An interesting email exchange circulated recently among directors of social work doctoral programs who are members of GADE (Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education). The question that started the conversation was simple: “Does your Social Work PhD Program consider applicants for admission who have not earned an MSW?”

As the responses began lining up in my inbox, I noted a trend and a controversy. Clearly, more and more PhD programs are moving toward eliminating the MSW requirement. Of the 38 program directors who responded (there are 81 member programs in GADE), 29 no longer require the MSW for PhD admission. Judging from the commentary that accompanied many of the responses, this trend away from the MSW requirement is a source of concern and discomfort. One of the responders summed up the concerns this way: “Where will the next generation of practice teachers come from? What other major profession (medicine, law, psychology) does not require its own masters as a condition of enrollment?”

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Ram A. Cnaan, PhD
Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Education

We are two years and a bit into the new DSW program. In many ways we are still in the infancy stage though we are also gaining experience and understanding. The most important thing is that “we can make it.” The program that was designed on paper and readjusted numerous times is soon to have its first batch of graduates. Just the idea of it is exciting. I am eagerly awaiting the first brave soul to defend a dissertation and be called Doctor XXX.

While we do not have strong competition yet, we are thinking ahead and planning for the eventual growth in DSW programs. We know that USC is now planning a macro-DSW and so are other schools. In fact, some of us here at Penn are also talking about a parallel DSW for policy and administration. But, to my mind, the core of the DSW’s future is in the clinical track. This is what the profession really needs. So, if and when the competition for top candidates becomes fierce what shall we do?

The answer is quite simple. The most effective means of academic recruitment are successful and satisfied alumni.

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How does it feel to be at the receiving end of the screaming patient's wife who is frantically worried about her husband's food tray, his television and his hospital issued sheets? Intellectually the professional self realizes that this wife is grieving and reeling over the suffering of her beloved, but on a visceral level the professional armor is chipped away and the personal self prefers not to be on the receiving end of this hostility. The taxing emotional expense of caring for seriously ill and dying patients in conjunction with other professional, personal and organizational stressors is the norm for hospital social workers. Each health care social worker's caregiving voyage coalesces with the emotions and journey of their respective patients merging their distress and stress. Job stress, compassion fatigue and burnout can easily affect the professional that works in this environment. Over the years, I realized in order to survive the rigors of this work; I had to have an outlet for my emotions. As a social worker we become a repository for our patients and their family's stories, but I noted that members of the health care team began to develop their own caregiving narratives and the silent need to tell their stories.

In the midst of the daily chaos there are also those tender moments shared with those we serve in this work—moments that make it a privilege to share their journey. I write to not only help in my professional process, but to honor the patients I serve. Below is an excerpt of Jake's story:

I often have the opportunity to meet patients several times over several admissions; Jake (name changed), a 50-something male was deemed “difficult” and “uncooperative” by most everyone that met him, originally came in through the emergency room and was later admitted to the inpatient oncology service where I am situated.

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Germain's Social Work Practice: People and Environments
An Ecological Perspective
Guia Calicdan-Apostle, MSSW

Published in 1979, Germain's book was the first seminal work to examine the ecological perspective of social work practice. As such, it was a pioneering work and was critical in promoting an understanding of the complex relationships between human beings and their environment. In contrast to traditional theory and practice based on the Freudian model of treating the individual without regard for the environment or his/her interaction with it, Germain proposes a conceptual framework linking the individual's issues to external influences, both environmental and cultural. In her book, she gathers fourteen social work practitioners and educators whose professional views represent a synthesis of ecology and social work, and who examine social work practice within historical, social, political, and ideological contexts.

Carel Germain's childhood experiences with the outdoors may have instilled a deep connection with the natural world, influencing her later views on the significance of the relationship between the individual and his/her environment. Her unpublished thesis dissertation, Casework and science: A study in the sociology of knowledge, later served as a foundation for the earliest drafts of her book, which was originally titled Social Work Theory and Practice.

When this book was published, America was on the threshold of environmentalism, as initially espoused by the early activists of the 1960s environmental movements. The moon landing in 1969 transmitted images of Earth as a beautiful blue planet, a single life-supporting system. This resulted in a national desire to preserve nature, as evidenced by a proliferation of environmentally friendly legislation, including the Clean Water Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Opposition to nuclear power grew after the partial meltdown of a nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island in 1979. As a result of oil crises that peaked in 1973 and again in 1979, ecological awareness became a substantial national interest. Controversies over “equality and liberty, bureaucracy and local control, taxpayers and beneficiaries and a reluctance or willingness to support a welfare state” (Weick, 1987) created an inner cleavage (Jung, 1973)—a drive between morality and utilitarianism.

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Globalization has become a ubiquitous concept/phenomenon in social work education. However, discussions about globalization and its relationship to social work are often theoretical and disconnected from practice. Frequently, the desire to internationalize social work and social work education leads to educational study abroad, or discussions about how social work clients might be included in an increasingly interconnected world. Such discussions have been good first steps, yet what is now needed is an exploration of how social work practices can and will respond to the complex change we face.

While we may debate the merits of globalization, there is little doubt that it is occurring. Globalization does not have to be merely a dark and daunting challenge for the profession, but can instead be an opportunity for social work in the United States to engage in some critical self reflection, and to recommit to an agenda of social change. Such recommitments do not minimize the importance of traditional clinical practice, yet social workers in the United States have much to learn from social workers and social work educators in other countries, many of whom have transcended the seemingly impenetrable divide (in our thinking) between micro and macro practice. One of the key messages that I have learned from social workers aboard is the importance of group work in bridging this divide and as an important tool in social work practice in our rapidly globalizing world. Groups are used throughout the world in a flexible manner in which individual and social problems are given ground or foreground, depending on the needs of the group members and context.

At its core, group work is a method or event that transcends the false divide between the individual and the social. Good group workers know that they always must contend with the needs of two distinct “clients”: the individual who is talking or “working” and the group as a whole. The group is a metaphor for the social. Through helping individuals learn to engage in conflict resolution, group consensus building, community development and healing, and deep and committed sharing, the group work may help engage in the process of social change. By helping clients focus on the implications of this work, and how they can bring these lessons into their own lives and social worlds, group workers may move social work from the intra-psychic to the interpersonal and social. Personal and social change must no longer be conceptualized as separate.

Group work is a perfect method for working with people in and between other countries, as it is more congruent with the collectivist values of many traditional people (Furman et al, 2009). In my work in Latin America, social workers are often surprised at North American social work’s focus on individual practice. Throughout Latin America, problems are viewed as situated within the realm of the community far more organically than in social work in the United States. By learning to help empower groups of people to work together on problems that are meaningful to them, social workers can help diverse groups of people take ownership for their social worlds. However, the process of

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Group Work, Globalization, and Social Change:
Where Do We Go Now
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working towards group change is not only beneficial for the whole, but can be a powerful tool of personal growth, transformation, and meaning. This is an important lesson of North American “radical” social work that has been somewhat lost over the last twenty years (Burghardt, 1986). As individuals live more connected, meaningful and socially engaged lives, they often find many of their seemingly “personal” problems diminish (Frankl, 1963).

Group workers who will work in an increasingly globalizing world will soon be using increasingly sophisticated internet and telephonic communication systems to facilitate group work across national-state borders (Furman, Negi and Schatz, 2008). For instance, a social worker providing group work to migrant workers in rural Pennsylvania can connect to migrant workers in their hometowns in Mexico or Central America through SKYPE and other technologies. The group worker can help facilitate collective problem solving on issues as practical as farming methods, or how to establish coalitions transnationally.

These were just a few of the many ways in which group work can be a valuable tool in a globalizing world. New social work scholars, particularly those in practice-based doctoral programs, are in an ideal position provide leadership in this important domain.

References

Reflections on Teaching Human Behavior in the Social Environment
Eric Stein, LSW

This past spring I taught Human Behavior in the Social Environment at The University of Pennsylvania. I enjoyed being on the giving end of the teacher/student relationship for a change. The class was held once a week during hours when I am usually winding down from my day at work, having dinner, and putting my child to bed. My original thought was that, at this less than ideal hour, the students and I would soon begin to flag in our enthusiasm for the materials and each other. But it was their spirit of inquiry, their openness to discovery, and their compassion for each other and for me that ultimately generated a lively classroom environment.

The students in my section were a range of full-timers and part-timers. Some had a great deal of experience and work responsibilities on top of their schoolwork. Others were relatively new to the field. When Professor Emeritus Louis Carter attended one of our classes he asked, “what brought you to social work?” He made an immediate connection through his understanding that it was our experiences of growing up as members of different races and ethnicities, with different sexual orientations, in a racist, sexist, and homophobic society. Our struggle with and respect for difference was ultimately what brought us to the field and has sustained us in our respective processes of discovery.

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A Warm Welcome to the DSW Class of 2012

Christina Creech
Christopher Deussing
Bianca Harper
Deborah O’Neill
Lisa Thaniel
Kietra Winn

Michael Crocker
Lisa Eible
Cheryl Horsey
Lois Robbins
Martina Verba
William Felder

Lauren DePinto
Carly Goldberg
Kia Kerrin
Marni Rosner
Jacquelyn Warr-Williams
Reflections on Teaching Human Behavior in the Social Environment

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On several occasions, the students raised the question of how to work with clients from oppressed and marginalized groups and communities, who do not share the same access to resources that we as members of the Penn community enjoy. We discussed the importance of being aware of privilege and of the need to move beyond privilege to be able to connect with clients in a purposeful way. We were also investigating concepts related to group, community, and culture. Students were challenged to process the idea that whiteness, heterosexuality, and other prevailing norms are actually difference. This helped us to look at how we define ourselves within the social environment and what our respective places were within the context of the classroom and our work in the field.

The students and I approached the course from a critical thinking point of view and this included being reflexive and critical with ourselves as students, teachers, and members of a task group. Many of the students had questions about how to cope with the stresses of working with clients who have been traumatized, whose health and safety are in jeopardy, who have lost or are in danger of losing their homes, and who have been oppressed and marginalized. Others asked about how to articulate their points of view as social workers to expand upon and/or bring clarity to an issue. All of us were asking the right question: How do I bring about effective change in the systems within which I am working.

Director’s Message

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Who will teach practice is a real problem, and one that has already arrived on our doorstep. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires faculty who teach practice to hold a Masters of Social Work degree, and social work programs around the country, Penn included, are already struggling to find qualified doctoral level faculty. How to best maintain a strong professional identity is also an ongoing concern, and not requiring our own masters for doctoral level practice and teaching, as other professions do, does seem counterintuitive and counterproductive.

I finished reading the email exchange among my doctoral director colleagues, more convinced than ever that we are on the right track with the Clinical DSW. Our first class of DSW’s, who are poised to graduate next May, are, I believe, on the vanguard of a new and welcome trend in social work: the move toward a professional doctorate. Stay tuned.

Ram A. Cnaan, PhD
Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Education

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It is a well known truth among directors of recruitment that there is nothing that speaks so directly to interested applicants as knowing that others graduated and regard the program with positive feelings. For the Penn-DSW program, we are almost there. Our inaugural cohort enters its third year and almost all of them defended their dissertation proposals. It is now clear that the maturity of this cohort will graduate on time. This is confirming to us as administrators and to members of the cohort. We will have graduates to brag about and show future applicants that “yes we can!” Members of the first cohorts will always remember this academic adventure and will always prove our belief in you was justified.

Every year that passes helps the program mature and institutionalize its structure and methods. Having three full cohorts is an affirmation that the program is needed and relevant. This is the only program, this year, in which every admitted student accepted. This is a rare signal of the program’s success and we are mighty proud of it.

We are now clear that the MSW is indeed a foundational degree. The substance and academic experience of the DSW is a world apart from the MSW. The DSW is a new high bar for those committed to the profession. Please spread the word—social work has a new terminal degree!
As I entered his room he looked up at me boyishly. He had the c-pap breathing machine on his face and it was extremely loud. His eyes smiled. I touched his hand. Kendra (name changed), hugged me and requested that I sit down. I accepted the chair and she began to speak quickly as she sensed that time was precious, “we want to get married.” I replied, “that is great.” After 32 years together and two kids you two are finally going to make it official.” My eyes moved to Jake. He did not look like he would make it through the weekend, but I put on a strong front. This was a moment where they both needed to hold onto hope. “Can you tell us what we need to do?” stated Kendra. “Sure, I will check right now out at the computer (pointing to the nurse’s station).” I summarily retrieved the number for Philadelphia City Hall Marriage License Bureau. The woman I spoke with on the phone explained the process in detail; essentially once all of the paperwork was completed they would have to wait 72 hours before they could get married.

I went back into the room and shared the information with them and told them I would complete a letter from the hospital that afternoon. Kendra asked if I would leave the letter in the room if she was not there and she would pick it up and go to city hall the next day. I wrote the letter as promised and both the physician and I signed it. In the morning after rounds, I went in to Jake’s room to drop it off. He didn’t look well and was struggling to breathe. He stated that he was feeling “sluggish” and asked if I could return later “to see him.” I returned to his room around 3pm and he was grumping at the nurse. “ Jake, how are you? Are you giving these ladies a hard time up here?” “No I’m just sayin’ this mask ain’t right. It’s too loud…” As I stood at the end of his bed, Jake stated, “Move my foot” “Please,” I retorted. “Please,” he smiled mischievously.

We then began to communicate nonverbally. I rolled up a pillow and put it under his head and we moved in this silent way both of us trying to alleviate his apparent discomfort and air hunger. In the midst of this awkward dance, he made us both chuckle when he stated with a delivery that was quintessentially his, “I’m going for the ‘L’ shape.” Ironically, I immediately understood what he meant because it helped maximize the flow of oxygen to his labored lungs. After we managed to make him less uncomfortable, I sat in the chair next to the bed. I knew he was tired, not just physically tired, but emotionally. He was ready to go soon. “Jake, it’s ok if you want to go to sleep.” He replied, “you ain’t gonna leave me is you.” “No, I’m right here. I will sit with you for awhile.” I thought I would try to stay until Kendra came back so that he wouldn’t be alone. I was hoping she wouldn’t be too late as I thought about all that I had to do before days end, but I chose not to worry, but to sit and absorb this moment. I sat still somewhere between tears and stoicism. I sat in the nondescript concave blue chair next to a sleeping Jake as a swirl of emotions rushed over my person. I thought about my first interaction with Jake who was admitted through the emergency room for an orthopedic issue, only to find that it was caused by metastasized tumor from his stage IV lung cancer. Jake pulled me out of my thoughts with a whisper, “I feel like the devil is on top of me…” My heart sank and I felt a chill in my spine. “What makes you feel like that?” “I’ve done a lot of bad stuff in my life.” I chose to comfort him and to engage in a discussion about his spiritual beliefs. Later I would ask the Chaplin to stop in and see him as well. He stated that he talked to God all of the time and that his ultimate comfort came through his redemptive relationship with his Creator. Silence fell upon us once again with only the sound of the oxygen flowing through his mask. “Are you scared?” “Sometimes.” I just rubbed his hand and my heart ached inside my chest. We sat like this for several moments and I said, “we knew it was going to happen, we just didn’t know it would be this soon.” He shook his head as a tear trickled down his cheek, “I wish I had more time.” I fought back the tears welling in my eyes. He knew I would stay with him. As I sat next to Jake the history channel flickered on the television. He drifted off into a peaceful sleep, which until now had eluded him. Now and again he would break out into song as if he was singing to someone. I heard him chuckle and checked to see if his eyes were still shut. He made me smile even now. I watched his chest rise and fall fighting to breathe. Finally, he was quiet lying on the pillow I rolled for him. I wrapped that rebellious pillow in a hospital gown to keep it in that shape. We both found it comical that we couldn’t get it into the “tight roll” he desperately wanted. Thus the gown wrap idea was born. He had exclaimed “these cheap plastic pillows” and laughed at my homemade wrap. These small moments that I shared with him are indelibly etched in my mind. We had already applied
Despite economic stagflation, the sociopolitical climate of the 1970s represented a re-emergence of the pioneering spirit and a restored sense of creativity. In social work, this period ushered in many new ideas, both theoretical and practical. Germain expanded her zeitgeist by drawing upon interplay of the natural world and a network of human relations, which she terms the physical and social environment. Her concept was not new but her language was less abstract than the nonhuman language system of systems theory, which is seemingly complex and difficult to integrate in humanistic themes.

Common threads between ecology and social work stood out. Germain (1979) posits that ecology, a form of general systems theory influences practice that is “directed toward improving transactions between people and environments in order to enhance adaptive capacities and improve environments for all who function within them” (p. 8). This ecological metaphor emphasizes an interchange between individuals and environment resulting in a mutual “goodness of fit” (Germain, 1979, p. 8). An equally important theoretical approach in Germain's ecological perspective examines a social work practice within the context of social roles, social class, ethnicity, and culture. Finally, and most important, is the applicability of sociological and psychological theories in the ecological practice issues. Some examples of these theories include Erikson's stages of man, stress, crisis, concept of adaptation, Kübler-Ross's hierarchy of adaptive strategies, and psychoanalytic theories.

Germain's (1979) text is divided into three parts. Part One comprises six practice applications in various social work settings. Two distinctive themes emerge. The first is the unique position of the social worker, who is “generally at the crossroads of life...at the location in the scene of the natural life that makes help available and more possible”, and the other is a clear approach, “be it ecostructural or adaptive, to the enhancement of the individual, family, or group's social and personal functioning” (p.8). Here, again, is the salience of the “goodness to fit” modality, where one looks at a relationship between individual and environment as a pivotal factor in understanding human problems.

Part Two of Germain's work describes the conceptual development of this perspective, in which four authors examine social network, extended kin, language, and life experience as critical variables in the adaptive process of human beings. For example, Swenson's concept of social network posits that human beings need to maintain a sense of identity and humanness by revitalizing the “nutritive qualities of the environment” (Germain, 1979, p. 215) through a network, system or self-help group. It seems logical that social work's network concept provides vital resources to clients in need.

Part Three covers practice issues of Grosser's reform and democratic participation, Bloom's ecological approach to social prevention, and Janjill's Park Slope case experience. Grosser and Bloom challenge social workers to incorporate a political view in their ideals of a humanistic welfare society, as well as to engage in corrective or transformational social change. This is a refreshing section; it aligns social action and community development with social work values on reforms and social justice.

As the collection of articles in Germain's book covers a rich variety of topics, breaking the book into three main sections enhances its readability, particularly for readers who want to move from theoretical concepts to practical applications. Unfortunately, the third section on practice issues is surprisingly spare. If the target audience of this book is social work practitioners, Germain might have done better to include a larger collection of practice issues. In addition, a consistent format, summarizing each article and providing a conclusion would have been helpful.

Germain's book is a seminal text in the history of clinical social work practice, and the ecological perspective she delineates therein represented, in many respects, a ground-breaking approach to social work. Supplanting the medical model in her ecological perspective with the person-in-environment connection, Germain's ecological perspective takes an expansive view, as opposed to a narrow assessment, of a client's psychoanalytic ego and drives. This new thinking recognized the social milieu or network as an organic and dynamic social and relational influence in client assessment.

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Germain’s Social Work Practice: People and Environments
An Ecological Perspective
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The ecological perspective is not limited to practice in casework, group work, or community organization; its framework works across all levels and can influence social and institutional policies. Finally, though, it is important to recognize that ecological perspective is just that—perspective. It provides a useful approach to practice cases, but it is the actual experiences of social workers that will continue to serve as evidence that the adaptive process of the ecological perspective can improve conditions of clients and enhance modern social work practice. With a strong relevance to the present-day system of managed care, the ecological perspective is unlikely to diminish in importance and should continue to provide a valuable framework for social work practitioners with clients facing 21st century problems. The ecological component is critical in understanding a continuing interaction of our clientele whether it is micro, mezzo or macro perspectives.

References

Narrative Matters in Hospital Social Work
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for insurance, obtained additional financial and supportive resources, had several family meetings and discussed hospice. Now we just waited for his “wife” of 32 years and again I ached for him and his beloved because I knew that they would not be able to make their union official—72 hours was another lifetime from this moment.

DSW Student News

Jane Abrams, MSW, LCSW - third year DSW student - will have a paper published in the next edition of Psychoanalytic Social Work. In her paper, What's Reality Got To Do With It? : Projective Processes in Adult Intimate Relationships, Jane uses two case examples to illustrate how the psychoanalytic concepts of projection, projective identification, the repetition compulsion and the use of an object can assist therapists working with couples in a modern relational social work practice.

Ginneh Akbar, MSW - second year DSW student - will be working with Temple University’s Center for Social Policy and Community Development, POMP unit, on creating a curriculum to train Philadelphia Department of Human Service (DHS) social workers, on racial disproportionality within the child welfare system.

Valerie Allen, MSW, LSW - third year DSW student - was interviewed and included in a short documentary released by the Christian Association on body justice. The short is called Body Without Fear. She also consulted with a HBO contractor producing a documentary on the impact of violence on adolescence.
Danna Bodenheimer, MSW, LSW - third year DSW student - spoke at the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups conference in Chicago this past June. Her presentation was based on a paper entitled *The Intergenerational Transmission of a Gay Identity in a Long Term Process Group*. Danna taught Direct Practice Research and is teaching Anxiety and Depression at The University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice. Danna is also teaching Social Work Practice at Rutgers Camden. She will be representing Rutgers at the CSWE conference in San Antonio this November and will address modes by which students can manage the difficult material presented in classes on trauma and violence.

Cynthia Closs, MSS, LCSW – third year DSW student - guest lectured on gender identity development and clinical work with transfolks at Drexel University. Additionally, Cynthia was part of a panel discussion at the AIDS Education Month Summit addressing clinical work with transfolks living with HIV/AIDS.

MaryAnn A. Groncki, MSW, LCSW - third year DSW student - was a Teaching Assistant for the Mental Health Diagnostics class at The University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice.

Melissa Kahane-Nissenbaum, LSW - second year DSW student - presented on The Impact of the Holocaust on Third Generation Survivors at the Conference of International Society of Quality of Life Studies in Florence, Italy.

Kate Ledwith, LCSW - second year DSW student - is a Teaching Assistant for the Mental Health Diagnostics class at the University of Pennsylvania School of Policy and Practice. Kate's paper, *Beginnings and Endings: A Look at Termination Experiences and Attachment of Clinical Social Workers*, has been accepted for the 2009 Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research. She will present the paper at the conference in November in Philadelphia.

Jack B. Lewis, Jr, MSW, LCSW - third year DSW student - is teaching American Racism and Social Work Practice at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice. Jack was accepted as a CSWE Scholar from July 2009 to 2010. For his dissertation, Jack is exploring the methods CSWE accredited MSW programs utilize to teach students how to provide culturally competent practice. A component of this research will also involve examining what outcome measures CSWE accredited MSW programs utilize to assess students's change in competence. As a CSWE Scholar, Jack will receive a small monetary award and will have an opportunity to present his findings at the 2010 CSWE APM in Seattle.

Margaret M. Preston, LCSW, DCSW - third year DSW student - was recently featured on the front page of The Chestnut Hill Local and KYW Newsradio after launching her t-shirt line to encourage women to “buddy up” while exercising. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the shirts will go into the “Women Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve Fund” which will provide pro bono counseling and financial assistance to women who have been assaulted while engaging in exercise.

Eric Stein, LSW – third year DSW student - is teaching Human Behavior in the Social Environment at The University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice.

Kielty Turner, MA, MSW, LCSW - third year DSW student - is teaching Research Methods at Marywood University. She is also an adjunct instructor for the psychology department at the University of Scranton. Kielty's article, *Mindfulness: The Present Moment in Clinical Social Work*, was published in Clinical Social Work Journal in June 2009. She has written a review of Mindfulness and social work which has been accepted for publication by Research on Social Work Practice.