



THE FELLOW

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Peer Review
Educating Social Work Students to Deliver Empirically Supported Mental Health Services by Julie Tennille

Page 2

Alumni Spotlight
Susan Kinney, Ph.D

Page 3

Research Opportunity
Page 3

Peer Cites
Pages 4

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FRESH START

First, we would like to welcome everyone back for the start of a new academic year. Hopefully, you have all had productive, restful and/or adventurous summers! We extend a very warm welcome to the new Ph.D. students Daniel Curtis, Michael Shier, and Marlene Walk who are embarking on what will undoubtedly be an unforgettable era in their lives as they make the transformation from mere civilian to full-time Ph.D. student. We hope your time at Penn is all you hope for and more, and want you to know that you have resources in those of us who have come before you. We will be planning a time for all to meet, a schedule of Doctoral Student Steering Committee (DSSC) meetings, a fall event within the next month, and more events through the year. Stay tuned!

Many of us are beginning our 3rd year, a last year of coursework and honing our research interests into our dissertation. This cohort has shared so much and we will, without a doubt, continue to support each other in this next phase of our development and work.

There are a few changes of note. First, we look forward to working under the new leadership of Dr. Susan Sorenson as she replaces Dr. Ram Cnaan as director of the Ph.D. program. Thanks to Dr. Cnaan for his guidance and sage advice over the last few years! Katy Kaplan and Michelle Evan-Chase will serve as colloquium co-chairs. Katy and Joanna Bisgaier did such an amazing job last year of bringing in outstanding speakers. We thank you Katy for continuing on for a second round! So, too, we thank Tom Byrne for being our GAPSA representative for yet another year. Lastly, we extend our gratitude to Maayan Schori and Mary Zhou for serving as DSSC co-chairs this past year.

Best, Samira Ali & Julie Tennille, DSSC co-chairs



Welcome to Academic Year 2010-2011! I welcome you as the incoming director of the Ph.D. program at the School of Social Policy & Practice. Professor Ram Cnaan has ably directed the program for six years and moved on to fill a new position in the School, Senior Associate Dean. I thank him for leaving the program in such good shape and wish him the best in his new role.

One of the questions that arise when there is one change is "What else is going to change?" Frankly, not much. You will continue with two seminars (the student-led doctoral student seminar and the Pauline Shaw Holsaert Research Colloquium; plan to attend both), your coursework (if you haven't completed it already), and research that includes your dissertation. One thing I'd like to do this year is expand the Graduate Group (the people who can chair SP2 dissertation committees), so if you have faculty who you think would be good to invite, please let me know.

Please join me in extending a special welcome to our three new doctoral students, Daniel Curtis, Michael Shier, and Marlene Walk. Three others accepted our offer of admission and later decided not to attend – one decided she wasn't ready for a Ph.D. program (a good realization before starting a program), another decided to pursue a degree at another department at Penn, etc. So Daniel, Michael, and Marlene likely will have coursework that is even more personalized than usual in our small classes.

Cheryl Gaffney, who provides support in multiple ways to the program and students, has updated the Ph.D. Student Handbook. It will be reviewed by others (doctoral students and faculty) and then posted online. Look for it in the coming weeks on the SP2 website. Speaking of which, Cheryl also updated the program's website. Among the updates was the list of dissertation titles for 2009. We hope to add your name to that list soon. I believe that things are set in terms of classes, office space, and so on, but if you have questions you can turn to Cheryl Gaffney (3815 Walnut, 1st floor, 215.898-4496, cgaffney@sp2.upenn.edu) or me (3815 Walnut, 215.844-2558, sorenson@sp2.upenn.edu). If you send me an e-mail, you can expect a response within two business days (if it is urgent, please indicate that in the subject line of your message - I will do my best to respond quickly).

Good luck with your work this year. I hope your accomplishments are many and the hassles are few.
Susan B. Sorenson, Ph.D., Professor



PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for classes, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. The Fellow provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

Educating Social Work Students to Deliver Empirically Supported Mental Health Services

by Julie Tennille | julie.tennille@gmail.com

Persons with severe mental illnesses (SMI) are entitled to receive mental health and physical health services from a well prepared and professional workforce. Moreover, this workforce ought to be delivering the kind of care and support associated with better mental and physical health outcomes. Makes sense, right? This seemingly simple issue has been a preoccupation for me for over twenty years now. Roughly ten of those years were spent as a direct care provider and administrator in public mental health and HIV prevention services and the last 10 have been dedicated to learning the process of research and developing teaching skills. Wow, I'm old! In any case, as my colleagues in the doctoral program and on the faculty who are interested in researching services for adults with mental illnesses can attest to, there are many facets to the challenge of getting good evidence based interventions to persons with SMI. Linking experience from my practice, research and teaching background has led me to focus on the methods we use to train social workers as a means of furthering our understanding of ways to systematically deliver evidence based interventions for adults with SMI. Here is why.

The literature has indicated that even though social workers are far more plentiful in mental health in the United States when compared to other mental health provider disciplines such as psychiatry and psychology, they are not being taught to deliver empirically supported interventions. While some schools do a better job than others when it comes to teaching skills of evidence based interventions, the majority of schools of social work do not. Based on this gap, it really should come as no surprise that there is close to a 20-year delay between the knowledge generated from research and the actual delivery of empirically supported mental health services. If the main providers of mental health services are not educated to the priority of delivering scientifically established protocols of care, the breach makes great sense. As a former mental health provider, I do remember well how little emphasis was placed on delivering a service grounded in theory or at least rooted in an evidence base.

Further verification of this problem comes from a recent national survey that concluded that two thirds of social work schools do not require the gold standard of didactic and expert clinical supervision in psychotherapy training in any empirically supported treatment, yet a full third of social workers in mental health settings claim that psychotherapy is the service that they render. These details are disconcerting and present a challenge to the social work profession. However, and not to be too big a downer, I think that there is yet another important factor not well

addressed in the literature which may further confound our ability to speed clinically supported treatments into community settings.

Even though research has shown that didactic programs alone are ineffective at training practitioners and aiding in skill development, schools of social work outsource student's experiential 'field' learning and supervision to field instructors who, in large part, are not familiar with evidence based practice concepts. Thus, social work students are not only trained dissimilarly within the same schools via their field experiences, which can be a widely variable assortment of hospital and community placements, but may literally be in settings where classroom learning cannot possibly be reinforced by a field instructor. Don't misunderstand my point as I do believe that real world internship experiences are enriching and absolutely integral to social work education. Nevertheless, it is vital for schools of social work to take greater responsibility for addressing the lack of evidence based interventions in mental health services.

How can we address this gap and see that our efforts are sustainable? I think that if we can work toward developing more rigorous educational strategies that take into account the training that social workers in mental health settings need to deliver evidence based interventions while simultaneously sensitizing and helping to train our field sites in greater depth, we will be further down the road to solving some of these workforce problems. An example may involve offering a course to students on an evidence based strategy such as motivational interviewing (MI). MI is broadly applicable to many populations that social workers encounter. Furthermore, it imbues critical process components to students that lay a foundation for future successful learning and delivering of other more complex evidence based practices. Inviting field supervisors to attend part of the course or even to have students and their field instructors learn to teach a piece of the course together may be an effective tool to help shape the mental health services workforce.

Ignoring the development of our social work field instructors as we seek to better prepare our students is not an option in building a platform for future implementation of evidence supported interventions. My hope is that I can be of service in furthering this effort by developing and testing new strategies to teaching students as well as their field instructors. I believe we have a professional obligation to research how we teach clinical practice in order to ensure that these most vulnerable clients receive the most effective services we can offer.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Susan Kinnevy, Ph.D. (SP2 '02)

Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Human Services,
Division of Performance Management and Accountability



Tell us about your work and how it relates to your research at Penn.

This job, in performance management and accountability, is ideal for me. I use all the research and data analysis skills I developed in the Ph.D. program. My dissertation was focused on child welfare in Florida, and it was easy for me to put together many of the skills I learned in the program and are

needed for this job and simply transfer them to another state.

What experiences at Penn have been the most valuable for you - as a student and now in your job at DHS?

The actual research experience. I made that experience rather wide. I went outside my dissertation because I felt that I wanted the experience of what real world research is like. The research classes that I had were the most valuable, especially the one with Dr. Solomon. I think it prepared me, it was the optimal way to look at how to do a research project. Knowing the gold standard allows you to get as close to it as possible when you are out in the field. Knowing how you should look at data, at an event, at an issue. Knowing how you should always have a research question, how you always need a hypothesis, and how to eliminate rival explanations to get to the answer. Knowing these kinds of rules, this type of structure, is invaluable no matter where you are. This is even more important if you are going to practice what you research.

What has been your biggest challenge as you have transitioned from being a graduate student to your current position?

What I was lacking was the administrative experience – creating and managing a division inside a large organization. I had to learn on the job, and use other resources to gain that experience. I don't think we learn that in the Ph.D. program. Also, the environment on the ground is extremely fluid.

What were your key considerations in choosing a career in administration?

I think one of the main considerations was my age. I went back to school late in life, right before I turned 50. I was looking at what it takes to get through the academic track. I didn't think I wanted to spend that kind of time. But it wasn't the only consideration. I was looking at where my talent and energy could make a difference. It could certainly make a difference in academia, but I didn't feel that was enough. I have passion for research, and I am an OK teacher, but am less passionate about that aspect of academia. Sometimes I miss the freedom of straight research, but overall I think this is the best combination for me.

Do you have any advice for current SP2 Ph.D. students vis-à-vis the job market and their career prospects and options?

The school is geared towards academic careers but it prepared me well enough for this career choice. I think it's just different strokes for different folks. It's your life and it's your education. You wanted to make a difference. It doesn't all have to be in academia. If you don't think you are cut out for it, don't let somebody force you. There are other options. If you take a job in academia even though you really don't like teaching, for example, it's not good for anybody – the students, the school and yourself. The other thing is that if everyone stayed in academia, things would just be recycled – how would information get out into the real world and make it matter?

Also, don't think of your dissertation as be all and end all. Don't get so hung up on it. Try to get other experiences in the academic environment. The dissertation is not the first or last thing you are ever going to do. People get hung up trying to do the perfect dissertation. Not only is there no such thing, but it's a guaranteed way to waste a lot of time.

Is there anything else you think current Ph.D. students should know?

People think tenure track is a secure way to go. It's not actually. There are other paths to security. Make sure you are suited for whatever you chose. Self-knowledge, really doing the interior work with yourself. Ask yourself: What do I want out of this? Why am I even in a Ph.D. program? What's the point of this? Don't lose sight of the reason you came in. If it was to have an academic career, than by all means go for it. Try to follow what you are good at. Don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole. Know there are other options to explore.



Research Opportunity

Interested in working on a manuscript to be submitted for peer-review? Manisha Joshi and Susan Sorenson collected data this spring and have quality data but no time to analyze it. They don't have funding (worked without pay) but have a good research design (random sample, random assignment to pre-, post-, and pre- and post-test groups) and high quality data(response rate was several times higher than what is usually obtained in online surveys). The analysis should be pretty straightforward. Ideally, a manuscript would go out this semester, so the work would be time limited. Given the timeframe, they are looking for an organized self-starter with data analysis experience. The data is about fault & blame in sexual assault as well as personal knowledge of sexual assault victimization and perpetration on a university campus. If interested, please contact sorenson@sp2.upenn.edu.

PEER CITES from April to August 2010

Publications

Mazer, M., **Bisgaier, J.**, Dailey, E., Srivastava, K., McDermoth, M., Datner, E., & Rhodes, K. (in press). Risk for cost-related medication non-adherence among emergency department patients. *Academic Emergency Medicine*.

Meinhard, A., Handy, F., & **Greenspan, I.** (2010). Corporate participation in the social economy: Employer-supported volunteering programs. In J. Quarter, L. Mook, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *Researching the social economy: A Canadian perspective* (pp. 245-266). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

North, C., Pfefferbaum, B., Kawasaki, A., **Lee, S.**, & Spitznagel, E. (in press). Long-term psychopathology among directly exposed survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing: A seven-year follow-up study. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*.

Solomon, P., **Lee, S.**, Chatterjee, A., & McClaine, L. (2010). Preliminary psychometrics of a new scale: A sense of acceptance in community activities. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 14(2), 113-122.

Matejkowski, J.C., Caplan, J.M., & **Cullen, S.W.** (2010). The impact of severe mental illness on parole decisions: Social integration within a prison setting. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 37, 1005-1029.

Schiff, M., Levit, S., **Schori, M.**, & Lawental, E. (in press). Anxiety symptoms of Israeli Methadone patients during the war in Gaza. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*.

Presentations

Mazer, M., **Bisgaier, J.**, Srivastava, K., McDermoth, M., Dailey, E., Datner, E., Rhodes, K. (2010, June). Cost-related medication non-adherence among emergency department patients. Poster presented at the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ.

Rhodes, K., **Bisgaier, J.**, Dailey, E. (2010, June). Social determinants of health: Economic disadvantage, poor health, and adverse health behaviors among urban emergency department patients. Presentation as part of the Didactic Session, "Beyond the Ambulance Bay: An Introduction to Social Emergency Medicine" the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ.

Byrne, T. & Gale, M. (2010, July). Investigating and describing veteran homelessness in several U.S. communities & implications for the VA's prevention initiatives. Presented at the National Alliance to End Homelessness 2010 National Conference on Ending Homelessness, Washington, DC.

Cullen, S.W., Matejkowski, J.C., & Solomon, P. (2010, July). Maternal mental health and parenting activities: A nationally representative sample. Poster presented at the National Research Conference on Child and Family Programs and Policy, Bridgewater, MA.

Greenspan, I. (2010, May). The winners and losers of Jewish philanthropy to Israeli organizations: The case of the matching grants initiative for the environment in Israel. Presented at the 26th annual conference of the Association for Israel Studies, Toronto, ON.

Schori, M. (2010, June). Long-term Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for Women: Lessons Learned from Israel. Presented at the 3rd Meeting of the International Women's and Children's Health and Gender Group (InWomen's) and at National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) International Forum.

Awards/Funding

Itay Greenspan received a dissertation research grant from the Center for the Studies of Philanthropy in Israel (of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare).

Rosemary Frasso was appointed a Lecturer in The University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine and School of Social Policy & Practice. She will be teaching 3 courses in the Masters of Public Health Program and one class here at SP2.

Sungkyu Lee received Individual Development Award from Binghamton University where he is teaching as an adjunct professor.

Jason Matejkowski graduated this August and accepted a position as an Associate Research Scientist with the Law and Ethics division of the Treatment Research Institute in Philadelphia.

Charlene C. McGrew accepted a position as an Assistant Professor (tenure track) at Eastern University.