebook pages and email. Such wellbeing themes for both parents and SCYP attempted to bring families together. The social work placement students discovered the importance of social work practice for school families where limited access to technology could potentially leave them at further disadvantage. With the NSW Department of Education recruiting for Student Support Officer roles highlighting the social work qualification, Social Work stands at a crossroads of further embracing, with caution, digital technologies alongside other telehealth services. Equitable access to adequate digital technology for disadvantaged client groups is highlighted.
22 | Justice and Peace: The relationship between activism and social work education.

Author/s: Ndungi Mungai, Fred Velander, Monica Short, Will Dobud, Lynelle Osburn, Sue Mlcek and Aaron Morrison on behalf of the ZiRS co-operative inquiry group

Charles Sturt University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

This presentation examines the changing social and political climate and its impact on the relationship between activism and social work education. The International Federation of Social Work global definition alludes to the current and historical existence of marginalisation, exclusion, racism, poverty and oppression internationally. Grassroot social workers are witnesses to the contemporary political trends disenfranchising people who are Indigenous, coloured, the diaspora, climate refugees or the powerless. It appears that many did not predict the expansiveness of the recent uprising and political distress within society and the impact on students. Furthermore, groups such as Students for Climate Change, Extinction Rebellion, Umbrella Movement and Black Lives Matter Movement contain students who are advocating for rights and justice. In other words, many students are demonstrating chanting, 'NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE'. In this presentation, we will posit that international social work education and practice is to a large extent allied with civil society and by proxy is a political activity. This is because social work education is guided by core defining values with social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities at its heart. This presentation outlines some of the challenges and possibilities for achieving rights and social justice in teaching social work; remembering that an important part of our cohort are saying there is an oppressive knee on their necks stopping them breathing let alone fully participating in education and civil society. We will conclude with dialoguing what can social work education in Australasia contribute in these current charged times?
Combining pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy to deliver transformational education.

Author/s: Manohar Pawar, Susan Mlcек, Lynelle Osburn, Katrina Gersbach, Will Dobud, Aaron Morrison, Rowena Duncombe

Charles Sturt University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

This presentation critically discusses the application of pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy in preparing social work students for practice. By offering a conceptual clarity of these concepts, we look at how social work educators and students use them to enhance their learning and teaching. Further, we explore online learning and skills development in the COVID-19 social distancing context. We argue that when educators, practitioners and learners use pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy in different combinations to enhance learning and skills development in the on-line environment, it produces novel learning dynamics. This type of transformational education has implications for the learning-teaching experience. Transformational education using the forms of learning also has implications for the creative development approaches to knowledge and skills acquisition, under forced online circumstances. While our analysis raises more questions than it answers, it also provides examples of effective strategies used in higher education for social work and human services context.
24 | Challenges and opportunities: Innovative social work placement delivery during COVID-19

Author/s: Louise Whitaker\textsuperscript{1}, Erica Russ\textsuperscript{2}, Lynn Berger\textsuperscript{1} and Monica Short\textsuperscript{3} on behalf of the International Network of Co-operative Inquirers

\textsuperscript{1}Southern Cross University, \textsuperscript{2}University of New England, \textsuperscript{3}Charles Sturt University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

This presentation shares the emerging themes from current research by the International Network of Co-operative Inquirers into the challenges to and opportunities for innovative delivery in social work placements across distance. Since commencing this research, COVID-19 has thrown a spotlight on the need for such innovation. Internationally, COVID-19 has forced educational reform, disrupted already strained field education systems, and increased the pressure upon educators and industry-based professionals to immediately develop creative options for placements. Field educators are urgently addressing two interlinked global trends: that workplace learning is radically changing in an unknown way; and the consequent immediate need to create innovative placement options with limited guidance. Key findings will be presented from co-operative inquiries examining innovative placements in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Scotland. Field educators and students in these five countries are using blended learning, innovation, connectivity and collaboration to cross the barriers caused by distance, where distance is defined geographically and/or sociologically. Further, this presentation provides an opportunity for critical dialogue about mediating the tensions between four related requirements: (i) student needs to develop professional skills and knowledge to be work-ready; (ii) academic governance rules; (iii) professional association mandates; and (iv) industry capacity.
Where are the Social Workers?

Author/s: Dr Rimple Mehta and Professor Linda Briskman

Western Sydney University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, scholarly work in this field is burgeoning. This comes from a range of disciplinary perspectives, mostly dominated by medical science but with increasing interest in the social impact of the crisis. Social workers across the globe are working, more often than not, behind the scenes to respond to the socio-economic crisis that the pandemic has unfolded which has revealed existing inequities and denial of agency to the most vulnerable. While frontline health workers have been valorised and referred to as ‘COVID warriors’, the acknowledgement of other ‘hands on’ work carried out by the social workers has been scant. In contrast, the latest education policies in countries such as Australia have devalued the profession, its relevance and contribution by either recognising it as an ‘allied health’ discipline or by substantially increasing the fee for social work courses while also increasing student contribution towards the same. The negative impact of these policies towards those aspiring to be social work professionals is not difficult to fathom. Most importantly, a decrease in the number of social work professionals will adversely affect a society where socio-economic marginalities have further deepened and will require critical interventions to support and ensure the well-being of those whom social workers are tasked with assisting. The pandemic has revealed that apart from health social workers, contributions to crisis are minimalised for social workers in community development settings or those who subscribe to human rights paradigms. In countries such as India, lack of a contextualised approach towards the issue of public health has disproportionally affected the poor, who are unlikely to be able to practice social distancing in overcrowded accommodation nor have access to sufficient running water or soap. The lack of policy attention towards the toiling classes in the rural and urban spaces has unleashed a crisis whose impact may have a much longer bearing on human life than that of the virus. The reason for bringing the examples from two countries is to draw attention to the fact that the pandemic is not a ‘great leveller’ as was initially popularised with its rapid spread. The pandemic has shown a mirror to several existing inequities not only between the Global North and the Global South but also within each of the nation-states. We propose a strategic attention to social work at the global level to enable both critical thinking and interventions with a focus on the socio-economic and political forms of oppressions and marginalisations which are deepened by the hierarchies and top-down approach to policy. We also discuss the measures required within the social work community to facilitate the process of rebuilding societies.
26 | Place-based work with men who choose to use violence: exploring the role of perpetrator intervention, justice pathways, and location in contributing to women’s safety.

Author/s: Brontë Walter, Donna Chung

Curtin University

Theme 2: Regional, rural and remote and international social work

Abstract:

There has been longstanding agreement amongst practitioners and researchers that differences exist between ways of working in regional and metropolitan areas, even though the intended goals of interventions may be the same. In the area of domestic and family violence, strong justice responses and the availability of effective perpetrator interventions have been the key interventions to ensuring safety for women and children. However, metro-centric assumptions about the environment within which these responses exist still underpin much policy and service design. In this presentation we examine how these assumptions are managed and mediated in delivering perpetrator responses outside the city limits.

This presentation draws on two studies which explored perpetrator interventions in rural areas. One, a case study detailing intervention and Justice pathways for men who use violence against partners and family members in a rural WA town. The other, exploring practitioners’ perspectives and ways of working with men who use intimate partner violence in rural areas in four Australian states.

Together, they paint a picture of the role of place and how it can be a strength utilised to provide strong perpetrator interventions, how organisational challenges of location and culture lead to local adaptations as well as insurmountable challenges at other times. The research also highlights barriers to perpetrator interventions and gaps in policy and funding provision which often take no account of locality. The implications for women's and children's safety of these complexities are discussed.

The presentation incorporates some considerations for future social work education and research in order to pursue social work’s commitment to inclusion and social justice.
27 | A case study of collaboration and cooperation between Queensland Field Education and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women 2 years on – what have we achieved?

Author/s: Vikki Watkins¹, Dr Phyllis Chee², Joanne Bidgood³ and Dr Fotina Hardy²

¹Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, ²Griffith University, ³University of Queensland

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and the classroom

Abstract:

Developing sustainable and quality field education placements that prepare graduates to deal with the complexity of practice is an ongoing goal and challenge in a highly competitive field education environment. This presentation follows on from our 2018 ANZSWWER conference presentation of a collaboration between multiple universities and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, who have worked together to build a sustainable model of student field education that has focused on building capacity. Two years on, we have seen the program grow from two regions of south east Queensland to a statewide program which provides opportunities for workforce development for staff to coach and mentor students, as well as a potential pathway for new recruits. Regardless of where graduates go on to work it provides a rich learning experience for students to appreciate how and why ‘child protection is everyone’s business’. We present our reflections on what has made this successful, while also highlighting the ongoing challenges and complexities involved. Initial findings from our ongoing collaborative research will be shared.
28 | Advances Journal Publishing Workshop: Publishing Session for New and Developing Writers

Author/s: Mim Fox

University of Wollongong

WORKSHOP

Abstract:

The Advances in Social Work & Welfare Education journal invites all new and developing academic writers to a Publishing Session at the ANZSWWER Symposium 2020. The aim of this workshop is to support new and developing academic writers in their understanding and approach to journal publication. Participants will learn about structuring their written piece for an academic audience, the submission process and peer review feedback. They will have the opportunity to discuss their writing ideas in a peer learning setting and to ask questions to develop their skills in writing academic components of a journal article. By the time the workshop is complete participants will feel empowered to start writing!
The power of social inclusion during isolation in rural, regional and remote communities

Author/s: Monica Short
Charles Sturt University

Theme 2: Regional, rural and remote and international social work

Abstract:

This presentation via an integrated lens with an epistemological base in rural social work, rural sociology and rural theology will discuss the immediate need for social inclusion during the COVID-19 epoch. Emerging contemporary scholarship regarding the contribution of social-distancing caused by COVID-19 to isolation and loneliness appears to focus on social change within urban contexts. However, COVID-19 appears to be compounding the experience of isolation in rural communities. Isolation is not a new experience for rural people; for example, there is extensive documentation regarding rural isolation, isolation caused by disasters, drought-related stress and isolation, and geographic isolation. Two case studies and two cooperative inquiries investigating Australian rural Anglican churches highlighted the importance of social inclusion in addressing isolation. Rural-focused social inclusion involves intentional, culturally-aware actions that ensure warm connections across distances. Inclusion can facilitate a rich understanding of rural communities and their spiritual, emotional and socioeconomic determinants. This presentation recognises the important role of social workers in promoting social inclusion. It will propose that the act of social inclusion helps reduce vulnerabilities caused through COVID-19 by creating a sense of belonging in a community, such as found in a church, and by ensuring access to resources despite social-distancing. For example, social inclusion may involve utilising emerging online technologies to promote the psycho-social-spiritual wellbeing of an individual and to grow the social, spiritual and human capital of a town. In this presentation, we will consider what rural towns and their institutions can share with urban centres about overcoming isolation.
30 | Retaining 'home grown' social workers in Greater Shepparton – A partnership between La Trobe University and not for profit employers.

Author/s: Tricia Quibell¹ and Corina Modderman²

¹Shepparton Community Share, ²La Trobe University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

A key challenge for the child and family service sector is to ensure the supply of a skilled and motivated workforce to meet the challenge of complex service delivery. For regional and rural areas there is the additional need to attract and retain 'home grown' talent. This is particularly important at a time of rapid reform when practitioners need to be upskilled to respond to new demands. Recent government reforms include the National Disability Insurance Scheme, First Nations self-determination, and recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Future Social Service Institute 2018 report indicates that over the next five years health and social services jobs in Victoria are set to grow by 60,000, placing further pressure on an already stretched system.

It is in this context that four community agencies collectively known as Shepparton Community Share partnered with La Trobe University and the Victorian Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to address 3 key issues:

- Developing the professional capacity of local social work students from the classroom to employment in response to the rapidly evolving environment.
- Providing exposure to the breadth of opportunities in the child and family services sector, beyond the experience of field education.
- Providing opportunities for students to be financially stable whilst gaining workforce experience.

In response the collaboration has established a packaged opportunity offering paid internships two days per week together with an option to complete the final 4th year placement in one of the other agencies. With the objective to provide real world experience, financial value and partnering for workforce capacity building.

This presentation will focus on opportunities and challenges in this partnership between University and local agencies, and the experiences of student interns. Findings show that this project has the potential to drive positive change delivering quality social workers that make a different for children, young people, and their families in Greater Shepparton.
31 | Social housing in Melbourne at the time of pandemic: A social work response

Author/s: Dr Kim Robinson\textsuperscript{1} and Professor Linda Briskman\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Deakin University, \textsuperscript{2}Western Sydney University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

The recent police response initiated by Government to COVID-19 with people living in social housing in inner city Melbourne, Kensington, Flemington and North Melbourne, has drawn widespread condemnation from critical social workers. In July 2020 without notice, 3,000 residents were subject to immediate lockdown, which was enforced by 500 armed police. For decades this part of inner-city Melbourne has flourished as different migrant communities, often arriving as refugees, mix with long standing residents. Multi-cultural, bi-cultural and community development workers work collaboratively and in partnership with communities, building sustainable and supportive social capital.

This paper will draw on the lived experience of two social workers, one of whom worked 25 years ago for Doutta Galla Community Health Centre as a social worker, and was based in Kensington, Flemington and North Melbourne, the site of the flats in the shutdown. The second is a human rights social worker who offers critiques of top-down state intervention that are antithetical to community driven responses. Based on a small qualitative study we highlight how social workers, community workers and leaders are currently engaging with the crisis and how their roles are minimised through the dominance of health and policing paradigms. We argue how the core elements of critical social work remain as urgent as ever at a time when police and public health responses to the pandemic were damaging to community trust, and that social work is best placed to respond to COVID through commitment to social connection, social inclusion and community development.
32 | Critically reflecting on applying trauma informed principles via telehealth: An emerging dimension of social work practice when supporting people living with chronic disease during COVID19.

Author/s: Maryanne Long¹, Rebecca Nelson², Louise Whitaker²

¹Southern Queensland Rural Health, University of Queensland, ²University of Southern Cross

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom.

Abstract:

Southern Queensland Rural Health’s Health and Wellness Clinic (HaWC), engages students in interprofessional practice in supporting the health and well-being of people living with chronic disease in a regional setting. Consistent with good practice with this population, social work in the clinic is influenced by a trauma-informed lens. During COVID19, service was maintained by rapidly introducing telehealth. While there is evidence about the use of telehealth in delivering mental health support to people with an identified trauma background, such as veterans there is little evidence about the use of a trauma informed approach within telehealth. This paper explores the experience of a social work student and clinical educator in applying trauma informed principles to co-design interventions with HaWC participants. Our critical reflections revealed the social work student’s confidence and competence with technology enabled her to establish rapport with HaWC participants. The relationship developed with the participants supported both effective social work interventions and engagement with other professions in the HaWC interprofessional program. The clinical educator facilitated the development of the student’s professional identity while supporting her to articulate the application of a trauma informed approach in this medium. In brief, telehealth provided a platform through which the supervisor, student and people living with chronic disease co-designed interventions that fostered health and increased sense of well-being. As this technology will increasingly be used post COVID19, these reflections on the application of trauma informed principles within telehealth, will inform effective future social work practice.
33 | Looking across the Tasman at integrating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the social work curriculum, what can we learn from each other?

Author/s: Libby Hammond

Flinders University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

Within social work, social workers have been complicit in supporting colonial beliefs and practices and denying Indigenous worldviews and practices. Australian social work acknowledges the centrality of Eurocentric epistemologies within its current social work curriculum. In 2014, the “Getting it Right: Creating Partnerships for change” framework in integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives into the Australian social work curriculum was introduced. Even with this framework in existence, the process of integrating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the social work curriculum seemed to be challenging. As a PhD candidate, I desired to find out if academics in Aotearoa New Zealand more effectively integrated Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into their curriculum and if in comparing the two nations integration we could learn from each other. I interviewed a number of academics from three universities in Australia and two universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. From this comparative study, I will present participants’ perceptions of what facilitates the process and what challenges are experienced in the integration process. Academics highlighted the challenges of navigating what has been coined the ‘Whitestream’ of academia, the whitestream system that slows the integration. Indigenous academics were included in the study and they provide their perspective on the integration process and their experience of navigating the whitestream. A key theme that arose from the data was the relationships that were involved in the integration process. These relationships will be discussed.
34 | The benefits of a disrupted ‘place’ for a placement: The potential of virtual student units during a global pandemic

Author/s: Matthew Williamson, Sonya Stanford and Justin Canty

University of Tasmania

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has required emergency changes to the way social work field education is delivered in Australia. As Australian states and territories experienced various stages of lockdown, the traditional apprenticeship model of field education, where physically present students work alongside an experienced practitioner in an agency setting, became untenable. Faced with this challenge, the Social Work program at the University of Tasmania questioned how our placement program could be delivered and also contribute to the state’s COVID-19 responses and recovery. In this presentation, we describe a model of University-based virtual student units that provided a unique opportunity to partner with 15 agencies who between them provided placement experiences for 154 students. Each group comprised six students who were working from home in each regional area, and they were organised according to their learning needs and practicum level. Groups were allocated to agencies (up to four groups per agency) and external supervisors provided group and individual supervision. Liaison meetings occurred each week through a group-based ‘culture coaching’ model that enabled early resolution of placement difficulties. Although the pandemic has been – to say the least – disruptive, it has prompted reconsideration of the focus and potential of ‘place’ in placements. We argue there is potential to adapt our model of field education to address the longstanding issues of the sustainability and quality of placements, as well providing new ways to demonstrate the community impact of social work field education in local and global contexts.
Social distancing and remote learning and teaching – How COVID-19 policy is impacting perceptions of connectedness amongst social work students and staff

Author/s: Dr Wendy Rollins, Assoc. Professor Annie Venville and Dr Doris Testa

Victoria University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

COVID-19 forced universities to shift rapidly to remote delivery of teaching and learning. This immediately changed pre COVID-19 patterns of communication and experience of social connectedness amongst staff and students. As Victoria endures its second lockdown, Victoria University, Melbourne, is exploring social work student and staff insights about their experience of social connectedness, and of teaching and learning, in the remote delivery context. Using survey and follow up in-depth interviews with Allied Health teaching staff and enrolled Bachelor of Social Work students at Victoria University, findings will contribute to ongoing development of remote delivery teaching and learning approaches that acknowledge the changed experiences of social connectedness. This presentation reports preliminary findings and their potential implications for staff and student experience of teaching and learning remotely.
36 | Using digital technologies to maintain and develop connections between children in care and their families during COVID-19

Author/s: Dr Susan Collings, Sarah Ciftci and Associate Professor Amy Conley Wright

The University of Sydney

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Children in out-of-home care have a right to maintain contact with their birth families. For the majority of children in out-of-home care in Australia, this right is expressed in case plans and court orders that set out children’s arrangements for direct contact with birth relatives. Typically, direct contact with birth relatives involves scheduled, face-to-face contact visits that take place in public spaces, with or without supervision. The COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented social restrictions implemented to curb the spread of the virus, resulted in the need to rapidly modify children’s contact arrangements with their families. Out-of-home care caseworkers trialled new ways of keeping children connected to their families when face-to-face visits were not possible, relying heavily on digital technologies to support meaningful family time.

This paper presents findings from the Fostering Lifelong Connections action research study. The study involves 33 out-of-home care caseworkers from four sites and eight partner agencies across NSW as action researchers who develop, trial, evaluate and embed relationship-building practices over three years in collaboration with a university-based research team and expert reference group. Drawing on qualitative evidence gathered from the study’s action researchers during reflective meetings, this presentation discusses casework practices that enable and support the use of digital technologies for contact visits. It describes observed benefits and opportunities for relationship-building between children, their carers and birth relatives as a result of technology-facilitated communication and considers the implications for contact arrangements post-pandemic including the use of digital technologies for promoting regular communication in between face-to-face visits.
37 | Mobility and employment outcomes for international graduates of Australian social work education

Author/s: Lana Battaglia

Monash University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

International student numbers entering qualifying social work programs in Australia have consistently grown in recent years, and discourse has centred on problematising this cohort of students. However, no known research exists about their post-study outcomes. To explore the employment and mobility outcomes of international social work graduates, an anonymous online survey was completed by 49 respondents, originating from 15 countries, who had recently graduated from 16 universities across Australia. Findings suggest that migration is a key motivator for international students enrolling into social work study. As such, geographic mobility is more likely within Australia rather than in international settings after graduation. While most participants secure their first professional role 3-6 months after completing their studies, a smaller proportion search for up to 18 months. The process of securing professional employment is described by most to be challenging. This is due to: visa status; language barriers; competition with other graduates; employers’ expectations for applicants to be professionally experienced; and lacking familiarity with the local context. These findings suggest that international social work graduates’ post-study pathways are distinct, compared to descriptions in the existing literature about newly qualified social workers. Further qualitative studies can help to understand how post-study pathways are navigated and experienced by international social work graduates. This can help to improve the way international students are conceptualised throughout Australian literature, and within educational settings, which in turn can benefit the preparation and support of this growing cohort of students.
Diving into the world of uncertainty: Learning and teaching social work practice skills during COVID-19

Author/s: Natasha Long and Fiona Smith

La Trobe University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

2020 has been a year of rapid change and innovation. Like many social work academics we were faced with a situation we were neither prepared for nor fully understood. The thought of rapidly transitioning a final year skills-based subject to an online platform seemed daunting. Initially the hope was that we would return to campus for face to face teaching and as such we focused on transitioning the theory component of the subject online. As the situation with COVID-19 worsened, our plans to hold face to face intensive skills classes were soon dashed. Teaching the theory component of classes online was one thing – grappling with how to teach ‘practice skills’ remotely was another thing altogether. With an existing interest in the use of simulation in skills teaching we rapidly designed and developed simulation activities for use online. Students worked intensively with Sophia Manikas over three sessions, applying three theoretical approaches in their online practice interviews. Whilst the essence of Sophia’s story remained consistent, file notes provided each week related to the chosen theoretical approach. Students conducted their interviews and provided peer feedback based on a structured observation/feedback sheet focussed on the weekly theoretical approach. This presentation explores the development of our ‘online intensive skills practice classes’, the challenges we faced and the innovations this led to.
Disrupting dominant discourses in professional practice: Practitioner perspectives on implementing ecosocial work

Author/s: Samuel Lloyd¹, Jeanette Ninnis², Laura Wilson³, Heather Boetto⁴, Wendy Bowles⁴

¹Private Practitioner, ²STARTTS, ³NSW Health, ⁴Charles Sturt University

Theme 4: Disruption in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

This presentation brings together social work practitioners from a range of contexts to reflect on the application of ecosocial work in professional practice. Following participation in a collaborative project practitioners reflect on their lived experience of implementing an ecosocial work approach, including impact during, immediately after and two years following the project's conclusion.

Samuel, working in hospital social work at the time of the project, discusses the challenges of implementing eco-social work in a large institutional setting at a micro level. Samuel will share a professional journey of reflective practice that shifted his eco lens from a radical, macro perspective to one that inspired ripples of change through an unchanging system.

Jeanette comes from an understanding that people's relationship to the natural world is an important component towards developing sustainable stewardship of the planet. When natural landscapes become warscapes, the natural environment can become a site of trauma and fear. As a refugee trauma counsellor, Jeanette presents how an ecosocial work framework assists reconnection to nature for healing.

Laura focuses at the organisational level by promoting cultural change within a mental health facility. Education sessions were held with clinicians and patients, with participants asked to identify ecosocial practice strategies that could be implemented within the workplace. Laura will speak about the strategies that were implemented and the influence the natural environment has on mental health recovery.

We conclude that disrupting dominant discourses in professional practice that neglect environmental sustainability is fundamental for developing transformative ecosocial work. By bringing together a range of practice experiences, we argue that the development of ecosocial work requires further collaborative exploration with practitioners to cultivate ecosocial work into mainstream practice. Without attention to ecosocial work practice detail across all contexts of practice, we risk consigning environmental practice as peripheral to the profession.
Democratic constitutionalism, agency, and social work ethics: A critically engaged account of the ethical problematics of statelessness and displacement.

Author/s: David Hodgson and Lynelle Watts

Curtin University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

This presentation engages with moral questions concerning displacement and statelessness by drawing on the philosophy of James Tully and Christine Korsgaard. Statelessness is defined by the UNHCR as “people [who] are not considered as nationals by any State” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017, p. 51). Statelessness and displacement are concomitant with loss of place, violation of rights, suspension of international norms, threats to safety and belonging, and a severe curtailment to access to law and citizenship. Our argument is that normative conceptions of social work ethics are nation-centric, and offer limited opportunities to consider agency and democratic constitutionalism beyond that of the nation-state. We present a reconsideration of established social work ethical understandings by arguing for the place of public philosophy and the constitution of the self as key to a social work theory and practice that is concerned with contesting relations of governance that are oppressive. We illustrate our claims by considering the moral challenge that statelessness and displacement presents social work ethics. Korsgaard’s work on normativity and agency, and Tully's notion of democratic constitutionalism provides a rich and original contribution to social work ethics that will be articulated for social work theory and practice.
Building whanaungatanga online

Author/s: Jude Douglas

Whakarewarewa Community Polytechnic

Theme 1 - Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand has traditionally been taught in face to face modes. Historically, there has been resistance to courses which have been more significantly online, despite several studies demonstrating similar or better student learning outcomes when courses are well designed and taught.

The Education (Vocational Education and Training) Amendment Bill, enacted in April 1 of this year, has heralded a new area in the provision of vocational education. Early working documents from the workforce development committees set up under the Act, indicate the direction of tertiary education in New Zealand will be towards more blended and online approaches.

What this means for professional and applied programmes like social work is that the role of most teaching academics will need to widen to include pedagogically sound ways of engaging and interacting with students online.

This session describes the attempts of one social work academic to increase the level of online engagement and interaction between lecturer and students, between the students themselves and between the students and the course material in order to build whanaungatanga in the group during the period of emergency remote teaching over lockdown between March and June 2020.

Five tools are used and evaluated.

The first is the use of the padlet application, an online noticeboard where students can interact in a variety of ways as an adjunct to the course Moodle (LMS) site.

The second is the use of e-text as an informal way of tutor/student contact, the third is the purposeful use of the class Moodle forums to encourage engagement, interaction and reflection, the fourth the use of a Moodle chat room and the final one was the use of the chat room function in Zoom.

The value of each is considered in light of how well it contributes to building whanaungatanga within this particular group of learners.

*Whanaungatanga  relationships, community, connectedness
42 | Same storm, different waka: the differential effect of Covid 19 on student learning experiences in a blended SW degree programme in Porirua, Aotearoa New Zealand; Experiences, ethical challenges & unintended Consequences.

Author/s: Jude Douglas, Charlotte Smith, Kellie Hapi, Leah Mailo, Lyana Ross and Nicole Tildesley

Whitireia Community Polytechnic

Theme 1 - Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

It's almost a truism to restate that the period of Covid lockdown highlighted existing inequalities. The issues that emerged within the student population were in many ways a microcosm of those in wider society.

A cohort of second year students and their tutor reflect on some of these inequities and the impact on the learning in the first semester of study in 2020. This co-constructed piece attempts to capture the experiences of students and educators during this extraordinary time. Responses to challenges are discussed including the varying experiences of students, emerging ethical issues for educators, and ultimately the impacts on learning and community building, or whanaungatanga in this cohort.

Aspects of the sudden move to remote learning are described from the viewpoint of students and tutor. The translation of a largely face to face mode into an online one, how the pastoral needs of students were met, emerging ethical challenges as well as opportunities for learning and growth for all are described using the analogy of a journey through a storm. For some, the boats were leaky, for others, sound.

The unexpected consequences of the rafting up of boats that had to occur to keep everyone afloat afforded new learning for students and tutors. Ultimately it provided a beacon of light which points the way to more collaborative, inclusive learning which more closely reflects the social justice mandate of the profession itself.

*Whanaungatanga relationships, community, connectedness*
Teaching mental health social work: What are we preparing students for?

Author/s: Louise Whitaker¹, Melissa Petrakis², Fiona Smith³, Lisa Brophy³

¹Southern Cross University, ²Monash University, ³La Trobe University

Abstract: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Historically the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) have detailed specific mental health curriculum content. This has covered attitudes and values, knowledge for social work practice and social work practice skills. "This reflects the prevalence of mental health problems in the Australian population, and also the complex situations that clients are likely to be facing. In turn, clients should be able to expect that social workers can recognise the nature of their difficulties, including mental health problems, and work collaboratively with them to resolve or improve their situation' (ASWEAS 2012, Guideline 1.1, p. 3). The new 2020 guidelines do not name mental health required curriculum content. Knowing this change was coming, 4 academics who teach mental health social work across 3 Australian universities met over 6 months in 2019/2020 and engaged in a cooperative inquiry into teaching mental health social work in Australian universities, exploring purpose, emphasis and challenges in teaching. Through rich conversations an issue that repeatedly emerged was "What are we preparing students for?" Analysis of the transcripts of meetings revealed four key themes, associated with this question: mental health social work practice as it is/has been; an aspirational view of the potential of social work practice in mental health; building students’ capacity to think critically and act with flexibility; and/or addressing ASWEAS guidelines. Findings from the first phase of the inquiry will be presented. Social work was found to be well positioned to address social determinants of health, and lead within the mental health sector.
Reflexive critical pragmatism for social work education, practice and research

Author/s: Dr Shelley Turner

Monash University

Theme 3: Indigenous knowledge, methodologies and perspectives

Abstract:

This paper explores reflexive critical pragmatism (Turner 2019) and its relevance for social work education, practice and research. It also explores the relationship between reflexive critical pragmatism and Dadirri, a method and way of life of the Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Territory's Daly River region (see Ungunmerr 1988; Ungunmerr-Baumann, 2002). Dadirri entails reflecting on, learning from and acting on a process of non-judgemental and non-obtrusive listening (Williams 2019), involving 'listening to and observing the self as well as, and in relationship with, others’ (Atkinson 2002, p.19). Reflexive critical pragmatism, as suggested by its name, combines reflexivity with critical pragmatism - concepts strongly aligned with Dadirri (see Atkinson 2002; West et al. 2012). Although variously defined, reflexivity essentially involves explicit, critical examination of the self, sources of knowledge, and how knowledge is applied in different contexts to make sense of situations and events. Critical pragmatism is an emerging philosophical perspective that aims to synthesise and capitalise on the affinities between Critical Theory and classical pragmatism. Its relevance for social work is in its dual emphasis on ethics and action, and its attention to values (what ought to be) and facts (what is) (Longhofer, Floersch & Hoy 2013). Thus, critical pragmatism is argued to offer a useful normative and theoretical framework for reflexivity - a reflexive critical pragmatism - in social work education, practice and research.
Connect for Safety: a world-first online child protection information sharing solution to make Australia’s children safer

Author/s: Briony Foster

Department of Communities and Justice.

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Connect for Safety is an innovative online child protection information sharing solution designed to enhance the safety of children and families in Australia. Arising from the Business Research and Innovation Initiative Challenge program of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Connect for Safety is the result of a four-year collaboration between government and small-medium enterprise to solve the complex policy problem of sharing child protection data safely and securely in near real-time. The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009-2020, and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, both highlighted that better inter-jurisdictional information exchange mechanisms are vital to improve child safety in Australia. Families and individuals with child protection histories often cross jurisdictional borders without this history being identified, which can mean that critical information is missed. Children and young people may therefore be vulnerable to situations of risk without the supports they need. Connect for Safety is intended to enable child protection officers to quickly identify if an individual is known to another jurisdiction, so that casework information can be shared more efficiently between agencies. The solution represents a world-first in complex data matching technology and has potential to significantly change how jurisdictions collaborate to protect children, young people and their families in a highly mobile society. This paper explores the national collaboration behind the Connect for Safety solution now being piloted with State and Territory information exchange officers, and which will ultimately be available to all authorised statutory child protection officers in Australia.
‘I had to take a casual contract and work one day a week’: Students’ experiences of lengthy university placements as drivers of precarity

Author/s: Dr Lisa Hodge, Dr Nicole Oke

Victoria University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Students in Australian universities – like students elsewhere – are increasingly required to undertake lengthy unpaid placements. While there are bodies of literature investigating whether lengthy unpaid placements help students get jobs post-graduation, or if placements heighten financial hardship that students already experience, this paper focusses on the way placements effect students’ current paid employment. Most Australian university students already undertake paid work, often to meet basic necessities. We argue that the requirements of lengthy placements restrict the conditions of which students can engage in the workforce and increases the precarity of their workforce participation. Precarity has been understood in various, often overly broad, ways. In this paper, we draw on Leah Vosko’s framework to examine precarious employment. Precarious employment occurs through being unable to work, reducing the time available to work, or taking on informal work. Students’ position in the workforce intersects with an already precarious youth labour market. This paper draws on a quantitative and qualitative survey with social work students in the bachelor of social work program at an Australian university, who were completing/recently completed lengthy unpaid placements. The study found increasingly limited hours of work decreased student options in the workforce and increased their vulnerability. Recommendations arising from this research, and suggestions for further research, are presented.
47 | Eco-social work: a DRAFT guide for frontline practitioners

Author/s: Anika Dietrich and Rachel Smart

Deakin University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

This presentation seeks to provide an overview of a field education eco-social work project two students from Deakin University are completing in the Barwon region of Victoria, Australia. Initial desktop research has indicated that there is a limited presence of an ecological approach to social work practice in human service organisations in the Barwon region. The project aims to develop a draft eco-social work practice guide to respond to this. This guide is aimed at supporting and raising awareness for frontline practitioners to integrate eco-social work into their daily practice. This presentation will discuss the rationale of the eco-social work guide and its relevance to critical social work practice, including mental health and family services settings. We aim to highlight practical ways that social workers can introduce eco-social work practices at the micro, meso and macro levels. This will include an acknowledgement of existing barriers, and a discussion about how environmental approaches can be utilised alongside traditional self-care strategies and practice methods. We will discuss the relevant theories and literature that our guide has drawn upon, including eco and green social work and Aboriginal perspectives. This presentation will demonstrate how we combined existing eco-social work literature with personal reflections as emerging and current social workers to create innovative practice approaches. Finally, we aim to discuss how our guide has been informed by relevant social work theories, specifically trauma-informed theory, intersectionality, feminist and anti-oppressive approaches.
Community-academic partnerships: a new model for social work field education?

Author/s: Jinny McGrath

RMIT University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

In response to the ongoing challenge of finding sufficient, quality social work field education placements, a number of new models of field education have evolved as an alternative to the traditional apprenticeship model. One of these is the RMIT community-academic partnership model which was introduced in 2015. A critical review of the literature has found there is limited research on this model and on community-academic partnerships in general in social work field education.

My Masters of Research aims to address this gap by investigating how 'success' is defined and measured by key stakeholders, identifying factors and conditions that enable and impede success, how and to what extent the RMIT model contributes to 'success', and opportunities for development. It will examine this from the perspectives of stakeholders involved in, or impacted by, student placements at three community agencies. A qualitative, critical interpretivist methodology will be used in the research, with a three-staged, emergent design using a mixture of focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. It is envisaged that the outcomes of the research will contribute to the development of alternative models of social work field education and identify key principles that lead to successful placements and thus inform social work pedagogy.
49 | Professional identity development in international social work students

Author/s: Hui-Yu Yao

Monash University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

There has been a significant increase of international students enrolled in Australian social work qualifying programs in the past decade. However, research on this student cohort is still scarce. It has also been noted that social work literature to date tends to focus on international students’ deficits and strategies to address the identified deficits. Professional identity, a critical aspect of social work education, remains an under-researched topic in international students.

This presentation discusses a PhD research project which explores how professional identity is developed among international students enrolled in qualifying social work education in Australia. The research aims to recruit international social work students at different stages of their social work education, and to explore their experiences and perceptions of learning to become a social worker in Australia.

Currently, the proposed research methods are guided by the principles of autoethnography and collective biography. The concepts of intersectionality and community of practice are also incorporated to inform the design and theoretic framework of the research.

This presentation will discuss and seek feedback on the proposed research methods for this PhD project.
A Simulated Placement Experience – Using a Mixed-Reality Learning Environment for Social Work Field Education

Author/s: Dr Sera Harris

Australian Catholic University

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

COVID-19 has presented new challenges for social work field education. In order to address the scarcity of direct client facing placements during the extended and unpredictable public health restrictions, the Australian Catholic University in collaboration with SimLab@Murdoch, created a simulated placement experience for final year students. Using this mixed reality platform, students were immersed in 9 different practice scenarios over a structured 2 week (70 hour) intensive program. Real time feedback and refractive coaching sessions with social work clinical educators offered students enhanced learning and development opportunities, applicable to multiple service settings and client presentations.

Although there is limited Australian research relating to alternative social work field education models such as simulation, international social work research, as well as research from other disciplines such as allied health, nursing and education, affirm that simulation offers alternative opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge comparable, and in some cases potentially superior, to traditional field education. This presentation contributes to the limited Australian social work knowledge and experience of simulation for placement by sharing an overview of ACU’s Simulated Placement, outlining the development of the program, along with its initial evaluation.

As we look with continued uncertainty to field education in 2021, this presentation also discusses the potential for an ongoing place for simulation in social work field education.
51 | Problematising Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social work education: Challenges, issues and possibilities.

Author/s: David Hodgson¹, Sophie Goldingay², Jenny Boddy³, Sharlene Nipperess⁴ and Lynelle Watts¹

¹Curtin University, ²Deakin University, ³Griffith University, ⁴RMIT University

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the 4th industrial revolution, and in higher education it will fundamentally transform the work of academics and higher education administrators. AI will also have several implications for students, including a reconsideration of what sorts of skills and knowledge should be taught and developed in the academy to prepare students for digital working lives. As social work educators, we have begun to wonder what the implications of AI in the academy will have for social work education. For educators, there are implications for pedagogy that go well beyond the introduction of new tools or gadgets that merely integrate into existing teaching models and practices. This is because AI will not simply add to current teaching practices, but will fundamentally change these teaching models and practices, including altering how we think about the human subject as a teaching and learning agent. This is a prospective and forward-looking presentation that will draw on recent literature and research into AI and higher education, to explore possible future implications for social work education. Key points of the presentation include (1) distinguishing AI from other kinds of digital technologies, (2) the transformative and disruptive potential of AI, (3) the arguments for and against AI in higher education, (4) ethical issues such as the relational side of social work as a profession, and (5) implications for social work education in the future.
52 | Climate Denial as Disavow: The Experience of Knowing and Not Knowing Simultaneously

Author/s: Johanna Donkers

Deakin University

Theme 4: Disruptions in Politics, Civil Society and The Environment

Abstract:

Climate change poses a significant threat, both to social work as a profession, as well as communities the profession works alongside. While there is a growing call for social work to engage with climate change as a matter of urgency, the area of eco-social work remains on the periphery of much social work practice and theory. The reasons why continue to be researched, but are wide and varied.

This presentation draws from the work of a doctorate project, exploring how frontline practitioners view their engagement with climate change. Part of this included a series of semi-structured interviews with frontline practitioners; the other an autoethnographic exploration of the impact eco-social work has on my practice as an early career social work practitioner. When exploring barriers to engagement two significant themes which came to light included the impact of neoliberalism on current work practices. The other highlighted the impact of societal climate denial on practitioner’s engagement in this space.

This presentation will explore literature related to climate denial, including its potential impact on social works engagement with climate change. More specifically, it will explore the experience of climate denial as disavow, which covers the experience of ‘knowing and not knowing’ simultaneously. I contend that without greater awareness and strategies to work through this experience, eco-social work will remain on the periphery of the professions work practices.
The Burdekin Report, 30 years on...from invisible children to invisible mothers.

Author/s: Maike Kaehler

University of Sydney

Theme 4: Disruptions in Politics, Civil Society and The Environment

Abstract:

The Burdekin Report in 1993, a national inquiry into human rights and mental illness highlighted the inadequacies in community care for people experiencing mental distress – naming it as a failure to provide basic human rights. It was also seen as a significant turning point in highlighting the needs of children of parents experiencing mental distress. It saw considerable funding and research focused on the “invisible” children of parents experiencing mental distress, with the subsequent formation of the COPMI [Children of Parents with Mental Illness] Initiative. See www.copmi.net.au

This paper examines how parents were left behind and continue to report feeling “invisible” by lack of acknowledgement and support in their identity and role as a parent when accessing mental health services. Emerging from the literature is a limited exploration of the parent’s perspective.

Systems and resource shortages in NSW provide glaring examples of this: NSW Health does not have a routine system for identifying patients (admitted to a mental unit) as parents. NSW is the only mainland state which does not have a public mental health mother-and-baby unit. Despite international recognition of the importance of Family Visiting Rooms in a Mental Health Unit, there has been limited implementation or development of models of care in NSW. This data is drawn from a literature review and practice understandings.

Conclusions – highlighting the importance for social workers positioning themselves as advocates and human rights defenders for parents experiencing mental distress.
Becoming and being a field educator: social workers’ experiences of providing social work placements.

Author/s: Gabrielle Drake, Robyn North, Justine O’Sullivan and Mick Houlebrook

Western Sydney University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom.

Abstract:

This expansion of Social Work in contemporary higher education is occurring within the broader setting of a pervasive, neoliberal and economic rationalist discourse. The impacts of this are that all aspects of work in the field have been subject to increased workload, competition, and pressure on service funding. Alongside these changes in the field, there has been a significant increase in the number of Social Work students and programs; with a significant number of placements now provided by an onsite field educator who is not social work trained.

This paper presents the findings of a mixed methods study that explored the experiences, capabilities, challenges and needs of field educators in the task of guiding students through productive, high quality placements. The 2020 study included 50 online surveys, and 10 semi-structured interviews, with field educators who are Social Work graduates of Western Sydney University. We asked field educators about the types of support and training they valued in preparing to supervise Social Work students. We also explored what motivates social workers to be field educators, and the types of support and development opportunities they valued.
Transforming students’ awareness of the interaction between social work and environmental justice: researching curriculum in an online Masters of Social Work.

Author/s: Dr Angela Daddow and Corinna Ridley

Deakin University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Higher education curriculum is a contested space, shaped and influenced by external and internal factors - “intertwined with the social and historical contexts of universities and the wider world in which they are situated” (Barnett & Coates, 2005, p. 28). Curriculum is typically the site where university responses to change and external demands become evident. Curriculum equips students for change, but more importantly, provides new lenses through which they can critically engage, and ultimately shape the future.

Increasingly, social work has a role to play in constructively responding to the natural and human-made disasters that impact our populous and inter-connected world, and working toward changing structures and systems that perpetuate environmental exploitative practices, and degradation (IASSW, 2018). The need to ensure environmental justice is integrated into social work education and practice has become more pressing, as the physical and mental health impacts of chaotic climate and weather systems, and the negative effects of environmental toxins, pollution and degraded ecosystems, impact disproportionately on those least privileged (Ife, 2016). In this study we use qualitative research to reflexively examine the impact of curriculum design, in which environmental justice has been embedded in a community development unit, in an online Masters of Social Work in an Australian University. The study elicits students’ responses to the unit through surveys, interviews, and assignment data. The findings suggest that students’ awareness has significantly shifted, and environmental justice has become a significant lens through which to potentially practice and innovate.
58 | Pacific tertiary success - Teaching practices that benefit Social Work graduates readiness to practice

Author/s: Fa’aeafale’upolu Samuelu

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa ki Papaiōea (Palmerston North)

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Pacific social work graduates in Aotearoa New Zealand may find themselves in predicaments where the Pacific worldview is not reflected in social work education. With the absence of Pacific knowledge in social work education, Pacific social work learners are affected holding major implications as they head into social work practice after they graduate. Understanding what teaching practices best contribute to effective learning outcomes for Pacific tertiary learners require educators to gain specialised knowledge and skills. Further, institutional commitment is also required to work alongside teaching staff in order to achieve Pacific tertiary success by ensuring capability.

This research explored teaching practices that best contribute to Pacific social work graduates readiness to practice. The Kakala framework by (Thaman, 1997; 2003; 2014; Johansson-Fua, 2014) was employed as it places Pacific people at the heart of its efforts. A qualitative semi-structured interview, referred to as Talanoa in this research, was used to capture the narratives of five Pacific social work graduates from the Wellington region in Aotearoa New Zealand. A total of nine key themes were identified from these narratives. These themes are: Experiential teaching, a Pacific worldview at the forefront of learning, supervision- one to one learning opportunities, Pacific identity, values and principles, creating allies between Pacific and non-Pacific, interactive activities in small groups, self-determination of one’s learning, skills and competencies gained in the classroom and work place and Pacific success is Pacific ‘Ola (well-being). The themes identified works in two parts, (i) it contributes to effective teaching practices in social work education and, (ii) it explores other factors and alternatives that can contribute to Pacific tertiary success in social work education.

Key recommendations include the need for educators in social work education to attain specialist knowledge (new knowledge about the Pacific) to diversify their practice both culturally and innovatively. This may mean establishing culturally inclusive curricula and teaching frameworks as a guide for social work educators. Furthermore, the development of support groups or committees that include academic and non-academic staff and students to come together and engage in talanoa and formulate action plans about how they are going to commit to Pacific tertiary learners and their success. Further research is also recommended regarding the implementation and evaluation of culturally inclusive social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Author/s: Betty Haralambous, Margareta Windisch, Judy Williams and Ronnie Egan

RMIT University

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

RMIT Social Work, like many other social work courses globally, faces challenges in sourcing field education placements for the increased student cohort. The RMIT social work field education team has developed a model over many years to enhance placement opportunities for students. The model, developed jointly by the RMIT social work field education team and the (Work Integrated Learning) WIL team, has focused on working with industry as a collaborator, providing multiple students and resources.

The COVID-19 outbreak posed additional challenges for Social Work. At the initial lockdown in Melbourne Victoria (early 2020), many students began their WIL activities. The RMIT partnership model helped facilitate smooth management of WIL activities during the COVID-19 crisis.

This presentation describes the approach taken to manage student placements during the crisis. The approach involved immediate establishment of revised processes in response to the global crisis, ensuring the integrity of placement and safety of students. This revised process included the transfer of face to face placements to digital or online mode, developing creative responses to placement (e.g. telehealth, online placements, transferring tasks to ensure skills are transferrable from one setting to another).

Outcomes and learnings include: using technology to continue to provide care to the client group; committed industry partners and placements help facilitate a crisis situation; mutual relationship and reciprocity are critical; engaging with the professional body and advocating for the sector; development of future risk assessment processes. These strategies led to the development of processes to manage future crises should they be required.
60 | Creating a climate for change through student field placements

Author/s: Ros Darracott PhD

Queensland University of Technology

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

The literature regarding social work's response to climate change is primarily focussed on social activism and community development approaches to practice. For social workers engaged in direct practice in an acute hospital environment there can be a disconnect between their day-to-day practice experience and the perceived relevance of a climate-aware perspective. Yet, the reality is that patients in an acute public hospital environment are often especially vulnerable to climate disruption: people experiencing complex health issues with limited access to the financial, physical, and social resources to assist in shielding them from the impacts of climate change. This paper proposes that field placements can help shape hospital social work practice towards being 'climate aware'.

In 2020, a series of field placements with Toowoomba Hospital have focused on research projects developing climate-aware direct practice. Toowoomba is in a regional area of Queensland that has experienced significant climate-change related events over the past 10 years and while there is recognition of social work's need to respond to individual disasters, the need to change day-to-day practice due to ongoing climate vulnerability has not been considered. The placement projects seek to identify and articulate the relationship between climate change and hospital social work practice; consider and experiment with ways in which direct practice should change to address these intersections; and create a climate-aware culture within the staff group. The paper will discuss the placement projects, how they've been conducted, and their reported impacts on staff's perceptions and practices regarding climate-aware practice in the hospital environment.
61 | We Are Sexual Beings!

Author/s: Denise Beckwith

Western Sydney University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

As both a woman and social work researcher with disability, I explored women with physical disability's limited access to sexual education, and the subsequent impact on their sexual identity formation and increased their risk of experiencing violence.

Nineteen women with physical disability – both congenital and acquired – from across Australia, were interviewed and asked to take four photographs representing themselves as sexual beings.

This research provided a platform for these women to share their stories and the full spectrum of their lived experiences relating to their sexuality and sexual expression. Women shared their experiences of sexual education and violence.

The women felt empowered by sharing their stories and valued the inclusive research methodologies used throughout the research process.

This research illustrated women with physical disability's voices, knowledge and experiences continue to be devalued and excluded from the development of sexuality education, policies and research. Wider society needs to recognise women with physical disability are sexual beings and sexuality education and research needs to be driven by women with disability for women with disability.
62 | Social work and outsourcing: What you need to know.

Author/s: Associate Professor Wendy Foote

University of Newcastle

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

While the outsourcing of services has been a feature of the government funded Human Sector for decades, recent years have been marked by an increasing application of neo liberal approaches that have implications for social work practice, especially in NGOs. On the federal level for example, the NDIS has been a foray into the government creating a ‘quasi market’ where there previously was none, in order to use market mechanisms as a vehicle to deliver services. This paper will consider the context of the current approach to the commissioning being used by the NSW state government in Australia. The case example of the commissioning out of home care services in 2018 –in which two reforms are embedded will be used as a case example to explore some of the issues that arise from this practice. The two reforms are: the Permanency Support Program (PSP), (stemming from legislative reform aimed at achieving permanency quickly, for children entering care), as well as a contracting reform with the move to ‘outcomes based’ contracting (being paid for what you achieve rather than what an agency does). The case example will be used to explore some of the issues that arise from the implementation of these reforms for social work practice.
Students bridge Covid 19 isolation through strength-based discovery conversations with the oldest of our generation.

Author/s: Vanessa Leane, Sharon Quirk, Lauren Harrington and Eliza Bampton

University of South Australia

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Described during Covid 19 as our most vulnerable and isolated cohort, the inaccessibility to older adults during lock down represented a unique opportunity for students on placement to reach out, bridge the divide and support wellbeing.

Upon completion of UniSA - WellbeingCPR course, students worked with aged care providers: Kindred Living to engage in discovery conversations with clients through phone calls for 8 weeks, listening and interpreting life stories to co-create profiles. A strength based narrative method designed to identify patterns and meanings of strengths through the narrative of storytelling, generated empathetic, rich, and delightful conversations with a purpose.

Vanessa and Sharon will share the significance of this approach working with students and older people. Outcomes include profiles for participants and staff adapted to suit needs, providing a legacy for families, a guide to enrich assessment procedures for staff and vital ‘how to’ knowledge to inform the design of care plans. Profiles were used to create identity posters for staff and families and character stories working with school children. Evidence of learnings gained in knowledge, values and reflective skills will be highlighted by students, Lauren and Eliza providing insights of their experience, excerpts of profiles and the intergenerational life story of a 100-year-old participant.

Recommendations will signpost: the impact of phone calls with a purpose during times of isolation, how a narrative method bridges intergenerational gaps, why understanding strengths patterns is important to wellbeing, why reflectivity and good matches create quality experiences and the generativity effect between young and old.
A Partnership Approach to Social Work Field Education

Author/s: Ronnie Egan, Betty Haralambous and Francesca Gullaci

RMIT University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

RMIT Social Work, like many other social work courses globally, faces challenges in sourcing field education placement experiences for the increased student cohort. This presentation outlines a model developed by the RMIT social work field education team to enhance placement opportunities for students and industry partners. The model, developed jointly by the RMIT social work field education team and the work-integrated learning (WIL) team, has focused on working with industry as a collaborator, providing multiple students and resources. Collaboration and partnership enhance the placement experience for all. The strength of the model is the inhouse as well as the external collaborative approach. The outcomes of this model have include: committed partners and placements; mutual relationship and reciprocity; a collaborative relationship with the WIL inhouse team as well as external partnership; a reference group that meets regularly setting the agenda for priorities, including joint research projects between academics and industry, and a published book.
Educational model - Strength Based Narrative Method enhancing Reflective Practice

Author/s: Vanessa Leane, Sharon Quirk, Jacqueline Alin and Ghenelle Brennan

University of South Australia

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Effective reflectivity, key competencies which enable social workers to integrate knowledge and values into daily interactions, assessments and interventions in professional practice, require an innovative educational model with life experiential processes and outcomes, to transcend the reliance on ‘technical-rational’ instruments and prescriptive skills still prevalent in systems of care.

This presentation explains how an introductory UniSA course WellbeingCPR cultivates reflective practice through a new strength based narrative method designed by PhD candidate Vanessa Leane. Four reflective competencies; empathy, interpretation, observation and critical thinking will be highlighted describing how students can use these skills to identify and interpret developed patterns of life strengths in action, with an understanding of how strength actions impact wellbeing and the effect of challenges and constraints on sustained life strengths development.

Sharon reveals insight as a supervisor and the findings of a thematic analysis of a survey conducted with 70 students on completion of training. Two students, Jacqueline and Ghenelle share reflections and provide evidence of competencies with excerpt of profiles constructed of their own life strengths in action and profiles of the strengths of another person.

Recommendations include the benefits for students and educators to support profiling one’s own strengths to enhance awareness and determination, with ‘how to’ knowledge to construct enabling personal and professional environments to match their strength patterns. The advantage of an educational model, which targets reflectivity with a strengths-based approach to understand meaning and perspective of another cannot be underestimated, translating implicit competencies into an explicit procedure empowering meaningful, reflective practice.
From Textbook to Life: Creating a transformative study tour with 31 students.

Author/s: Sophie Diamandi, Vanessa Leane and Patricia Muncey

University of South Australia

Abstract:

As thirty-one UniSA social work students walked on the side of the road, dodging trikes, and stepping over holes, each one walked past a child begging for pesos from the gutter - the expression on their faces said it all. This was no textbook case study, with an analysis of disadvantage, students were confronted with the magnitude of social problems etched into the faces of individuals, inequality embedded in social landscape of the urban poor. They had embarked on a Colombo Study tour of the Philippines in Feb 2020, a tour which would challenge perspective, build, and transcend social work knowledge into actions of practice, impacting development of self and professional identity.

The tour model was constructed to provide a critical balance between gaining a knowledge of structural determinants, observing community development practice, co-creating meaningful activities and team building with fun.

Sophie, Vanessa, and Patricia will share insights gained as co-educators on this remarkable study tour. Strategies used to help students process this included regular debriefing with staff, small peer group discussions and informal discussions over meals. How students responded to the learning task of designing and implementing a children’s wellbeing program in challenging and difficult circumstances will be discussed. Student’s expression of values and competencies such as social ingenuity, empathetic and interpretative reflectivity, kindness, fairness, leadership, and teamwork in response to challenges provide valuable insight to how students transcended and transformed knowledge into experiences of growth.
Adapting creatively in a time of change: ‘Online’ community development in a social work program

Author/s: Dr Deborah Lynch\(^1\) and Dr Catherine Forde\(^2\).

\(^1\)University of Queensland, \(^2\)University College Cork (Ireland)

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom.

Abstract:

This paper explores how fourth year social work students adapted creatively to an online learning environment in a community development course. The students 'brought to life’ community development ideas and principles through story-telling, creativity and self-reflection. Drawing on Bloom’s higher order learning goals, the paper explores one student group presentation through video clips which include their own reflections on the learning experience and challenges encountered. The pedagogical approach, the simulation activity and the online context will be discussed with a view to exploring future opportunities for online learning and teaching in social work.

This presentation fits with Symposium Theme 5: Social Work Education in the Field and in the Classroom. Exploring community development approaches enables students to develop as critical and creative practitioners. Encouraging them to animate ‘virtual’ community development scenarios enables them to engage in praxis through modelling skills and approaches while reflecting on them in action. Learning and practicing online also helps students to model adaptability and versatility, crucial skills in a changing social work environment. This also offers students an opportunity to model online practice skills which may be useful for future online working scenarios.
68 | Elevating the voices of marginalised young people about services provided to them: a Photovoice Project

Author/s: Nikkolo Savuro¹, Susan Gair², Sara O’Reilly¹ and Ines Zuchowski²

¹Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Services, ²James Cook University

Theme 3: Indigenous knowledge, methodologies and perspectives

Abstract:
Elevating the voices of marginalised young people about services provided to them: a Photovoice Project

This paper presents the findings of a research collaboration between staff of the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Services (TAIHS) Lighthouse and social work academics from James Cook University. We report on a Photovoice research project with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, exploring their views of services and the community. The project was collaboratively designed and conducted in 2019. After training young people in the use of camera equipment and providing guidance on photovoice as a research methodology, young people took photos in the community and then engaged in focus group discussions exploring the meaning of the photos they have taken. The project aims were to:

- Listen to and document the needs of young people at risk of becoming involved in, or currently involved with juvenile justice systems for evidence-based service delivery;
- Facilitate development of young people’s strengths, positive engagement and wellbeing;
- Facilitate their skills and knowledge for self-advocacy, collaboration and public speaking;
- Contribute to local and national social work practice with young people at risk.

We present the project findings and explore the benefits for young people involved in this participatory research. Young people were engaged in being creators of positive change, within themselves and in service delivery. Moreover, we highlight the participatory research methodologies, and how shared expertise has benefited all partners and participants, including social work students who have been on research placement. We will consider methodology from two angles, Photovoice as a method of research and partnership research as a mutual process of learning.
COVID-19 and the student experience: An exploration of the lived experiences of University students studying in Australia

Author/s: Christine Craik, Dr. Sonia Martin, Dr. Patrick O'Keeffe, Associate Professor John Whyte, Madeleine Barclay, Alice Borde, Zoe Kellman and Charlotte Lynch

RMIT University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

COVID-19 is the most significant public health crisis in the 21st century to date, with far reaching ramifications for the health and wellbeing of populations across the globe. While at the time of writing Australia has fared comparatively well in terms of viral spread, the social and economic impact is significant. Among the sectors impacted is Higher Education, and in particular public universities. As campuses across the country closed and teaching was moved online, students found themselves confronting new learning environments that required new ways of engaging with their teachers and peers, in ways never intended for full-time study. At the same time, other aspects of their lives were being disrupted as part-time and casual work came to an abrupt end and/or students found themselves in new or different caring roles. International students were cut off from any income support and advised to go back to their country of origin. We expect that the intersections between study, life and work have been reshaped by the pandemic and by state and federal government responses to the crisis. The impact of these events on the social, mental and physical well-being of students, we believe, is significant.

This research is a collaborative project between social work staff and students on placement at RMIT University. This presentation shares the initial findings from our review of policy responses and news and social media accounts. These findings will inform a larger study into the impact of the pandemic on student well-being.
70 | Valuing an arts based approach within PhD study

Author/s: Cath Stewart

Curtin University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

Interpretive practices in qualitative research "make the work visible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3), in the case of this PhD study, the everyday world of early career social workers. Whilst this research utilised mixed methods, it was predominantly a qualitative study with a focus on making the depth of practice experience visible, exploring understandings and meanings made of the first year of practice working in the Australian health sector. The post-structuralist conceptual framework employed, rejected formulaic approaches, viewing data from multiple perspectives. Working with levels of data and analysis, the quantitative data offered context, the 'lay of the land' in which qualitative findings, with commonalities in perceptions, views and emotions could be situated. Whilst this mixed method study was not arts-based research per se, arts perspectives and approaches were used to engage with quotes of participants in coding, analysis and presentation. It was in the more personal, subjective experiences shared by participants that sentient statements were identified as in-vivo codes. The following poem is a researcher-generated construct of in-vivo codes as one one example in this presentation where an arts-based approach was used as part of the coding and analytic process but also in the representation of findings. This presentation illustrates the value of incorporating arts based approaches in research methods at a time where the arts are becoming increasingly devalued in Australia.
What has a dancer and social worker got in common? Facilitating social work identity formation and practice learning through embodied pedagogy.

Author/s: Margaret Spencer

University of Sydney

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Traditional pedagogy divides mind and body into a dichotomy that regards the body as little more than a subordinate instrument in service to the mind. Embodied pedagogy on the other hand, regards the body and mind as joined in a physical and mental act of ‘choreographing’ and constructing knowledge. A key task of social work education is to facilitate a student's critical embodiment what they hear, observe, feel, think and do.

This presentation will showcase the application of embodied pedagogy in the curriculum of a social work practice course which commences with the question: “What has a dancer and social worker got in common?” The curriculum borrows ideas and activities from physical movement and performance studies to explore concepts such as “use of self”, positionality, engagement, advocacy and self-care. The presentation will highlight the creative opportunities embodied pedagogy present in terms of involving the ‘field’ in learning as well as for interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration. It will also discuss the challenges in terms of bringing students, sessional teachers and the Institution on board with this way of learning.
Creating connection and promoting belonging: the use of technology in times of disruption.

Author/s: Dr Cate Hudson

University of South Australia

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

Relationship and a sense of belonging is important to individual wellbeing, and that is even more so at times of change and disruption. A sense of belonging is also crucial to student retention and success at University (O’Keefe, 2013), positive interaction with staff and peers has been found to be one of the factors associated with developing that sense of belonging (van Gijn-Grosvenor & Huisman 2020). This paper reports on some unexpected benefits to staff and students from using video conferencing technologies and web-based teaching and learning resources during COVID 19 restrictions. Significantly those benefits included a greater sense of connection to peers and staff for both internal and externally enrolled students of an undergraduate Social work program. This paper argues that the skilled and considered use of video conferencing and other digital technology in social work education, can improve access and promote equity for students regardless of location. This is particularly important for attracting, retaining and supporting students who live in rural, regional or remote communities where often there is a continuing unmet need for social work professionals.
73 | Australian social work placements in China in the context of COVID-19

Author/s: Deborah Boswell¹, Tzu-Ping Ou¹, Dr Abner Weng Cheong Poon¹, Associate Professor Jie Lei²

¹University of NSW, ²Sun Yat-Sen University

Theme 2: Regional, rural and remote and international social work

Abstract:

The Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) requires students to complete two field education placements in the third and fourth year of the four year degree. As a result of Coronavirus and international border closure, two UNSW international social work students from China were unable to return to Australia to complete their final placement. With the endorsement of the Australian Association of Social Workers, UNSW social work field education and Faculty staff explored viable overseas learning opportunities. Placement opportunities were developed in two well established non-for-profit agencies undertaking social work practice with their respective communities in Guangdong and Shandong Provinces. A train the trainer approach was used to support the Liaison Tutor and Field Educators to develop familiarity with the Australian Social Work degree requirements (informed by the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards) to support students on placement. This presentation will describe the process and implementation used by UNSW to identify opportunities for international field placement, the social work context in China and learning tasks, strategies employed to support student well-being, and practical considerations for successful course completion. The presentation will also discuss the opportunity for innovation created to promote two directional learning across a virtual bi-lingual and bi-cultural environment within a pandemic context. This innovative approach may enable future international placement opportunities and practices, especially in non-English speaking countries.
Social justice is a central concept in social and community work. However, is social justice sufficient to promote equity without economic justice? In other words, "What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't have enough money to buy a hamburger? (King, 1968)." The 2010s saw New Zealand's highest-ever levels of income and wealth inequality (Rashbrooke, 2015). In addition to creating entrenched poverty, high economic inequality has been correlated with negative downstream health effects such as higher rates of suicide, homelessness, and infant mortality (Truesdale & Jencks, 2016). While economic justice and financial inclusion are considered vital organizing principles in well-regarded large-scale social work/social development efforts (see Social Work Grand Challenges and Sustainable Development Goals), these concepts have opportunities to be further applied to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

To explore the application of economic justice as an organizing concept in Aotearoa New Zealand, the authors are creating an Economic Justice Research Network. The first step in the creation of this network is to bring together researchers and practitioners that work in related areas to understand a. what is already happening that can be grouped under economic justice work and b. what a future research agenda for economic justice might be in this context. This presentation will include a summary of the discussion and key takeaways from that initial symposium. We will share a proposed economic justice research and action agenda for Aotearoa New Zealand.
Challenges to Social Work Education delivery in the time of COVID 19 at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA)

Author/s: Dr. Norma Rosales-Anderson, Dr. Selina Akhter and Dr. Elias Martis

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change.

Abstract:

The Covid-19 situation challenged the education system across the world and forced educators to suddenly shift to an online mode of teaching. In New Zealand, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA), an indigenous Māori tertiary organisation and the biggest provider of social work education was compelled to explore new options of delivering the programme whilst having to adapt to Tikanga (Māori cultural protocols) and Kaupapa Māori (Māori approach). The priority was to protect the students, faculty, academic staff and communities. On the other hand, the situation demanded humanness and unity particularly for Māori where the kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face face) contact, kotahitanga (unity) and roopu (group) activities are key foci. Some of the options available were to deliver through the virtual classes such as Zoom, MS Teams, Google Class, and Facebook live streaming.

The presentation portrays the critical reflexion of three teachers of the Bachelor of Bicultural Social Work (BBSW) at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa on the strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities of online delivery during Covid 19 lockdown. This critical reflexive approach includes method of observation and analysis of students’ written feedback. The reflexion will throw light on the accessibility, affordability, creativity and group interaction of students. The indigenous aspect will be linked to Tikanga and Kaupapa Māori frameworks highlighted by exploring whether the teachers’ delivery was consistent with the pedagogy of TWOA’s ‘ako’ (teaching and learning) framework linked to ‘nga takepū’ (Māori applied principles), ‘wairuatanga’ (spirituality) and ‘ko wai au’ (identity), essential notions within the BBSW of TWOA.
76 | Better than a case study! Learning from ‘experts by experience’ as people enact their stories of gambling harm.

Author/s: Judy Avisar and Catherine Simmonds OAM

Link Health and Community – Three Sides of the Coin Project

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Three Sides of the Coin gambling harm project places people with lived experience of gambling harm as advocates for social change. As the knowledge-holders and ‘experts by experience’, their stories are woven into theatrical performances to ignite discussions about gambling in our communities. They highlight the intersections between gambling, mental health, alcohol, drugs, and family violence, breaking through artificial siloed thinking, impacting professional practice as well as de-stigmatising and de-shaming gambling addiction and re-framing it as a public health issue.

At this online conference, Three Sides of the Coin project will screen 2-3 authentic, emotive 5 minute video stories of people who have personal experience of gambling harm. These individuals creatively share their journeys into and recovery from gambling addiction or being affected by a loved one’s addiction. These videos are artistically crafted (with animation and music) and provide ‘lived experience case-stories’ for teachers, students and professionals.

These video case-stories help professionals/students understand the often hidden impacts of gambling on their clients and ensure it is on their radar. After viewing the case-stories there will be an opportunity for a live Q&A with the protagonist advocates, followed by discussion.

Discussion can include:

- Exploration of how these videos can be used by teachers with students.
- Impact of ‘experts by experience’ in Professional Development sessions.
- Exploration of ways to ask the stigmatised gambling question.
- Evaluation outcomes (in partnership with Deakin University) - exploring the impacts of Three Sides of the Coin project for both lived-experience advocates and attendees of Professional Development sessions.
A Field Placement Hub: Supporting International and Domestic Students During the Pandemic, Findings of Focus Groups

Author/s: Bronwyn Charles, Shane McDonald, Lynne Briggs, Jianqiang Liang

Griffith University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

In Feb to Jun 2020, Griffith University established a student hub for social work field placement. The aim was to create an improved experience and supportive learning environment for international students commencing first placement. Previously we had found the students struggled with commencing placement due to being in a new environment, understanding Australian social work and the socio-cultural context of placement. A spoke hub model was developed in response to this where agencies were identified for two students, one domestic and one international to attend. It was considered essential to identify suitable agencies, onsite supervisors who were skilled and interested in working with international students, and University Field Educators to build a supportive relationship to nurture the student’s placement learning and success.

The COVID-19 Pandemic disrupted the placement hub early in the placement but the field education team were able to work alongside students, supervisors and the agencies in managing the changes and supporting students in completing their placement. Some crucial and creative response included: independent projects worked from home, weekly online group check-ins and supervision, a COVID-19 recovery course tutorial.

The paper will present the findings of two focus groups with students who attended this placement hub, to share their voices, experience and reflections in the placement. It will shed light for social work academics, field educators, supervisors, and students on factors that can increase effective support to international students during placement and ways to respond to manage the current and future disruptions of placement due to the Pandemic.
COVID-19 and accredited work-integrated learning in Australian social work: identifying impacts, innovation and opportunities

Author/s: Dr Shelley Turner¹, Associate Professor Ronnie Egan², Dr Averil Grieve¹, Haidee Hicks², Margareta Windisch², Dr Nicole Hill³ and Mary Duncan⁴

¹Monash University, ²RMIT University, ³University of Melbourne, ⁴Flinders University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have exacerbated an existing national crisis in social work field education, but has also inadvertently created ideal conditions for experimentation and innovation. So what does work-integrated learning (WIL) in Australian social work look like during the current pandemic and what are the implications for its future? How are the thousands of international and domestic social work students in Australia experiencing field education during this pandemic? Beyond reactive and short-term solutions, what new Covid-19-related practices have emerged in social work field education that may offer ongoing opportunities for greater diversity, accessibility, innovation and sustainability? This paper describes an exploratory research project that examines these questions and provides a ‘national snapshot’ of how social work students and university educators are responding to the evolving issues surrounding WIL and the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings are intended to highlight challenges and innovative responses for improving student wellbeing and equity of access to field education, as well as scalable and sustainable WIL models for social work and related disciplines. The project is funded by a grant from the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and is a collaboration between emerging, early career and senior researchers from Monash University, RMIT University and the National Field Education Network (NFEN).
Critical social work in action: Equipping social work graduates for socially just practice

Author/s: Dr Michel Edenborough, Dr Fran Gale, Prof Linda Briskman, Dr Rimple Mehta, Sajad Al-Wahab, Toa’ila Hema and Zouhair Farhat

Western Sydney University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Background

Redressing inequality, discrimination and oppression are core for social work practice. Yet increasingly social work students find themselves grappling with identifying and challenging issues of social justice in contexts influenced by neoliberal hegemony. Such contexts emphasise failings of individual behaviour where people may be experiencing social problems such as poverty, inequality, incarceration and racism.

Aims

By exploring the ways in which social work students can most effectively identify and challenge issues of social justice this research aims to inform social work teaching practices which can best equip graduating social workers for emancipatory social work practice.

Method

Here we report on a pilot study, part of a wider research project exploring student experiences and understandings of an undergraduate social work subject which explicitly aims to equip students with skills for social justice practice. Field education students carried out a review of social work social justice literature; then undertook peer interviews to share collective experiences and co-design creative solutions for addressing the research question: what are the most effective approaches for teaching social justice understandings and practices to social work students?

Findings

The students provide insight into ways they frame social justice concerns and the methods and strategies they believe could most effectively promote student recognition, understanding and critical skills for socially just social work practice in contexts increasingly shaped by neoliberalism.
80 | Quiet voices of change: International students’ encounters with ‘race’ during social work field placement

Author/s: Haidee Hicks

RMIT University

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

Increasing numbers of international student enrolments in social work programs in Australia represents one of the most significant changes in social work education in the past decade. While the empirical research is beginning to examine international students’ experience of social work field placement, it has largely ignored their encounters with ‘race’ and experience of racialised ‘othering’. Drawing on current doctoral research, this presentation will provide an overview of emergent findings related to international students’ experience of racialised ‘othering’ and racialised discrimination during social work field placement. As such, the constructivist grounded theory methodological approach will be presented, including an analysis of emergent findings relating to ‘race’ and international students’ narratives of negotiating racialised field placement learning contexts. Accordingly, these findings have important implications for social work curriculum, practice frameworks and field education pedagogies, each of which will be considered in this presentation.

Within the current ‘climate of change’ it is imperative that ‘race’ informed dialogues are inclusive, critically reflexive and serve to strengthen our social justice agendas. Failing to address this issue for international students, we miss an opportunity to move forward and develop a robust position to challenge racism in our broader communities. More specifically, however, international students’ insights offer us an opportunity to critically analyse the ways in which ‘race’ operates across practice learning environments. Confronting ‘race’ and racism in social work education represents a transformative social justice agenda and responds to the quietest voices amongst us.
Abstract:

Background: Despite significant growth in knowledge translation research, there remains a 'gap' connecting knowledge translation, domestic violence research and research networks.

Aims: Given the paucities of existing literature, this study explored the shared understanding of knowledge translation of a domestic violence research network. The study answered the following questions: What is the shared understanding of knowledge translation and activity in a domestic violence research network? How is a shared understanding of knowledge translation developed in a domestic violence research network?

Method: Building on the exchange model of knowledge translation, combined with a participatory action research the study included three phases of sequential data collection: an online survey, a realist informed systematic review and deliberative dialogue.

Results: A survey completed by 49 researchers found considerable focus on policymakers and practitioners, with noteworthy gaps including lived experience survivors. A systematic literature review of fifty studies using a realist lens identified the mechanisms of change to support knowledge translation. The disaggregation of the included studies identified five potential program theories. Moreover, qualitative analysis of the deliberative dialogue meetings identified three key actions: (1) development of collaborations for sustainable partnerships, (2) dedicated leadership with an authorising environment, and (3) multiple strategies supported by flexible use of evidence.

Conclusion: This study will support domestic violence researchers, policymakers and practitioners and adds to our understanding of the meaning of shared knowledge translation. Moreover, the mechanisms of change identified will support the knowledge translation of future domestic violence research.
82 | A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Using Photovoice Journaling as a learning tool

Author/s: Dr Margaret Spencer and Dr Pam Joseph

University of Sydney

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Poster

Abstract:

This poster showcases the use of photovoice journaling as a way of facilitating student's sensemaking and vocational discernment. The poster includes: An overview of photovoice as a pedagogical method, an explanation of how the process is embedded in a professional social work skills course, exemplars of students' journaling, and students and teachers reflections on the process.
Post-COVID Education: Embracing Creative and Adaptive Alternatives in Social Work Field Education

Author/s: Julie Steffner and David Betts

The University of Newcastle

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

The changing nature of tertiary education – COVID-19, financial cuts and restrictions, and uncertainty – shows that alternative, adaptive, and locally inspired non-traditional placements allow for creative learning, skill development, and the creation of social workers that can reflect the necessary skills for social work in 2020-onwards.

When the COVID-19 global pandemic was declared some Australians saw increasing social disconnection and isolation. At the same time COVID-19 disrupted many traditional ways of teaching and typical models of field education. The University of Newcastle Social Work program (as with others around the country) was required to adapt and respond to social work field education in a way that provided creative practice, creative interpretations of social work, and adaptability in the wake of a global pandemic.

This presentation will explore an opportunity that arose to partner with a Federal MP and to further develop a project that UON field education had engaged in focusing on intergenerational connection, and to consider this in the context of COVID-19. This project provided opportunities for students to direct and shape the project – skills beyond ‘traditional practice’. A collaborative model saw students work alongside political staffers and academics to further develop an intergenerational pen pal project that aimed to support the well-being, increase social connection, and share intergenerational learning for all participants. This presentation will draw upon findings that were developed from student, educator, and participant reflections, to consider how social work education – both in the classroom and in the field – can creatively respond to widespread social disruption.
84 | ‘It was such a success!’ The unexpected bonuses of learning, teaching and assessing interpersonal skills via Zoom

Author/s: Sue Bailey, Kathy Boxall, Jacquie Tarrant and Wendy Till

Edith Cowan University

Theme 1: Digital Technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

As the country went into lockdown, we were planning a one-week residential course on Advanced Interpersonal Skills. Rather than cancel the course, we decided to offer it online via Zoom. Prior to lockdown, students had prepared a case study drawing on the principles for writing social work case studies outlined in Boxall et al (2018). Each student therefore had a pre-prepared role to play in skills demonstration exercises. On Monday 20th April 2020, students and staff logged on for an ‘online interpersonal skills residential’. This presentation draws on questionnaires with students and a recorded discussion between the social work educators who taught on the ‘residential’ and marked assessments.

Contrary to our initial trepidation, the online interpersonal skills residential was regarded as successful by students and staff alike. Some unexpected bonuses of this approach were:

- The opportunity for students to inhabit the role of service user, playing this role multiple times with students practising the role of social worker in the breakout rooms to which they were randomly allocated each afternoon.
- The breadth, depth and quality of diversity offered to students practising the social work role by case studies prepared by students from multiple diverse backgrounds.
- The authentic communication that transpired between students inhabiting these roles when recording their skills demonstration for assessment. “There was real flow between people – the service users were very authentic, so it all felt real and the social work responses were natural.”

Participants will learn about approaches to teaching interpersonal skills on Zoom, which they can apply in their own teaching going forward. They will also learn about potential pitfalls and ideas for avoiding these in future.

Author/s: John Read

Deaf Services QLD (Ageing Well)

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

My presentation reports on a qualitative study which explores the challenging but perhaps necessary relationship between Australian social work's pursuit of recognition, and its commitment to the pursuit of social justice, in the context of social work education. This relationship is argued as necessary because of social works' need to work within social systems in order to change these systems (Lorenz, 2006, p.9). Through a critical discourse analysis of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) (2015), this research explores the question: Which discourse is stronger in the ASWEAS document, the need to be recognised as a profession, or the need to pursue social justice? The findings identified three key discourses as underpinning the document: Social works’ need to be recognised as a profession; the Australian Association of Social Work is the authority on social work in Australia; and social work is done onto/with the ‘other’. These findings indicate the need for professional recognition is the strongest discourse present in the ASWEAS document. This can be argued as undermining the professions’ commitment to the pursuit of social justice, given the discourses associated with professionalism under neo-liberalism in Australia have been linked to limiting social works capacity to work from an anti-oppressive framework. Furthermore, the discourse of 'social work being done onto/with the ‘other” can be argued as further undermining concepts associated with an anti-oppressive framework.
Teaching and learning about climate change. I cry when I go home.

Author/s: Dr Susan Bailey

Edith Cowan University

Theme 4: Disruptions in politics, civil society and the environment

Abstract:

We live on an Earth that is changing in ways that will make it challenging for (some) humans to live well into the future. The recent fires, floods, pandemics, and the changing climate are all consequences of a philosophical positioning that suggests humans exist outside eco-systems. In 2019, I began teaching a 1st year social work philosophy unit and introduced teaching and learning strategies that explored how Western philosophies have contributed to the destruction of our eco-systems. This was facilitated by using both Western and Aboriginal philosophical positionings to understand the causes of climate change. Initially there were some concerns expressed by staff about our duty of care for students as they learned the devastating truth.

In this presentation, I detail the frameworks used to anchor and support the students’ feeling responses, outline the teaching and learning strategies used, share some of the students’ final portfolio work and reflect on my own sadness that trailed me through the course of the semester. Over the course of the semester students engaged with their own grief using photovoice methods, developed beginning understandings of Aboriginal philosophies, used Western philosophical methods to deconstruct climate change denialism and explored climate justice. They emerged knowing more about the dire circumstances, but most were able to situate that within an action-oriented hope. “…while I thought that my contribution to address climate change may have been very limited, now I believe that, yes, I am part of a whole, but I can make the difference.” (Student Participant).
Outdoor Healthcare as a way of unifying a diverse field of practices including Eco/Green Social Work that utilise nature contact for human health and healing: A limited systematic review

Author/s: Josh McLean, Dr Anita Pryor and Tom Mulvaney

Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

There is a growing and already robust body of research that explicitly recognises contact with nature as beneficial for human health and healing. Eco/Green Social work is just one example of the diverse field of practices that identify the intrinsic value of nature contact for human health and within healing processes. To encapsulate and connect this growing field, a new term, Outdoor Healthcare was developed by the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy (AABAT) in consultation with a broad range of practitioners and government representatives prior to hosting the Eighth International Adventure Therapy Conference in 2018. With development of the new term Outdoor Healthcare came the need to compile supporting evidence and identify common mechanisms and elements across modalities. To support this work and connect the new sector, AABAT organised the inaugural “Nature & Health” – Research, Practice and Policy Symposium 2020.

This presentation will discuss the findings from a limited systematic review designed to address the question, "What are the human health and wellbeing benefits arising from nature-based health interventions?" The research includes investigation of nature-based services provided by trained or experienced practitioners but does not include the range of physical or mental health medicines and remedies drawn from plants and animals. Findings contribute to the development of Eco/Green social work and critical social work. The presentation points to the importance of working together across outdoor modalities to support human health, and the likely benefits of unifying the diverse field of nature-based health practices.
88 | Exploring the response to the ubiquitous Pandemic for Social Work and Human Service placements – A home based placement, or project based placement at the University of South Australia Community Outreach Centre on campus.

Author/s: Sophie Diamandi and Salina Shrestha

University of South Australia

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

As we faced unprecedented times with the Covid-19 Pandemic rapid responses were required when agency placements shut down as increasing numbers of staff moved to working from home. Many students could no longer complete their placement in the external agency. They too had to have their placement shifted and the placement redefined as an ‘at home placement’ or ‘project based placement’ became the norm with the latter being based at the Uni SA Community Outreach Centre. In response to these challenges and once Covid-19 surfaced we have over the last 5 years created various placement opportunities through an on campus "agency" that has morphed into a Community Outreach Centre and has become a social work student hub.

This centre provides links to various external industry partners, projects and case management opportunities that students can access as a placement whilst still being based at the Community Outreach Centre on campus. Students were designing and facilitating face to face social support groups for students living with mental health issues; students on the Autism Spectrum disorder and international students being allocated a mentor for smoother transitioning into uni life. We will explore how these placements changed to an online delivery using technology in challenging times. to still maintain integrity but with flexibility.

A number of other placement projects will be discussed as will the benefits, ongoing challenges and future growth opportunities.
“So he was like yeah, so what, you asked for it”: Barriers and responses to disclosure of child sexual abuse experiences by male survivors

Author/s: Alankaar Sharma

Australian Catholic University

Abstract:

Men and boy survivors of child sexual abuse are an under-studied, under-addressed, and stigmatized population in India. Little extant research has examined experiences of child sexual abuse for boys and men survivors. This qualitative research study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the lived experiences of men survivors, specifically studying barriers to disclosure of abuse experiences to others, and others' responses when survivors disclose. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), I conducted in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 11 adult men who self-identified as survivors of child sexual abuse. I identified two major themes: barriers to disclosure, and responses of others to disclosure. Major barriers to disclosure included shame, guilt, protecting the perpetrator, protecting others from getting hurt, same-sex nature of abuse experiences, and fear of minimization of experiences by others. Responses to disclosure from others varied; while sometimes the responses were supportive and affirming, often others responded in a negative or unsupportive manner. Some of the unhelpful responses included silence and lack of response, expecting the survivors to “get over” their abuse experiences, and victim blaming. These findings underline the importance of disclosure experiences in male survivors’ journeys of healing and recovery, and reveal the gendered nature of these experiences. They also advance and complicate current understandings of disclosure of child sexual abuse experiences by male survivors, with implications for direct practice with male survivors and their families, as well as community practice for creating a more respectful and responsive climate for survivors of child sexual abuse.
Environmental Justice, Sustainability, Equity: Contemporary Challenges faced by Adivasi of Wayanad

Author/s: Thara Prabhakar
Massey University

Theme 6: New Voices in social work research

Abstract:

The Adivasis struggle for their rights is a consequence of their forcible eviction by the British from their traditional land to the present scenario where incidences of land dispossession in the name of development and conservation are underway. The proposed study will use in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and photovoice technique in a grounded analysis to understand various challenges contributing to the environmental injustices experienced by the Adivasis of Wayanad district of Kerala, India. The study will also explore how the environmental injustices experienced by the Adivasis impact their life and environment. By using a ‘Green Social Work’ lens, this qualitative exploratory research utilises community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) to enable the researcher to capture the Adivasis voices by understanding their emerging perspectives and aspirations with their ability to envision their future. By locating the discussions and occurrences on Adivasis rights violation in the context of colonisation, social injustice and ecological sustainability, the researcher further integrates indigenous knowledge with environmental conservation through community-partnership.
The Single Truth: information/knowledge/power in disaster preparedness

Author/s: Amanda Howard, Dara Sampson, Pam Joseph and Margot Rawsthorne

University of Sydney

Theme 1: Digital technologies in a time of change

Abstract:

This presentation draws on a program of research that explores the dynamics of disaster preparedness in the context of climate change. A recurring theme in research findings across diverse settings and forms of disaster has been the elicitation of The Single Truth. Most notably, Emergency Management Services evoke (it would seem sometimes quite desperately) a single source of truth to guide their own and others behaviour. In floods, the BOM website is claimed to be The Single Truth. In bushfires, ABC local radio files this role. Other forms of digital information, such as Facebook, are portrayed as unreliable and disruptive. In this presentation the notion of The Single Truth will be explored using post-modern understandings of power and knowledge. Attention is paid to the way localised knowledge often based on embodied historical experience is subjugated through this process. The subjugation of this localised knowledge has real life impact on the people human services work with and the agencies themselves. This paper will conclude with a discussion of how human services can engage in debates about knowledge on disasters to challenge The Single Truth. Engaging in this debate will ensure local expertise is not sidelined in preparing for and responding to climate change.
92 | Flipping the expert: Curriculum design with survivors of domestic and family violence

Author/s: Brigid Lang-Norris¹, Pamela Connor², Lisa Cannata² and Dr Susan Heward-Belle³

¹Domestic Violence Advocate & Lived Experience Expert, ²Lived Experience Expert, ³University of Sydney

Theme 5: Social work education in the field and in the classroom

Abstract:

The issue of an educator's duty of care to her students when exposing them to potentially distressing content is of increasing concern within the social work academy. Students who enter social work are over-represented as survivors of childhood trauma and some experience learning challenges when confronted with domestic and family violence curriculum. Building the necessary knowledge base, skill set, and ethical stance required to become a helpful professional, pivots on understanding survivors' lived experience, including their everyday acts of resistance. Embedding lived experience led knowledge into the social work curriculum can result in better practice with service users and has the potential for students and practitioners to develop post-traumatic growth. This can disrupt students' hegemonic assumptions about the inevitability of experiencing 'burn-out' or 'vicarious trauma' as a result of coming into contact with potentially distressing content and people who have experienced violence, abuse and/or neglect. Consequently, this paper reports on our experiences of developing curriculum with survivors based on their knowledge and expertise. The project was informed by a critical pedagogical perspective to prepare social work students to work with people who experience violence and other forms of oppression. In this presentation, lived experience experts and an academic will share their experiences of working collaboratively towards creating learning opportunities that provide space for students to engage in deep and transformative learning opportunities within a framework of safety and increased self-awareness.