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Director's Message

Much has happened since the last issue of the Clinician.

We bade a fond farewell to one Dean and welcomed another. Dean John Jackson, who moved back across campus to his “academic home,” to assume the Deanship at the Annenberg School of Communication, was a stalwart supporter of our DSW program while he was the Dean of SP2. He continues to mentor DSW students on their dissertations and teach one of our most popular classes—Race, Culture and Identity. In January we welcomed our new Dean, Dr. Sara “Sally” Bachman who has already begun to leave her mark at SP2. Last Spring, a school-wide Taskforce on Race and Social Justice began to take a serious look at how to expose and address issues of identity, intersectionality and race across all areas of the School. Under the leadership of Dr. Jerri Bourjolly, Dr. Amy Hillier and our own DSW alumna, Dr. Jenn Clinkscales, the Taskforce, made up of students, faculty, staff and alumni, organized a One Book. One SP2 project, inviting members of the SP2 community to start the new academic year by reading and discussing the book, Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements, by Charlene Carruthers. Our new cohort of DSW students took part in the book discussions, which began online and continued in lively small group conversations after the SP2 Convocation.

In other DSW news, a group of students from our 2017 cohort traveled with me to Athens, Greece to learn about the refugee and migrant crises that was unfolding there. The DSW governance committee has been exploring how to use what we learned from the Athens pilot project to internationalize the DSW student experience. Speaking of internationalizing, we continue to draw students who live far and wide around the globe to the DSW program. This year’s new “2019 cohort” students, selected from our largest applicant pool ever, live and work coast-to-coast across the US as well as in Japan, Sri Lanka, and India. Our alumni are also doing impressive and important work around the world, many as tenure track or contract full and part-time faculty—one moving to Australia to accept a faculty position there; others assuming leadership positions in and outside of academia, including our graduate recently appointed the MSW Director of another top 10 social work program.

I am grateful to the current student Editor of The Clinician, Ciji Blue, and all the rest of the contributors to this issue, for helping spread the news about Penn’s DSW program.

Lina Hartocollis, MSS, PhD
Editor's Notes

This edition of The Clinician is dedicated to the DSW students incessantly laboring for social change. However salutary and gratifying this journey may be, regarding elevation and opportunity, the road to “finished” is bumpy. Dwelling in the space of both professional and student begets ambivalence. Those who contemplate such a step, in the near future, should accept the uneasiness that precedes innovation.

In this edition, we have supplemented the newsletter with a podcast, titled The Clinician, to enhance the reader’s experience. Our focus centers on the journey of the student and useful tips for all professionals who endeavor to complete their Doctorate. I want to personally thank our team for their contributions and the University of Pennsylvania’s faculty who generously devoted their time for an interview.

Ciji L. Blue, MSW, LCSW

WE MAY HAVE ALL COME ON DIFFERENT SHIPS, BUT WE’RE IN THE SAME BOAT NOW.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Psychodramatically Becoming Your “Future Doctor Self”: A DSW First Year Immersion Session

Scott Giacomucci, DSW, LCSW, CTTS, CET III, PAT

Sociometry, Psychodrama, and Social Work have considerable overlap in their history, theory, and philosophy - nevertheless, they remain mostly segregated. Jacob L. Moreno, the founder of sociometry and psychodrama and a pioneer in group psychotherapy, created a philosophical system with many parallels to social work including conceptualizing the person in their social environment, advocating for social justice, emphasizing relationships, highlighting the worth of each individual, and promoting mutual aid in groups. Moreno actually coined the terms “group psychotherapy” and “group therapy” in Philadelphia in 1931. His sociometric system focuses on the interpersonal dynamics within groups and society while his psychodramatic approach uses experiential methods to externalize the intrapsychic realities of an individual. Sociometry and psychodrama as complementary group psychotherapy approaches investigate the individual’s psychodynamics within the sociodynamics of their social network and society.

While sociometry and psychodrama receive almost no mention in social work education (only two psychodrama electives currently exist within the entire American social work academic system), group work has always been a component of the social work field. Historically, concentrations in group work were offered in nearly 75% of social work degree programs in the 1960s, while today it is less than 5% of programs that offer a group work concentration. Group work in social work education significantly declined over the past six decades, while group work’s demand in practice increased exponentially. Most social workers report being expected to facilitate groups of some sort (therapy, supervision, community, training, organizational, education, etc.) in their field placements and careers but are not receiving any, or adequate, education in group work. Group work experts criticize many for being unable to engage the group-as-a-whole and instead doing individual case work or individual therapy in a group setting.

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Sociometry and psychodrama provide social workers with experiential group-as-a-whole mutual aid processes that can be adapted for use with any topic, any population, and any group setting. These approaches are all action-based - moving beyond words into a holistic experience that integrates the body, psyche, social, and spiritual into the group process. To portray the power of these tools, sociometry and psychodrama vignettes from a session with the incoming DSW students on their immersion week will be depicted.

Considering that incoming DSW students were meeting each other in person for the first time this week, various sociometry tools were utilized to help the group uncover the various unseen connections between group members. After multiple sociometric explorations and a deepening of interpersonal connections the group was warmed-up to go deeper. Three empty chairs were positioned in the center of the room to represent “the DSW degree and dissertation,” “the future self as a doctor,” and “family, friends, and colleagues.” Participants were invited to spontaneously sit in one of these chairs, role reversing with one of these roles, and verbalize a negative or positive messages.

Messages from the DSW degree and dissertation were verbalized including - “I am too big for you to complete,” “you were meant to create me,” “I am the change you will create in the world,” - as these were articulated, others students raised their hands indicating their connection to the messages from their peers. Towards the end of the session, the energy shifted towards the future self role and students began to role reverse with themselves in the future as doctors of clinical social work. From this future self role, they spoke to themselves today offering encouragement, validation, and insight - “I am proud of you,” “you are right where you are meant to be,” “this DSW process will be tough, but you will succeed”. Some students articulated their messages in other languages - while the rest of the group didn’t cognitively understand the content of the message, the emotional content was clearly received. As we moved towards closure and integration, students began clapping enthusiastically for each other’s messages.
10 Ways to Maximize your PENN DSW Immersion

Julia Colangelo, MSW, LCSW, SIFI (DSW 2018 Cohort)

Congratulations! You’ve been accepted to one of the most rigorous Doctorate of Social Work Programs in the nation. You’re about to embark on a journey of learning, researching, and collaboration. These 10 tips will help you to maximize your DSW immersion experiences.

**Eat, Sleep, Hydrate.** This one might be pretty obvious but as social workers and change makers, it’s easy to forget that when we don’t nourish our bodies, our minds suffer. While food and snacks are provided and readily available, stock up on your favorites just in case so you can soak up everything.

**Caffeinate, but not too much.** Your brain needs to be awake to take in all of this information, connect, and develop neuropathways as they relate to your current and future research and scholarly goals. If you’re a coffee drinker, keep up your routine, but don’t drink so much that you become jittery because you will be seated during seminars and you’ll want to feel comfortable. Ultimately, stick with whatever caffeine habit got you here.

**Be ready to be (somewhat or sometimes) uncomfortable.** No matter how much you know about a topic or population, you will be surrounded by scholars and leaders in your cohort as well as professors. You may disagree sometimes, and it may not be comfortable all the time. Preparing for this mentally will help ease any differences of opinions or experiences voiced during the immersion.

**Get ready to change your mind.** You came in with one research idea, but as you let the introductions, material, and readings soak in, you realize something a bit different peaks your interest. Explore this! Just because you thought you wanted to focus on one area doesn’t mean you have to stick with it. The first immersion is where you’ll be exposed to many different areas of Penn’s leaders’ research. By the second immersion, you’ll have done some more narrowing of your goals towards your dissertation and future research career.

**Get ready to get some things wrong.** Just a reminder that even though you’re in this competitive program, you’re a human who makes mistakes. You may say something or do something that you wish you hadn’t and remember to use some self-compassion if this happens. The points of the immersions are to be human and bring your full self: whatever that looks like!
Don’t necessarily make other plans with folks outside of Penn DSW- yet. You’re in Philly and maybe an old roommate, friend, or mentor is around. You want to see the city, you want to do it all. That’s great! You can and should BUT your priority should be to focus on the Penn DSW cohort so you can build relationships and partnerships within the cohort. Once you’re in the immersion for a day or two, you’ll get into a rhythm and can always make plans at that point with friends outside of the cohort so you can balance connecting on a micro and mezzo level while you’re at Penn.

Position yourself to say YES. Want to go to the bookstore? “Sure!” Want to have lunch together?” “Yes!” “Should we all grab dinner after today’s seminars/classes end?” “Of course!” Not every member of every cohort is an extrovert so saying yes to everything can be challenging. However, bring the focus of the immersion back to cohesion and accountability. By saying yes and connecting with people in your cohort, you position yourself to establish deeper bonds and to learn more about each other. This will set up a solid foundation for when you leave post-immersion and begin 10 months of online classes together.

Take Photos… even if it’s annoying in the moment. You will have TWO (yes only two!) guaranteed opportunities outside of Graduation day to meet in person. Build those memories and capture them while you can. Take a tour of campus over lunch break, have friendly Penn students take your photos, and embrace the feeling of being a freshman even though you’re not 18.

Don’t pretend to know everything. You were accepted into this program because you are an expert, leader, and scholar. You were not accepted into this program because you knew everything there was to know about everything, even your research topic. Don’t be afraid to say “I’m not sure yet… I look forward to finding/reading/researching more…”

Have more than fun. Notice what I did there? I didn’t say just have fun but have more than fun. Embrace this opportunity. When you begin a Doctorate, it’s probably the final time or one of the final times you will be in a rigorous multi-year academic program. Smile, laugh, pursue adventure, engage in deep conversations, cry, feel uneasy. Experience it all but experience it with a group of other people who are uniquely going through the same experience.

We are so excited to welcome you to the Penn DSW community, and can’t wait to see the connections you will make, research you will do, and populations you will serve.

Congratulations again and good luck!
One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.

Sigmund Freud
PODCAST PREVIEWS
(available on iTunes - click below)

Clinic on iTunes Clinic on AnchorFM

Ciji L. Blue, (MSW, LCSW) & Kerryann Spaulding Silvestri, (MSW, LSW) & Sara Bartlett, (MSW, LCSW)
DSW 2018 Cohort

School Counseling & Social Worker Cultural Competency with LGBTQ Youth

Kerryann Spaulding Silvestri, MSW, LSW (DSW 2018 Cohort)

As a proud member of the DSW 2018 cohort, this 40-something cisgender, heterosexual female has boldly embarked on a dissertation topic outside of her comfort zone, life history, and clinical experience; a topic inspired by the journey of an amazing young man who would have benefited from supports in a variety of settings on his journey to live his truth; a young man whose story has paralleled that of so many of the children she proudly serves as a school counselor at Carl Sandburg Middle School in Old Bridge, New Jersey.

My nephew’s inspirational journey in becoming an openly gay man has truly motivated my research with Dr. Phyllis Solomon regarding “School Counseling & Social Worker Cultural Competency with LGBTQ Youth.” Recently, my dissertation adventures led me to an enlightening and inspiring dialogue with Dr. Erin Cross, director of the LGBT Center at Penn. During our exchange, we discussed many topics impacting the LGBTQ community throughout the lifespan, the role of the LGBT center at Penn, advice for social workers who work with members of the LGBTQ community, as well as the evolving relationship between the center and the School of Social Policy and Practice. At the end of our time together, this novice researcher and LGBTQ ally emerged feeling determined, accepted, and invigorated to add to research designed to help school counselors and school social workers become empathic allies and effective clinicians working with LGBTQ youth. Listen to our interview on our podcast, The Clinician, under the title Supporting Our LGBTQ+ Kids.

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DSW Roundtable Discussion

Sara Bartlett, MSW, LCSW (DSW 2018 Cohort)

On October 18, 2019 using Zoom, five students from SP2’s online DSW program participated in a discussion about their experiences in the program. The session, moderated by Sara Bartlett from the 2018 cohort, was also attended by Brett Bartruff from the 2018 cohort, as well as Christine Holmes from the 2019 cohort, Jason Mallonee from the 2017 cohort and Laura Vega and Patty Inacker from the 2016 cohort. In this podcast, the group shares thoughts, feelings, and experiences about various aspects of the program, reasons for pursuing their doctorate, initial feelings when they first found out they were admitted. Students reflected on their thoughts and advice regarding the immersion experiences, classes, and their dissertations, as well as tips for self-care and bonding with fellow classmates. They also discussed how the program affected their career trajectories, as well as their personal and professional outlook on life and the social work profession.

Themes noted from the discussion included an overwhelming sense of support and connection found in the DSW program. Using technology that some might find isolating, these students feel that between the immersion experiences, the structure of the courses, and the faculty and peer support, their experience has been incredibly rich. Despite it not being a traditional, brick and mortar program, the connections they've formed are priceless and they truly value the Penn network that unites social workers from all over the globe. Listen to our podcast episode, DSW Roundtable Discussion, as students share advice for future DSW students about “trusting the process,” the importance of self-care, and about making the most of the experience.
Dissertation Do's and Don'ts with Dr. Marcia Martin

Pursuing a Doctorate is often fraught with periods of innovation, ambivalence, self-doubt, and growth. Ditto for the Dissertation process. The overwhelming excitement of newness, research, and curiosity can quickly mutate into an overwhelming reminder on your to-do list. Preparing for the dissertation process, in my perspective, is a progressive skill that requires introspection, reverence, practicality, and honesty. Once your Imposter Syndrome has dulled, you quickly learn that those big ideas of pursuing untapped research have to be mobilized and narrowed. I knew I wanted to pursue meaningful, useful research that would contribute to military behavioral health and solidify my efforts as a social work researcher. I just didn’t know where to start. From the 1st immersion, I felt relief and excitement in meeting & knowing that Dr. Marcia Martin is our Dissertation Advisor. Her expert guidance and ability to normalize those anxieties into practical steps was refreshing. Listen to our interview on our podcast, **Dissertation Do's & Don'ts**, with Dr. Marcia Martin as she explains Dissertation Best Practices and the Dos and Don’ts of moving from the conceptual to execution phase. In this interview, Dr. Martin chronologizes the cerebral Year 1-3, reflects on common obstacles that students encounter, and the nuts and bolts of finishing the research.
**DSW ALUMNI & CANDIDATE UPDATES**

*Sara Bartlett, MSW, LCSW (DSW 2018 Cohort)*

**Sophia Carlton (2018 cohort)** co-founded a nonprofit healthcare organization where she is serving as the chief operating officer. Throughout the last year, Sophia has helped create Washington Health Institute, which provides primary and infectious diseases specialty care, preventative medicine, the Ryan White Holistic Care Program, and more. The program received a competitive $250,000 capacity building grant to provide HIV testing and outreach in the community, and she’s working on launching that program now. Learn more via the new website Sophia helped develop at: [www.DC-WHI.org](http://www.DC-WHI.org).

**Brett Bartruff (2018 cohort)** was promoted in January to Clinical Director of the Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Services at Davis Behavioral Health, Inc. in Kaysville, Utah. The substance use and recovery programs serve between 1,000 and 1,300 clients per year and provide outpatient, intensive-outpatient, residential levels of care, as well as compressive early intervention, continued care, and case management recovery supports. Brett will oversee 21 therapist and an additional 16 staff that are peer-support, bachelor level social workers, or residential techs.

**Jason Mallonee (2017 cohort)** started a full-time faculty position at New Mexico State University in July. He coordinates the MSW Field Education program for on-line students and those at the Albuquerque campus. As part of this role he oversees 50-60 field placements and teaches two Field Seminar classes. He is also a College Assistant Professor there and teaches second year Social Work Mental Health Practice. He is currently applying for a tenure-track position for the 2020-21 academic year, contingent upon finishing his dissertation.
“Our challenge, as we enter the new millennium, is to deepen the commonalities and the bonds between these tens of millions, while at the same time continuing to address the issues within our local communities by two-sided struggles that not only say “No” to the existing power structure but also empower our constituencies to embrace the power within each of us to create the world anew.”

GRACE LEE BOGGS