From the President
Jean Hill
New Mexico Highlands University

SCRA Finances and Investments
As SCRA’s financial resources have increased, it has become clear that we need to emphasize transparency in our finances, and to ensure that we are using and investing our resources in ways that are congruent with our stated values. While our policies and procedures stipulate that a financial report be presented to the membership during the annual meeting at APA, that mechanism, by itself, does not seem adequate to keep our membership informed. In this column I will present a summary of our income and expenses for calendar year 2011, and a description of our current funds and their distribution.

2011 Income and Expenses
Since the renegotiation of our contract with Springer publishing in 2009, our journal, the American Journal of Community Psychology, has been by far our largest source of income. Profit from the Biennial Conference obviously occurs only every other year, and is extremely variable. Income from membership dues is increases during biennial years, and then falls on alternate years. We also receive some income from other sources, including donations, grants and royalties outside of the AJCP contract.

2011 Income
Publications, $363,178.82
Biennial Profit, $66,438.99
Membership, $47,712.96
Other income, $11,698.54
Interest Earned, $8,053.18

2011 Expenses
AJCP, $363,178.82
Committees, $31,351.18
Publications, $22,353.05
Executive Committee, $18,624.09
Membership Services, $52,201.63

The cost of the membership services category will increase this year since we have hired an executive director and are planning to dramatically change and expand our website. The amount going to our committees will also increase as we fund projects such as the consultation program developed by the CEP and the Practice Council.

Current Funds and Investments
We currently have over $440,000 invested with Vanguard, $350,000 invested with HighTower (another investment company), and over $200,000 in our checking and savings accounts. About $36,500 of the money in our savings is dedicated to funding the Kalafa awards and another $22,400 is dedicated to funding the Sarason award. The $790,000 in long-term investments represents almost a 300% increase from 2008.

SCRA has invested with Vanguard for many years and has done well with their services. However, as our investments began to grow and become significant, the EC decided that we needed to address the issue
of socially responsible investing. We formed an investment subcommittee, the members of which investigated several different options. Their final recommendation was that we open an account with HighTower. A strong point in favor of HighTower is that it is the investment group used by SPSSI, and has experience working with non-profit organizations. We began investing with HighTower this fall, and if the arrangement works for us we will consider shifting the remaining $440,000 of our long-term investments to their firm.

HighTower allows their clients to specify industry filters to apply to their accounts precluding investment in those industries. As a start, we adopted many of the same filters as those used by SPSSI. Currently our industry filters are tobacco, adult entertainment, liquor, firearms and defense/aerospace. In order to determine if these choices fit with the priorities of our membership we conducted a short survey via Survey Monkey. A total of 56 people completed the survey. The chart below indicates the percentage of the respondents who indicated that it is very important to them that SCRA not be invested in specific industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Entertainment</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense/Aerospace</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also included an open-ended question on the survey that allowed respondents to list additional industries and 22 people chose to do so. The most frequently mentioned industry was gambling, followed by pharmaceutical companies. Fast food was mentioned, as were several specific companies. Some respondents mentioned that “carbon fuels” was too vague a category, and wanted to ensure that we preclude investing in companies that engage in practices such as fracking or mountain top removal. Several respondents mentioned that they would like us to consider the labor practices of the companies in which we invest, and their effect on the communities and regions in which they operate. Finally, a few respondents brought up the issue of not just filtering out industries in which we do not want to invest, but also specifically selecting industries that we would like to support, such as renewable energy.

While we need to work with HighTower to determine how many filters it is reasonable to apply, there is certainly room for expansion in our current list. The investment subcommittee will be considering the results of the survey, and discussing them with HighTower, to see how we can best meet the concerns of the SCRA membership.

Questions for the Future

As we move forward the EC will work to ensure that our investment strategies reflect our values to the greatest degree possible. We will also be working on two other major issues. The first is to determine how much of our assets should be kept in long-term investments, with the goal of producing income for the organization. The answer to that question then determines how much financing we can give not only to operating expenses, but also to committee projects and other initiatives. The second issue is perhaps the most fundamental of all: How do we ensure that we are using our resources to effectively promote the mission of SCRA?

We welcome your input on these issues.
Greetings! In this issue our column editors have treated us to a wealth of information about the intersection of community psychology with other disciplines. Gina Cardazone, Editor of the Community Ideas column, shares the work of Spencer Toyoma and Jon Lewis who are using comics to combat human trafficking. In the Community Practitioner column, Editor Susan Wolfe has invited a number of evaluation professionals to share their enthusiasm for the new and growing community psychology topical interest group of the American Evaluation Association. Living Community Psychology Editor Gloria Levin shares a warm and insightful profile of our colleague Greg Meissen. Regional Network Coordinator, Susan Dvorak McMahon and the regional coordinators update us on events and activities around the world. Our Student Issues editors Jesica Fernandez and Danielle Kohfeldt bring us a collection of articles, including reflections from Eco Conference Travel Award Recipients. In addition, we have contributions from our Rural Issues, School Intervention, and Self-Help and Mutual Support columns, and Council on Education Programs Chair, Rhonda Lewis, shares the goals of Council.

At the time that we conclude preparation of this issue, we are all grappling with the horror of the events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. As we reflect on the tragic loss of life suffered within that community, it is our hope that as educators, practitioners, researchers and scholars, this event will serve to renew our commitment to enhancing wellness in all of our communities.

Gregor and Sylvie ☺
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INTEREST GROUPS
AGING
The Aging Interest Group focuses on the productive role of aging in the community and the prevention of mental health problems in the elderly.
Chair: Margaret M. Hastings, (847) 256-4844
margaretmhastings@earthlink.net
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES
The Children, Youth & Families Interest Group facilitates the interests of child and adolescent development in high risk contexts, especially the effect of urban poverty and community structures on child and family development.
Chair: Richard N. Roberts, (435) 797-3346
COMMUNITY ACTION
The Community Action Interest Group explores the roles and contributions of people working in applied community psychology settings.
Chair: Bradley Olson, (773) 325-4771
bradley.olson@nl.edu
COMMUNITY HEALTH
The Community Health Interest Group focuses on health promotion, prevention, and health care service delivery issues as they relate to the community.
Chair: David Lounsbury, (415) 338-1440
dlnoubs@east.com; Shannon Gwin Mitchell, (202) 719-7812
sgwimitchell@gmail.com
DISABILITIES
The Disabilities Interest Group promotes understanding of the depth and diversity of disabilities issues in the community that are ready for research and action, and influences community psychologists’ involvement in policy and practices that enhance self determination, personal choice, and full inclusion in the community for people with disabilities.
Co-Chairs: Kendra Liljenquist, ksliljen@bu.edu
Erin Stack, erinestack@gmail.com
ENVIRONMENT & JUSTICE
The Environment & Justice Interest Group seeks to enhance development and in importing organization studies psychology themes (e.g., empowerment, ecological analysis, prevention, sense of community) in organizational contexts, and in importing organization studies concepts, methods, models, and theories into community psychology.
Chair: Neil Boyd, (717) 512-3970
Boyd@Lycoming.edu
PREVENTION & PROMOTION
The Prevention & Promotion Interest Group seeks to enhance development of prevention and promotion research, foster active dialogue about critical conceptual and methodological action and implementation issues, and promote rapid dissemination and discussion of new developments and findings in the field.
Co-Chairs: Monica Adams, madams8@depaul.edu
Derek Griffith, derekgm@umich.edu
RURAL
The Rural Interest Group is devoted to highlighting issues of the rural environment that are important in psychological research, service, and teaching.
Co-Chairs: Susana Helm, helms@dsap.hawaii.edu
Cécile Lardon, (909) 474-5781
clardon@va.gov
SCHOOL INTERVENTION
The School Intervention Interest Group addresses theories, methods, knowledge base, and setting factors pertaining to prevention and health promotion in school.
Co-Chairs: Paul Flaspohler, flaspoph@muohio.edu
Melissa Maras, marasme@missouri.edu
SELF-HELP/MUTUAL SUPPORT
The Self-Help/Mutual Support Interest Group is an international organization of researchers, self-help leaders, and policy makers that promotes research and action related to self-help groups and organizations.
Chair: Louis Brown, ldb12@psu.edu
THE SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH & ACTION
Council of Education Programs
Rhonda K. Lewis
Chair, Council of Education Programs
Wichita State University

An Overview of CEP Objectives

First, I want to thank Jim Dalton who did an outstanding job of leading the CEP last year for 2011-2012. A number of initiatives were completed under his leadership. Second, I want to thank the committee members for working so hard to accomplish our goals. The committee consists of Ashley Anglin, Christian Connell, James Cook, Carie Forden, Beiye Gu, Robert Gutierrez, Andrew Hostetler, John Peterson, Toshi Sasao, and Sylvie Taylor. Lastly, I want to thank Jim Cook who hosted our annual meeting in Charlotte, NC. We truly enjoyed ourselves and we got a lot done. I wanted to share a list of our objectives and share some of the objectives we are currently working on.

CEP Objectives 2012-2013

1. Plan and conduct an updated survey of graduate programs, resulting in a compendium to be published on the SCRA website, and in the Community Psychologist.
2. Promote stronger, timely, sustained communication between CEP and SCRA graduate programs. This will include reporting on the findings of the survey of graduate programs stated above.
3. Promote board discussion of the SCRA Competencies for Community Psychology Practice document that is soon to be circulated widely in SCRA. This document includes a proposed list of competencies needed for the practice of community research and action in communities.
4. Work with the SCRA Practice Council on the Consultation Project, which is testing ways to provide consultation by community psychology practitioners to graduate programs seeking to strengthen their training in competencies for practice.
5. Work with others in SCRA to promote development of competencies in state of the art methods for community research and data analysis. Building on recent preconference workshops in this area, this work will broaden opportunities to develop these skills, e.g., webinars, workshops at regional eco-conferences.
6. Increase coverage of community psychology introductory psychology textbooks: Communicate with and work with acquisitions editors and authors of introductory psychology textbooks; and involve SCRA members, especially those who teach introductory courses, have colleagues who write textbooks; or are willing to serve as reviewers of textbooks.
7. Expand efforts to build visibility of community psychology among all undergraduate students in psychology and related fields, through outreach with Psi Chi, Psi Beta, undergraduate psychology students and faculty, Idealist.org education fairs, the APA Education Directorate, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, and on the SCRA website.
8. Work with others in SCRA to explore the utility of an online course (for a certificate, not for academic credit) in community psychology, sponsored by SCRA, to increase the public visibility of our field.
9. Expand and update CEP resources on the SCRA website, including information on education programs and careers, and resources for teaching community psychology and related courses.
10. Recruit faculty in community-clinical doctoral programs to serve in the APA clinical psychology accreditation process, e.g., as site visitors, to promote recognition of the distinctive role of community psychology education in community-clinical doctoral programs.
11. Work with others in SCRA to support predoctoral internships and postdoctoral training opportunities related to community research and action, and to increase the number of these opportunities.

Several of these objectives are currently implementing. I will highlight three of them.

First, we have completed revising and have sent out the SCRA CEP-CPPC survey to graduate programs. This has truly been an extraordinary adventure. We were able to include the 18 community psychology competencies that the Community Psychology Practice Council was able to develop. Now each community psychology program and related program will be able to answer questions about how their program’s curriculum features community psychology practice competencies. This will give students the chance to find out what the graduate programs have to offer. Second, we also worked on a proposal to support new community psychology programs which was developed in collaboration with the Community Psychology Practice Council. The SCRA Executive Committee was supportive last year of providing funding to have community psychologists consult with programs about their graduate curriculums. Two schools were selected Pacifica Graduate Institute and the American University of Cairo. There were a number of lessons learned from these consultations. Through this collaboration the two councils decided that more of
SCRA’s efforts should go toward funding new programs and helping to expand the ‘brand’ of community psychology and providing funding for new programs was one of the best ways to accomplish this goal. Third, one of our objectives was to promote visibility through working with acquisitions editors of different publishing companies. Inroads were made and we are working collaboratively with the Publications committee on a number of initiatives to accomplish this objective.

Other successes include working with graduate programs to attend Idealist Fairs. DePaul University participated in a local Idealist Fair in October and SCRA’s information was shared with undergraduate students. The CEP has been busy implementing our objectives. If you have an interest in helping or getting involved please feel free to contact me at 316-978-3695 or email me at rhonda.lewis@wichita.edu. We would love to have your input. We are community psychologists we love input.

**Community Ideas**
*Edited by Gina Cardazone*

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**Community Ideas: Comics to Combat Human Trafficking**

Can comics be a useful tool in the fight against human trafficking? Spencer Toyoma and Jon Lewis think so. Citing the role of the 1940’s radio program *Adventures of Superman* in undermining support for the KKK, Toyoma and Lewis boldly state on their site that “Pop culture can make a difference.”

With this firmly held belief, the two have undertaken a project aimed at spreading awareness of human trafficking through the creation of a graphic novel. Titled *Home of the Brave*, this comic depicts a fictional portrait of an America that never recovered from the Great Depression, and tells the story of a brilliant 13-year old girl named Aria who has been sold into slavery. Toyoma explained his reasoning for using this medium as follows, “A graphic novel is a format that is almost universally understood across so many different generations, but it also doesn’t require much of a budget to tell a grand story, and isn’t as formally regulated as movies and television, so you can get deeper into a story.”

The ability to tell an epic tale without a giant budget was essential for the pair, since they began the project with virtually no funding. In order to realize their goal, they used the online crowdfunding platform Kickstarter, hoping to raise $12,000 to cover printing costs and other expenses. The fundraising campaign was successful, and the two were able to surpass their goal thanks to small donations from over 300 backers. These backers pledged anywhere between $1 and $1500, and in turn were promised various products such as electronic and print copies of the book when it comes out, or signed original artwork.

Surprisingly, Toyoma and Lewis are not the only artists on Kickstarter who see comics as an ideal medium for storytelling centered on human trafficking. Dan Archer, a self-described “graphic journalist,” has used comics to tell the emotionally charged stories of people who have faced domestic violence, gang violence, and wrongful conviction for murder. After collaborating with human trafficking survivors who shared their stories in San Francisco and in the Ukraine, Archer has launched a campaign to raise funds so that he can do similar work in Nepal. In addition to creating his own comics, he plans to use funds to create workshops for women and children in Nepal who are interested in learning how to use comics to tell their own stories.

Comics can also be used in prevention work, and Toyoma is a backer for another project called *Abolitionista*, which uses the comic format as a way to reach girls at risk for domestic sex trafficking. The initiator of this project, Thomas Estler, was inspired to begin this project by a friend of his who worked at the Sex Crimes Court and Juvenile Offender Court in the Bronx borough of New York City. While doing an event with girls who had been rescued from being trafficked, she noticed that many of them were reading comic books. The team behind Abolitionista includes artist Delilah Buckle and community practitioner Jane Rodas. The latter is a former director of an anti-trafficking program in Connecticut, and has developed a workshop around the comic. The team hopes to bring the comic and these workshops into schools and community-based organizations.

The effectiveness of using comics in this kind of work has yet to be determined, though Archer is planning on using surveys to evaluate the success of his efforts in Nepal. Toyoma and Lewis have already seen some positive results from their fundraising campaign, as it inspired local news coverage of the project in its home state of Hawai‘i, enhancing visibility of the issue before the graphic novel has even been completed. The two also used their Kickstarter page to direct visitors to a petition for the passage of safe harbor legislation in Hawai‘i designed to protect trafficking victims from being prosecuted as criminals, as well as to websites for anti-trafficking organizations.

Though the association is not immediately obvious, comic enthusiasts and social change agents may be natural allies. Toyoma and Lewis recently attended the New York Comic Con, which brought over 100,000 fans of comics, fantasy, and sci-fi. Although they did not find many projects with a social benefit focus, they did receive a very positive
response from many convention attendees. “There was a lot of interest in our project, and I believe it’s because a lot of those people dressing up as superheroes really want to be heroes and see social justice projects as a way of fulfilling that.”

Toyoma counts himself among those who grew up wishing to be superheroes, and feels that his work Home of the Brave has transformed him. “Initially, I just wanted to create an interesting story involving issues I cared about. The Kickstarter campaign, and being involved with the true heroes of this cause has absolutely changed me on a very personal level. I really want to get more involved as much as possible, helping to raise awareness and finding actions that everyone can take part in to address modern day slavery.”

In an era dominated by superhero movies, comic enthusiasts and artists may be an untapped resource for bridging fantasy and reality. Not everyone who dreams of being a superhero will be motivated to take on the less glamorous work necessary to achieve actual social change, but those who are able to utilize the medium to educate and inspire may be uniquely positioned to help people make that leap.

Abolitionista: http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/469957464/abolitionista

Do you have an idea for community work that you’d like to share? Whether it’s been implemented or only imagined, we’re interested in hearing what you have to say. You can write a column or we can interview you and feature your idea. Contact Gina Cardazone at gina.cardazone@hawaii.edu.

The Community Practitioner: Careers in Evaluation
Edited by Susan Wolfe

Introduction
Written by Jeff Sheldon and Rachel Becker-Klein

This year marked a first for the American Evaluation Association (AEA) with the addition of Community Psychology (CP) to its long roster of topical interest groups (TIG). Although the history of the TIG is relatively brief, it has had a number of notable achievements including the articulation and introduction of CP to an audience known more for its methodological focus than its values focus. In part, the TIG was started because there are many evaluation practitioners who incorporate CP values into their work, yet are unaware of the inherent links with CP. The TIG was also started, in part, because many evaluation practitioners don’t incorporate CP values into their work, but their evaluations and the people either with whom or for whom they work would greatly benefit from a CP perspective. Therefore, we wanted to make sure that there was a forum within AEA where CP in all its manifestations could be discussed, debated, and elevated to a higher level of consciousness. We would be remiss if we didn’t thank Susan Wolfe for planting the CP seed into the AEA soil and watching it germinate into a budding enterprise.

Over the past year, the CP TIG has grown from a small nucleus of like-minded evaluators and community psychologists to a burgeoning membership of over 100 drawn by our mission and values. Amongst others, the membership includes practitioners, academics, applied researchers, social scientists, community and political activists, agents of social change and participant-conceptualizers. The overarching Mission of the CP TIG is to promote the values of CP as they relate to the field of evaluation, and to use the methods, practice, theory, and research on evaluation to enhance the field of community psychology. In addition, we promote the following perspectives in the TIG: ecological (i.e., settings and individuals are interrelated); person–environment fit; attention to issues of diversity and context; social justice; grounded in empiricism; and methodology acknowledges value-driven, research involving community members; quantitative, qualitative, and other innovative methods are embraced.

As we mentioned, beyond getting the TIG up and running, this was a year of notable achievements, one of which was our strong presence at this year’s AEA annual conference. The theme of the conference was “Evaluation in Complex Ecologies: Relationships, Responsibilities, Relevance” and we could not have been more pleased given the incredible response to our call for presentation proposals. Over 30 proposals were submitted to the CP TIG conference program, and ultimately we sponsored 12 sessions. Based on our observations, sessions were well-populated, the attendees (i.e., community psychologists who practice evaluation and evaluators who are engaged in community work) were quite enthusiastic, there were some “AHA” moments, and we got a sense that CP will permeate AEA moving forward. The penultimate moment of our conference program was a panel of accomplished community psychologists and evaluation practitioners that included...
I was lucky enough to receive my doctoral training in one of the few freestanding CP programs in this country and that experience has greatly influenced my evaluation work. CP was not a field that I knew about or was looking for, but somewhat by accident I happened into. In 1996, I was searching for graduate programs in Developmental Psychology. I found one at New York University that required participants to select a discipline of Psychology, and I was intrigued by the description of CP. Ultimately, I obtained my doctorate at New York University under the tutelage and mentorship of Beth Shinn and Ed Seidman among other great community psychologists.

Unfortunately, the program was terminated after I left (no correlation that I know of). Through my graduate program, I became a big believer in and proponent of the tenets of CP and I continue to use many of those theories and philosophies as I engage in my evaluation work.

My foray into evaluation work was fortuitous yet similarly unexpected. Through my CP connections I found a wonderful practicum placement at the Center for Social and Community Development at Rutgers University. The Center allowed me to work with data they had been collecting from an evaluation of an educational program designed for children and families living in poverty. This was the first instance where my worlds of CP and evaluation collided. I had been bitten by the evaluation bug, and upon obtaining my degree in 2003 I began looking for work as an evaluator.

Once again, fortune intervened and I found PEER Associates, where I have been working ever since. PEER Associates introduced me to many evaluation theories, especially Michael Quinn Patton’s Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE). Right away, I saw many similarities between the foundational theories of CP and U-FE and I felt right at home.

One of the intersections between CP and evaluation that I noticed immediately was the idea of being a process catalyst. In my graduate work, one of the CP principles I encountered, which became one of my favorites, was that we should never make ourselves integral to the process or product because building capacity is much more effective as a long-term strategy. This is equally true in the evaluation philosophy of my firm, Peer Associates, in which our stated goal is to help organizations build the capacity necessary to reflect on and internally evaluate their own programs. PEER Associates is committed to using a participatory evaluation process by getting as many stakeholders as possible involved in all parts of the evaluation (i.e., from defining the evaluation questions to analyzing data). Over time we have more consciously incorporated the notion that actively involving as many stakeholders as possible throughout the process helps with the utility and effectiveness of the evaluation. This commitment to participatory action is also shared by CP. In fact, one of the four broad principles of SCRA is that, “Community research and action is an active collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and community members…and should be guided by their…active participation.”

Another principle of CP that is germane to my evaluation work is Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach that places each individual in the context of their surroundings, and the interactions of those contexts. I believe that Developmental Evaluation (DE) is a natural extension and application of ecological/systems thinking. In my evaluation work, I always try to use this approach to understand the context in which stakeholders and organizations are embedded. This approach of considering complex ecologies was even the theme of the last American Evaluation Association conference in 2012.

In sum, over the years, the links between CP and evaluation have become more and more clear to me, as has my appreciation of my education and foundation in both areas. They truly do inform each other, and I not only think about, but apply some CP principle or theory almost every day in the evaluation work that I do.

In Service to Communities and Social Change: Program Evaluation as a Community Psychologist

Written by Theresa L. Armstead, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

I just returned from attending the 26th Annual Conference of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and participating in the first-ever Community Psychology (CP) Topical Interest Group sponsored conference program. Ironically, if I had closed my eyes in past AEA conferences and only paid attention to the other sponsored programs, conference themes, and the types
of sessions available, I could have sworn I was attending a conference for community psychologists. It also helped to see so many recognizable community psychologists attending and presenting at this conference compared to when I first began attending AEA annual conferences six years ago. The familiar feeling I experienced at AEA was especially salient because CP has not been a part of my job title or description since I left graduate school.

My first job was a post-doctorate at the University of Iowa in the College of Public Health. Less than a year into my job I applied to an open Assistant Faculty position in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health. During this time I also worked in the University of Iowa Prevention Research Center (PRC), first in the post-doctorate role and then as the Assistant Director of the PRC. Finally, I served as the PRC evaluator from 2006 until I left the university in 2010. Community-based participatory research was a core function of the PRC and it provided the niche where CP values, principles, and theories came together in the form of a sense of community, empowerment, cultural humility, social change, and action research.

Before I describe how CP has influenced my approach to evaluation I must provide a disclaimer: I know that not all community psychologists will agree with my next statement so I only claim to be speaking for myself. As a practicing community psychologist I approach program evaluation in service to communities and social change means evaluation capacity development, continuous quality improvement, rapid feedback of the data, and program improvement as the purpose for evaluation. Evaluation research is important and has its own inherent value, but it is the features of program evaluation mentioned above that serve communities so they can learn from what they are doing, make adjustments, and get to outcomes sooner than the research enterprise alone would allow. CP serves as a moral and ethical beacon for me, reminding me to consider behavioral settings, social regularities, and social, environmental contexts in addition to the achievement of statistical significance, changing risk and protective factors, and identifying evidence-based programs along the social ecological model. In the end, the common goals of my roles as community psychologist and evaluator are social justice and social change.

[Disclaimer: This manuscript was written by Theresa Armstead in her private capacity. No official support or endorsement by CDC is intended or should be inferred.]

The Community Psychology - Empowerment Evaluation Nexus
Written by Jeff Sheldon, School of Behavioral & Organizational Sciences, Claremont Graduate University, The Claremont Colleges

Although not formally trained as a community psychologist, much of my evaluation work and research interests have been informed and honed by a Community Psychology (CP) perspective. For example, early in my career, Abe Wandersman at the University of South Carolina gave me opportunities to work with community–based programs using an evaluation approach that would eventually become one of the most recognized Empowerment Evaluation models, Getting To Outcomes (Wandersman et al., 2000). As such, I guided program staff and community members through a planning, implementation, and evaluation process that ostensibly led to their having greater control over programmatic outcomes. These experiences, and ultimately my applied research work at an HIV/AIDS care clinic in South Africa, were the beginning of an interest in moving evaluation from programs and projects towards a social intervention that empowers and fosters the self-determination of marginalized, oppressed, and disenfranchised people in keeping with the values and tenets of CP. In essence, evaluators who work towards that end are really no different than community psychologists.

The question many people ask me: what is the nexus between your work in Empowerment Evaluation and CP? First, it is fairly well established that Fetterman (1996) drew on empowerment research from CP in his articulation of the Empowerment Evaluation approach, acknowledging the similarities between them. For example, CP
and Empowerment Evaluation focus on individual, organizational, and whole - community participation in which each works to establish control over their respective affairs, and pose a fundamental challenge to the assumption of objective scientific neutrality. As many community psychologists have noted, values permeate all aspects of science – many of which are implicit – but community psychologists and empowerment evaluators make their values explicit. In Empowerment Evaluation specifically, value is placed on empowering organizations through information and skills that can be learned by conducting evaluation (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Second, regarding the nexus between the role of community psychologist and empowerment evaluator, Zimmerman’s (2000) characterization of the community psychologist’s role in empowering activities is easily adapted to the empowerment evaluator. An empowering approach to program or project intervention design, implementation, and evaluation redefines the professional evaluator’s relationship with individuals, program, organization, or community. The evaluator’s role becomes one of collaborator and facilitator, rather than expert. As a collaborator, the evaluator learns about participants through their culture, their world - view, and their life struggles. By working with instead of advocating for participants, the evaluator’s skills, interest, or plans are not imposed on the community. In this way, the evaluator becomes a resource for a community. This type of role suggests that what evaluators do depends on the particular place and people with whom they are working rather than on technologies predetermined for application across all situations. While interpersonal assessment and evaluation skills are necessary, how, where, and with whom they are applied cannot automatically be assumed as in the role of a psychotherapist with clients in a clinic.

Last, as Fetterman (2002) argued, the techniques of evaluation must be shared with organizations to build their evaluation capacity as during an Empowerment Evaluation. Likewise, community psychologists have maintained that psychology should be given away to the public (Wandersman, 2003). In sum, given these shared philosophies and missions, Empowerment Evaluation may be a useful approach for community psychologists in their evaluation projects as CP has been useful to me in my own evaluation work.

References


Identity and Role
Exploration

Written by Susan Ryerson Espino, Ryerson Espino Evaluation and Development (REED)

I am a community psychologist who, for now, engages full time in program evaluation and development work as a consultant. I arrived to CP with multidisciplinary interests, including undergraduate training in Anthropology and Latin American Studies and formative volunteer and work experiences in the US and Latin America. My professors and peers within the Division of Community Prevention Research, the Department of Psychology, at the University of Illinois Chicago encouraged a broadening and deepening of those interests. Importantly, within CP I expanded my commitment, scholarship, methodologies, and practice around ecology, social justice, and diversity. I believe this past facilitates my work in a variety of sectors and disciplines (e.g., evaluation, education, public health).

During graduate training, professors and mentors afforded me opportunities to gain early application experiences in both community research and evaluation. I was taken by the possibility of contributing on a more ongoing basis to the reflection and action around social concerns through community-based evaluation work. I wanted to find ways to give back and contribute to the important formative contexts in my life with my now more diverse and refined “toolkit.” I was initially very intimidated to venture out from academia. It has been a pleasant surprise to find
meaningful work and practice opportunities outside of the university. I now know something that was not immediately obvious when I ventured out anxiously in 2007 with my newly earned PhD… there is a rich, often challenging but inspiring, terrain both through, apart, and with academia for CP practitioners.

Over the last five years, I have deepened my commitment to evaluation practice through one pivotal internal post (within Chicago Public Schools, Department of Program Evaluation, Office of Research, Evaluation and Accountability) and more recently a variety of external consultancies with school districts, universities, foundations, community agencies, and county health services. My roles and work within these posts have been facilitated by my doctoral training. In turn this work nurtures a deepening commitment to using social science to address social concerns. I still struggle with how to attend to my identities as an evaluator and community psychologist. I found it tremendously useful to hear community psychologists like Robin Miller, Rebecca Campbell, and Michael Morris discuss this tension at the recent AEA Evaluation 2012 meeting. I hope to continue to find ways to embrace my identities, understand their often separate styles, and be more disciplined about seeking out connections with CP and paying tribute to this field that at times has been hard for me to call home.

I spend a lot of time exploring, identifying and processing contextual resources and barriers. Often my work simply identifies the key themes from this “environmental reconnaissance” (thanks Becky for reintroducing this terminology). I am finding that models from Implementation Science and Evaluation Capacity Building resonate greatly with my practice (thanks to Abe Wandersman and his team and to Tina Taylor Ritzler for influencing this reflection). I am drawn to explore the structural dimensions (the macro level) surrounding projects. I am compelled to spend even more time exploring the organizational factors, general provider skills, innovation-specific skills, participant factors, as well as the monitoring and evaluation capacity development needs. I engage with clients around ways of coping with capacity concerns, and encouraging - sometimes even facilitating - capacity development. There is a time and a place for the nature of this engagement. However, I am drawn to projects that support longer term engagement and relationship building with clients within which more of this work is possible. There is a tension between this stance and that held by evaluation colleagues not trained in traditions influenced by theories and values of ecology, empowerment, and social justice. I want to embrace this tension and be more intentional about objectivity and engagement.

Disabilities Action
Edited by Kendra Liljenquist and Erin Stack

Crossing for the Line: Experiences with a Special Interest Group for Psychologists with Disabilities
Written by Emily M. Lund

When I attended the 2010 Rehabilitation Psychology conference in Jacksonville, Florida, I was expecting to present my research and meet other people who were interested in disability-related issues. I was not, however, expecting to meet other people with disabilities. As a new graduate student with a physical disability, I was already becoming used to being the only person with a visible or openly disclosed disability in most academic and professional situations. It seemed that a dividing line between “us” (researchers and clinicians) and “them” (people with disabilities) was often drawn in psychology and related fields; as someone who identified strongly with both categories, it frequently left me feeling out of place. Fortunately, the people I met at this conference would begin to change that.

At the conference, I attended a dinner and a breakfast roundtable for the budding Psychologists with Disabilities Special Interest Group (SIG) and felt an almost immediate sense of belonging. Here was a group of intelligent, motivated, and successful trainees, scholars, and practitioners who understood disability on both a personal and professional level. Here were people who understood about asking for accommodations during practicum. Most of all, here were people who understood what it meant to be on both sides of that dividing line.

Following my initial contact with the SIG at the conference, I have continued to actively participate in the group through our listserv and monthly conference calls. The SIG offers advice and support to members as they address disability-related issues in their training, but they have a broader focus as well. Namely, we seek to understand and challenge the barriers that exist for practitioners and trainees with disabilities in psychology and related fields. Both as a group and as individuals, SIG members have given conference presentations and prepared manuscripts that address the lived experience as psychologist with a disability. We discuss the physical, systemic, and attitudinal barriers that continue to exist even in disability-focused fields. To this end, we encourage colleagues to reconsider their attitudes and approaches to colleagues and trainees with disabilities to embrace disability not as a deficit or an inspiration but
rather as another form of diversity and one that should be acknowledged and sought after in training programs and professional settings.

As an individual, I have benefited in numerous ways from my involvement in the SIG. On a personal level, the group has provided a sense of kinship and empathy as I have dealt with disability-related issues in my own training, such as difficulties arranging accommodations and dealing with attitudinal barriers. Furthermore, they have also served as role models for me, proving that it is possible to thrive in psychology as an individual with a disability.

On a professional level, the SIG has provided opportunities to explore my scholarly interests in education and training issues related to disability and do so in a way that treats disability as diversity instead of pathology. For example, several SIG members presented a panel on supervising trainees with disabilities at the 2011 Rehabilitation Psychology conference, and the content is currently being revised as a scholarly manuscript on which I am a co-author. Given that the experiences of psychologists and trainees with disabilities has not been widely explored in the scholarly literature, I consider myself very fortunate to have access to a group of colleagues who share these interests and are ready and willing collaborate on related projects.

The Psychologists with Disabilities SIG is a new yet vibrant resource within the Rehabilitation Psychology division of the American Psychological Association. It provides a community of people who exist on both sides of the disability “line,” and in doing so I believe it is starting to weaken that line. By promoting the active involvement of people with disabilities in psychology and related fields, the SIG creates a more welcoming, disability-aware environment that I hope to see grow.

Author’s note: Emily Lund, M.Ed.

is currently a first year student in the Disability Disciplines Ph.D. program at Utah State University. She completed her undergraduate degrees in psychology and social work at the University of Montana and her Masters degree in educational psychology at Texas A&M University. In addition to her interest in educational and training issues, her research interests include interpersonal violence and abuse against men and women with disabilities and bullying, peer victimization, and peer relations among students with disabilities. She lives with cerebral palsy. She would like to thank Dr. Erin Andrews and the other members of the SIG for their support, advice, and friendship.

Living Community Psychology
Written by Gloria Levin
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“Living Community Psychology” highlights a community psychologist through an in-depth interview that is intended to depict both personal and professional aspects of the featured individual. The intent is to personalize Community Psychology (CP) as it is lived by its diverse practitioners. For this installment, we profile a senior community psychologist who embodies the role of action researcher – and all-around “nice guy.”

Featuring:
Greg Meissen, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology and Coordinator, Community Psychology Doctoral Program
Wichita State University
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“Midwestern nice.” That’s what I always thought of Greg Meissen whenever, over many years, I’d see him at biennial conferences. Friendly, sunny disposition, considerate of others, impeccable manners – yes. But another characteristic of “Midwest nice-ness” is civic connectedness, a rootedness in community. Greg tells me there is truth to the Midwest Nice characterization and, in fact, takes considerable pride in it. He modeled himself after his father, “a really nice guy,” and his strong rootedness in Wichita and Kansas is basic to his persona.

Both of Greg’s parents were drawn to Wichita from other Kansas communities around World War II, attracted to urban, wartime jobs. For most of his working life, his father worked in a warehouse for a chemical company. Mr. Meissen was the first in his family to have completed his high school education, having come through the Depression. Greg’s mother had a little college and then worked for Boeing during the war; after the war’s end, they met and married. Greg’s birth was followed two years later by his younger brother Steve. Until Greg was 3 years old, the family lived in the poorest neighborhood in Wichita. With the help of the GI Bill, the family bought a small house in a safer, working class neighborhood. The new home was in a blue collar community with a strong sense of community.

Mrs. Meissen died when Greg and Steve were pre-schoolers, and Mr. Meissen raised the two boys, assisted by live-in babysitters, older women who were willing to work for room and board and a small salary. “Without being asked, the neighborhood moms gave us special and positive attention, looking out for us. We didn’t know any other household without a mother; in fact, there weren’t many single parent families at the time.”

Mr. Meissen was much involved in his sons’ education, spending many evenings at the kitchen table,
helping with homework. A devout Catholic, he enrolled both sons in the neighborhood Catholic school which they attended throughout their primary and secondary education. The teacher-nuns were rigorous, but Greg was always a good and conscientious student. Knowing that the Meissen boys did not have a mother at home, the school staff took special care of them. The Meissen boys were into sports, encouraged by their father who wanted them to keep busy.

When Greg was a junior in high school, his father married a widow who had been a classmate in their small Kansas town of 300 people. She moved to Wichita to open a beauty shop. She had 3 children (two of whom were grown), and the family blended well, having a great time.

Greg’s father and his (engineer) uncle insisted that he study engineering at the Colorado School of Mines. Greg received a full football scholarship there, but he soon discovered he did not want to play football (being a student athlete was harder than he imagined) or be an engineer. Offered a better scholarship to Wichita State University (WSU), he returned home to begin his sophomore year in college. He did not play football. The year prior to his return to Wichita, much of WSU’s football team had been killed in a plane crash. Instead of a football scholarship, Greg worked at various part time jobs. Being an urban university, most of WSU’s students worked full or part time and commuted to school. He took whatever jobs he could find that fit his school hours.

Another source of financial assistance was scholarships, one of which paid his tuition for two years. This involved tutoring a person in the community. Greg connected with an African American family and recruited three other students, each of whom tutored a family member. This experience introduced him to diversity since, before that time, he had had no other significant contact with a person of color. The tutoring also introduced him to teaching and working in a community setting. This experience greatly influenced his decision to later become a (community) psychology professor.

Another major influence on Greg’s career path came from a community psychology course taught by Charlie Burdals. Charlie was a researcher on a secondary prevention, Outward-Bound type program that served boys (12-13 years old) who had been identified to be of concern to teachers. The program was run by the St. Francis Boys’ Home in Salina, KS. Greg volunteered to work with the program for a summer. However, the program was expanding so he took a break from school to accept a paid position as a counselor. “I lived in a tent for two years, doing wilderness adventure camping with the kids.” Greg soaked up considerable knowledge and experience from the many small group techniques and peer interventions involved. One innovative feature of the program was the provision of training to the parents while their kids were away. This program was the first in a series of innovative programs that are still in existence. In fact, Greg later served on St. Francis’ Board and is currently working with their Board Effectiveness Committee. “One thing about Kansas is that once you’re connected, it’s a life sentence.”

Greg had originally considered clinical psychology as his only career option. But his experience with the St. Francis program got him thinking “outside the box.” He had seen tremendous progress with the kids in their two-month exposure to the program. The counselors honed in on each child’s problem behaviors. However, it became painfully obvious to Greg that, despite the availability of ongoing peer counseling to the kids upon their return to their communities, much of that progress subsequently unraveled back in their home communities. A tragic circumstance led to Greg’s decision to “do something other than clinical psychology.” One of the kids who had made the most progress committed suicide. When Greg visited him in the hospital after an earlier suicide attempt, the boy said he had no hope. Three weeks after his hospital discharge, he committed suicide, an act which profoundly rattled Greg. “Even before I’d ever read works like those of George Albee, I knew there had to be something better than sending a kid right back to the environment that caused problems in the first place.” Being familiar with WSU’s master’s program in community psychology, Greg realized there was a viable alternative to clinical psychology.

Upon returning to finish his B.A., Greg hung out with M.A. students in WSU’s community psychology program. To prepare for graduate school, he worked on research projects associated with that program and took master’s level courses in community psychology. He applied all over for graduate school, ranging across applied experimental,
social psychology and community psychology programs. “I was pretty naïve, only making a few phone calls and reading the big APA book on graduate programs.”

He chose the University of Tennessee and affiliated himself with John Lounsbury, a young professor who had trained with George Fairweather and Lou Tornatsky at Michigan State University. In

He was also advised against locking himself into a tenure track job at a lesser school

Greg’s last year, Ray Lorion came to Tennessee to assist in developing a community psychology focus. (However, a number of circumstances occurred after Greg graduated, resulting in the failure to realize a defined program in community psychology at Tennessee.)

Upon arriving at Tennessee, Greg was told that he was required to do a practicum every semester. The program was new and a little disorganized, so students were expected to find their own placements. Greg worked with Big Brothers and Big Sisters throughout his graduate school years. He became a Big Brother, worked with the organization’s Board and published an article in the Journal of Community Psychology, based on the impact of congruent expectations of volunteers, children and parents. He had learned much about the nonprofit world. Another placement was at a large State Psychiatric Hospital, doing evaluation research, as well as working for Oakridge National Laboratories, better known for its role in inventing the atomic bomb but also responsible for social and environmental impact work. These paid placements subsidized his poorly paid graduate assistantships, important because Greg had married in graduate school.

Greg had met his wife, Jan, in an English class at WSU. A year ahead of Jan in school, Greg stayed in close touch with her during his first year at Tennessee. “My phone bill – this was long before email – was more expensive than my rent.” They married in the summer, after Greg’s first year in graduate school, and Jan entered a Social Work program at Tennessee.

Greg completed his doctorate in 3 years. One explanation for the rapid progress in obtaining his Ph.D. was that Greg had already, in his senior year of college, taken graduate level courses. Thus, he arrived at Tennessee with statistics and research methods already mastered, allowing him to launch into his dissertation quickly.

A year before Greg expected to have his PhD, he began applying for academic jobs just to test the market. Even his dissertation advisor, Dr. Lounsbury, thought his applications were premature. However, several fantastic jobs were announced that year, so he decided to throw his hat in the ring, with no expectation that he would be competitive. He was shocked when he was offered a few jobs. For example, through an introduction to Emory Cowen by Ray Lorion, Greg was offered a postdoc research position at the University of Rochester. In the end, however, Greg accepted an offer from his undergraduate alma mater, WSU, for a tenure track position. Jan, by then a licensed social worker, was thrilled with the prospect of moving back home to Wichita, where she could establish her private clinical practice.

Almost everyone else, however, cautioned against the WSU position as a very bad career move, being insufficiently prestigious. In sum, that he “could do better.” At that time, WSU’s master’s program was “off the radar” in its ranking among community psychology programs. Greg concedes: “WSU was on the map, but it wasn’t a big spot on the map.” He was also advised against locking himself into a tenure track job at a lesser school but was urged instead to publish a few more articles so as to make himself attractive for better jobs. “I understood all the words that were being said to me as being well meaning, that this maybe wasn’t the best career move for me.” Greg, however, liked that WSU’s longstanding master’s program had a steady stream of students, all of whom were doing good work and some of whom went on to earn PhD’s. He felt that the position at WSU was a great fit for his family and has never regretted the decision. “I’ve always been happy here. Particularly in those early years, I was tempted when invited to apply for other jobs. However, the longer I stayed, the more this felt long term for me.”

Greg excitedly plunged into setting up his classes and starting a research program, a needs assessment of local nonprofits which got him deeply involved in the community. “I still have relationships from that very first piece of research.”

Although he was firmly rooted in Wichita, he took a year’s sabbatical in Boston. From service on the local board of Huntington’s Disease (HD) and his association with a group working with medical researchers around the country, he became

His sabbatical exposed him to the world of large research grants

interested in the burgeoning science of genetics. A group at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) was doing groundbreaking work in applying a new genetic test (applicable to any disease) to the genetically straightforward HD model as the first foray into understanding predictive testing. The family regarded the move to Boston as an adventure, loading
the two kids (aged 1 and 3 years) in a truck for the drive to Boston. The work was exciting, and Greg toyed with the idea of extending his stay. However, the family missed Wichita — “I was ready to move back to a place where I didn’t have to circle the block seven times to pick up my dry cleaning!”

His sabbatical exposed him to the world of large research grants. He

The Center’s work was true action research – split between research/ evaluation and program development

soon got over his intimidation with grants and acquired the confidence and skills needed to be a successful grant applicant. Over the years, WSU had become more research oriented. Upon his return to Wichita, an opportunity presented itself that required significant external funding.

A former employee of Lutheran Social Services had founded a local Self Help Center and Clearinghouse. Greg supported her work with a practicum student, photocopying, undergraduate volunteers and consultation. When the woman could not continue the work, she asked her supporters to take over. Greg, the only “taker,” volunteered to move the clearinghouse to the university, increasing his involvement with the field that was to become his career passion. He now admits that he had not thought through the longer-term implications of his generosity (“foolhardiness”) nor could he have envisioned the extent to which the work would expand. However, he saw the self help field as a great example of community psychology from an ecological point of view, using resources that at the time were being neglected. “Everybody knew about Alcoholics Anonymous, but other action was going on in self help support groups that needed to be spotlighted.”

His department was supportive, but the university administration was cautious. Greg was required to undo the organization’s nonprofit designation because the administrators believed that having a nonprofit inside the university would somehow compete with the university’s nonprofit status. However, after Greg disbanded the nonprofit status and brought the Clearinghouse into the university, the administrators “completely forgot about it and ignored us for years. At one point, the center had 27 people working in 1200 sq ft of space – less square footage per person than the law allowed for prisons!” Recognizing that the university would not fund community-based work, he would have to generate external funding. “So I just set upon writing grants! And got good at it over time.” I’ll say!!

His resume shows he was awarded 85 grants, both small and large, over the years -- the smallest under $3,000; the largest for $2,828,000 in one year (with multiple others of that scope).

The Center’s work was true action research – split between research/ evaluation and program development. Every grant application they wrote had both a strong community component and a strong research component, even if the grant solicitation did not call for both. “This was not only to generate data for the next grant but it was also to fund second year projects and dissertations.” Greg admits that the pressure to keep up a constant stream of funding was intense for over 20 years, until he stepped away from directing the Center in 2008.

Greg’s grants not only brought in overhead funds to the university but has engendered good public relations for WSU in terms of community partnerships. One notable effort has been a grant to fund tuition for persons with mental illness. “A college campus is a great place for people who are working hard on their recovery.” The university had not realized that prior students with mental illness had been hanging out on campus, as a safe, congenial environment.

In addition to his direction of the self help network (which evolved into the Center for Community Support and Research), 1985 to 2008, he coordinated WSU’s Community-Clinical PhD program (1994-7), was promoted to Full Professor in 1995 and, since 2010, he has coordinated the free-standing Community Psychology PhD program (which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary).

And yet Greg admits to feeling like a maverick inside of organized psychology and at WSU. Although his colleagues like him and his work, “they don’t understand why I would spend so much time on it. The typical tradition in academia is to teach and write and go home. At times, I’ve been accused by my own psychology colleagues of never being around

I’ve been accused by my own psychology colleagues of never being around because I’m out in the community so much

because I’m out in the community so much. They don’t understand why a nonprofit doesn’t want to come to the university to meet.” The community psychologist in him knows that he can do much better work being out in the community, meeting nonprofits on their turf. His work has been honored with a slew of local, state and national
awards and appointments to boards and advisory committees including the Surgeon General’s Council on Self-Help and Public Health.

Greg has long been a leader in organized community psychology, via the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA). He co-founded and chaired SCRA’s Self-Help Interest Group (1989-93); twice chaired the Council of Program Directors; served on SCRA’s Executive Committee (2004-2007); and most notably, co-founded and co-chaired, with Tom Wolff, what has become the highly productive Community Psychology Practice Council (2005-2012). Greg is attempting to refocus a bit, in part owed to a recent (Summer 2012) health scare – a brain tumor which, fortunately, was determined to be benign.

Soon after Greg’s recovery from brain surgery, he experienced a joyful side of aging – the birth of his first grandchild. He is very proud of his two accomplished children. Daughter, Emily, has an MSW and works at the Kansas Health Institute in Topeka, KS “doing work suspiciously like community psychology,” he says. His son, Chris, is studying at Berkeley for a PhD in mechanical engineering. (Fulfilling his father’s wish that a Meissen would become an engineer.)

So, the aphorism “nice guys finish last,” coined by Leo Durocher, is belied by Greg Meissen who proves you can thrive personally and professionally as the prototypical “nice guy.”

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Regional Update
Winter 2013
Edited by Susan Dvorak McMahon, Regional Network Coordinator, DePaul University
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I would like to welcome our new Regional Coordinator for the Northeast Region, Suzanne Phillips, from Gordon College in Wenham, MA and our new Student Regional Coordinator, Erika VanBeek, from the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology! The Northeast region is looking for another person to join their Regional Coordinator team, so please let me, or the Northeast Coordinators (contact information below) know if you are interested in learning more about the position. We are always interested in getting more people involved with SCRA, and becoming a Regional Coordinator or International Regional Liaison is a great way to engage with people in your region and let the rest of the world know about the exciting events and activities occurring in your “neck of the woods”.

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Erika VanBeek, from the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology! The Northeast region is looking for another person to join their Regional Coordinator team, so please let me, or the Northeast Coordinators (contact information below) know if you are interested in learning more about the position. We are always interested in getting more people involved with SCRA, and becoming a Regional Coordinator or International Regional Liaison is a great way to engage with people in your region and let the rest of the world know about the exciting events and activities occurring in your “neck of the woods”.

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News from the Midwest
Written by Luciano Berardi

The Midwest Ecological-Community Psychology Conference (ECO) sponsored by Michigan State University took place on October 13, 2012 in Hickory Corners, Michigan. A total of 98 students, faculty and community practitioners from cities and universities around the Midwest attended the ECO conference this year. ECO’s Award winners for student presentations were awarded to: Julia DiGangi (DePaul), Kelly Amrhein (Bowling Green State University), Amber Mandalari (MSU), Katie Gregory (MSU), Carolos Luna (DePaul), and Patrick Janulis (MSU). More information about the theme and conference events can be found at http://2012midwesteco.com/. Location for next year’s ECO has yet to be determined. Historically, UIC, UIUC, DePaul University, MSU and Wayne State University have served as sponsors/hosts of the conference. The last three ECO conferences were sponsored by UIUC, DePaul University and MSU. More information about next year’s ECO conference host will follow in the next Midwest update. Please let me know if you are interested in hosting.

The National Louis University in Chicago made history this fall by housing its classes for a brand new cohort of PhD students at a community agency in the “Little Village” neighborhood called El Valor http://www.elvalor.org/. This partnership between a Community Psychology Ph.D. program and a local CBO to offer classes in the community represents an exciting educational strategy to develop a new generation of community practices and community change. We welcome this new cohort of students to SCRA.

Please mark May 2-4 on your calendars for the SCRA meeting at the Midwest Psychological Association conference held in Chicago. Also,
plan to join other SCRA members from the Midwest Region on Friday May 3rd for an informal dinner near the conference, details to follow. Additional information and a call for proposals will be forthcoming on the SCRA listserve.

Announcements and information for inclusion in future Midwest updates should be sent to Luciano Berardi (lberardi@depaul.edu).

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News from the Bay Area
Written by Danielle Kohfeldt & Regina Langhout

The network of Bay Area community psychologists and colleagues from other fields with interests in community-based research and intervention continue to meet once a semester for an informal colloquium. The Fall Colloquium, held October 19th at UC Berkeley, had three great presentations. Erin Ellison, MA, Graduate Student in Social Psychology at UC Santa Cruz, presented on “Participatory Action Research and Theories of Collective Action.” Iris Lavi, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, spoke on “Family Interventions within the Community: Theoretical and Practical Issues.” Finally, Howard Rose, Founder of Firsthand Technology, spoke about promoting computer-based action games to promote children’s dental health. All three presentations were engaging and inspired interesting dialogue. We would love to expand our network and always welcome new faces! For those interested in attending and/or presenting, please contact Danielle Kohfeldt or Gina Langhout (see emails below). The goal of our network is to provide a forum to informally discuss work in progress, network with other community practitioners, and provide an exchange of ideas related to community intervention work. The larger group meets twice a year while encouraging smaller groups to form around particular interests. If you would like to be on our mailing list, please email Danielle Kohfeldt (dkohfeldt@ucsc.edu) or Gina Langhout (langhout@ucsc.edu).

The Northwest Community Research & Action Conference took place October 12th at Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon. For a graduate student reflection on this engaging and thought provoking conference, please see Wendy Viola and Erin Stack’s piece in the Student Issues section of this issue.

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News from the Southeast
Written by Ciara Smalls Glover

This September, the community program at Georgia State University celebrated its 30 year anniversary of the program! Alums from across the nation returned for a day-long celebration that started with an alumni panel, followed by a student poster session. We were delighted to have Dr. Rich Wolitski, a graduate of the program, as our keynote speaker. The anniversary was a springboard for discussions about a timeline of programs in Community Psychology. We had such a wonderful time that plans are in the works to have more frequent alumni gatherings.

This October also marked the Southeast ECO conference. In partnership with North Carolina Central University (NCCU), SCRA sponsored a breakfast for the 2010 Southeast ECO conference attendees. During the breakfast, Dr. Jim Cook presented about the mission of SCRA, its guiding principles, history, and ways to become involved. While Dr. Cook spoke, students received handouts about the benefits (journal subscriptions, discount on Springer books, networking, listserv, etc.) and cost of SCRA student membership. We actually had several people go online during the breakfast and sign-up to be members of SCRA, which was fantastic!

Virginia Johnson from UNCC spoke about the benefits and ways to become involved. For example, she discussed the various committees, interest groups, and listservs that students can join. Several shared their experiences about how SCRA has been beneficial as a student member. For example, a graduate student mentioned that being a member as an undergraduate was helpful for her to mention at graduate school interviews because it provided connections to professors.

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Northeast Region, U.S. Regional Coordinators
Michelle Ronayne: mronayne@ccsnh.edu, Nashua Community College
Suzanne Philips: Suzanne.Phillips@gordon.edu, Gordon College
Student Regional Coordinators
Samantha Hardesty, hardest1@umbc.edu, University of Maryland
Dorothy VanBeek, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology

News from the Northeast
Written by Michelle Ronayne, PhD

We are gearing up for our annual program held in conjunction with the Eastern Psychological Association Conference. We are in the process of reviewing submissions and putting together our programming for March, 2013.

We are happy to announce that our keynote speaker for this year is James Shearer. Mr. Shearer has been working to help those that are homeless and low income provide for themselves for many years. He is a co-founder of the Homeless Empowerment Project/Spare Change News in Cambridge, MA. He has served in various capacities within the organization and until recently was the Board President. Spare Change News provides homeless and low income individuals with the opportunity to sell the street newspaper for a profit. Mr. Shearer will speak about his personal experiences with homelessness and talk about effective strategies for working in the community.

We have two new coordinators as we have been joined by Suzanne Philips, a professor at Gordon College and Erika VanBeek, a doctoral student at Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology.

If you would like to serve as a coordinator, please be in touch with Michelle Ronayne (michelle.ronayne@gmail.com). The coordinators term is three years and the primary responsibility is for planning the SCRA program at EPA. We can provide a detailed job description if anyone is interested in nominating themselves for the position.

Ireland
International Regional Liaison
Eylin Palamaro Munsell: eylin.palamaromunsell@ucd.ie, University College Dublin

News from the Republic of Ireland

This fall I was honored to be asked to give a seminar on evaluation in community settings by the Community Knowledge Initiative at the National University of Ireland in Galway. While there, I met many community-minded individuals from all over Ireland. There were representatives at the seminar from various academic disciplines, such as law, geography and medicine as well as directors, leaders and volunteers from various youth and adult serving community programs. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about the good work being done here in Ireland. For instance, The Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI) is a project housed in the university and funded by a range of philanthropic trusts. The mission of CKI is to develop and strengthen civic engagement by linking university and community resources. CKI has extensive programs which include such activities as student service learning, student volunteering, community-based research and university-community knowledge sharing. CKI partners with a host of local, national and international organizations to achieve their goals. If you are interested in learning more about this dynamic initiative, please visit their website at http://www.nuigalwaycki.ie/.

Galway is a beautiful city and I enjoyed my time there immensely, in great part due to the fine hospitality of Ann Lyons from Community Knowledge Initiative and Dr. Seamus Morrissey from Galway City Partnership. I extend a heartfelt thanks to them both and to all those who made the seminar such a success. Until next time, “Go n-éirí an bóthar leat” or may the road rise to meet you.

Canada
International Regional Liaison
Robb Travers: rtravers@wlu.ca, Wilfrid Laurier University

Advancing Social Justice and Community Well-Being through Community Psychology
Written by Begum Verjee, Ed.D.

The Adler School of Professional Psychology was founded on the pioneering work of Alfred Adler. Alfred Adler articulated the fundamental concepts of community psychology around ‘gemeinschaftsgefühl,’ social interest or the connection between individual and community well-being, and systemic intervention. The Chicago campus in the United States was the first to be established in 1952, followed by the Vancouver campus in Canada in 1978. The School
is an independent not-for-profit institution of higher learning that is North America’s oldest independent psychology school. The School’s vision and mission in graduate education and training is to prepare students to become socially responsible practitioners who engage communities and advance social justice.

In Vancouver, the Adler School engages directly with more than 150 community partners in order to provide students with training in socially responsible practice and advancing the goals of social justice in collaboration with those communities. Through these partnerships, Adler School students annually provide more than 12,000 hours in direct service through Community Service Practicum (CSP)—which focus on building capacity and implementing systemic change that will improve services to and enhance the well-being of the populations these community partners serve. Students also provide hundreds of hours of service to communities each year through clinical practicums, and community or organizational psychology practicums.

Every Adler School student is required to complete a 150-hour Community Service Practicum with a community group or service agency. Our integration of service learning and contribution into our programs is based on a simple question: What would Alfred Adler do today? Adler emphasized deeds over words and understood the positive effect of community engagement on both the person and the community. The strength of this training component lies in the practice of social change under Adler’s philosophy, holding the common goals of social action and collaboration through community engagement for social justice. Adlerian philosophy and training is focused on social justice and social responsibility through applying skills in collaboration, respect for diversity, inclusion, accountability and social justice. This training is enhanced by practical experience in community organizations where students have the opportunity to “walk the talk.”

The Vancouver Campus offers a Master of Arts in Community Psychology, a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology, a Master of Arts in Organizational Psychology, and a Master of Counseling Psychology, as well as western Canada’s first practitioner-oriented Doctor of Clinical Psychology Program beginning in fall 2013. The M.A. in Community Psychology degree program offers a curriculum that includes an integration of theory, community-based research, applied skills and community service, within the disciplines of community psychology and community development, public policy and social change, as well as counseling theory and practice. Central to this program is an exploration of how health inequities are structurally determined, such as from poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. Knowledge and skills developed in this program enable graduates to enhance their practice as consultants, activists and social change agents in government and community agency sectors towards building inclusive, equitable and healthy communities.

Among the students currently enrolled in the Adler School M.A. in Community Psychology program is Diana Jung, who is also pursuing her M.A. in Counseling Psychology at the School. For her Community Service Practicum (CSP) as part of the required curriculum, she worked with Vancouver leaders as part of the Women Transforming Cities initiative to address the lack of female representation in government. Systemic inequality tends to trickle down to the individual experience, she said, and the CSP gave her experience in working at a systems level to advance social justice.

Once Adler School students complete their CSPs and most of their coursework in the M.A. Community Psychology program, including Principles of Community Psychology; Foundations of Community Development; Research Methods in Community Psychology; Program Assessment & Evaluation; Public Policy, and other coursework, they are required to complete a 350-hour Community Development Practicum (CDP). These practicum are arranged with community organizations, educational institutions and government programs where students apply their knowledge and skills in understanding community issues and concerns from a multiple level of analysis (i.e. individual, community and society). Students identify and critically review related interventions, evaluations and research regarding the social determinants of health in the development of community programs, public policy, political choices and structural interventions in remediying health inequities.

Jung is completing her CDP working on projects related to student mental health and well-being at the University of British Columbia (UBC): serving as project coordinator for a program evaluation of a student-led club on mental health; serving as project assistant for a community-based action research project exploring undergraduate student perspectives on stress; and leading projects that include writing funding proposals and launching a series of free art workshops for UBC students, faculty, and staff to promote positive stress management. The projects and
initiatives address barriers that inhibit students from fulfilling their full potential, Jung says, noting that compared to other post-secondary institutions in North America, UBC undergraduate students report the highest rates of stress. 

“Not only have I had the opportunity to apply my Adler School coursework to get firsthand experience with research and needs assessments, but I have had the opportunity to gain knowledge about the experiences of individuals that can inform policy and services,” Jung said.

“In terms of community health outcomes, I have been able to emphasize taking a strength-based approach. For instance, the needs assessment has been particularly focused on student experiences of stress from a pathogenic lens. I’ve been emphasizing the importance of bringing stress management and coping from a salutogenic lens into the picture.” Jung said the CDP has enabled her to explore different learning opportunities and work experiences. She described her learning goals upon beginning the practicum as (1) to develop and maintain skills to build relationships and partnerships with different stakeholders; (2) to gain practical experiences related to fund development; and (3) to enhance her facilitation and training skills and experiences.

“Not only will I have met those goals by the end of my practicum, but I will also have gained experience in conducting research in an academic and applied setting, facilitating focus groups and workshops, and collaborating with different groups within a large institution,” Jung said.

“The Adlerian approach to systemic change and community health has been embedded in the work I have been involved in and when it has not, I have brought it up. For example, a lot of the projects I have worked on foster feelings of community. I went to a conference dedicated to looking at student mental health in post-secondary institutions; I was quite impressed with the community of practice they developed.”

Through such approaches that focus on interventions that facilitate psychological competence and empowerment and promote constructive social change, the Adler School of Professional Psychology is revolutionizing how socially responsible practice can engage communities and advance social justice.

For more information contact:
Begum Verjee, Ed.D., Program Director & Core Faculty
Master of Arts in Community Psychology
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Tel: 604.482.5522; Fax: 604.874.4634; Email: bverjee@adler.edu; Web: www.adler.edu

Latin America
International Regional Liaisons
Nelson Portillo: nelson.portillo@udb.edu.sv, Don Bosco University, El Salvador
Tesania Velázquez Castro: tvelazq@pucp.pe, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

As described in our last column, the fast-paced growth of community psychology in Latin America has allowed it to become one of the most thriving areas of work and study in the field of psychology. It is in this context that we would like to invite community psychologists from the U.S. and around the world to come to Latin America to attend the XXXIV Interamerican Congresses of Psychology that the Interamerican Psychological Society (IPS) will hold from July 15th through the 19th of 2013 in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. The Interamerican Congresses are among the largest meetings of psychology held in the Latin America and they attract a large body of community psychologists who share the work they conduct in several countries. This will be a great opportunity to establish a fruitful dialogue that breaches the borders of North and South. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn how community psychology operates in different cultural
settings and help to spread the international reach of our field.

Under the scope of community psychology, the congress will cover topics on research models in community research, community psychology values, obstacles to community well-being, collective resilience, community cohesion, needs assessments, interventions, social justice and equality, human rights and power, professional development of community psychology, challenges of globalization, and violence. Whether you want to present your work or would like to simply attend this ground-breaking event, we encourage you to consider coming to Brazil. On the other hand, during 2014, the ISP will celebrate its regional meeting in El Salvador and we hope our colleagues, both American and international, choose to visit us. In the meantime, we encourage you to visit the congress’ website (http://www.sip2013.org) and start planning your trip soon!

Regional Coordinators & International Regional Liaisons as of November, 2012

U.S. REGIONS

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<th>Connecticut</th>
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Northeast RCs:
- 2nd Year: Michelle Ronayne, Nashua Community College; michelle.ronayne@gmail.com
- 1st Year: Suzanne Phillips, Gordon College; Suzanne.Phillips@gordon.edu

Northeast SRC:
- Graduate: Samantha Hardesty, UMBC; hardesty@kennedykrieger.org
  Erika VanBeek, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology

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<th>U.S. REGIONS</th>
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Southeast RCs:
- 2nd Year: Sarah Suiter (graduate of Vanderbilt) Program evaluator at Centerstone Research Institute; Sarah.Suiter@centerstone.org
- 1st Year: Ciara Smalls Glover, Georgia State University; csmalls@gsu.edu

Southeast SRCs:
- Graduate: Virginia Johnson, UNC Charlotte; vjohns27@uncc.edu
  Chris Langeler, Vanderbilt; Chris.Langeler@gmail.com
  Rebecca Rodriguez, Georgia State; rrodriguez12@student.gsu.edu

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Southwest/Rocky Mountain RCs:
- 3rd Year: Jessica Goodkind, University of New Mexico; JGoodkind@salud.unm.edu
- 2nd Year: Vacant
- 1st Year: Vacant

Southwest/Rocky Mountain SRCs
- Vacant

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### Midwest

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**Midwest RCs:**
- 1st Year: Luciano Berardi, DePaul University; LBerodriguez12@student.gsu.edu
- 2nd Year: Andrea Flynn, DePaul University; AFlynn1@depaul.edu
- 2nd Year: Nathan Todd, DePaul University; NTodd@depaul.edu

**Midwest SRC:**
- Abigail Brown, DePaul University; abrown57@depaul.edu
- Jaclyn Houston, DePaul University; jhoust12@depaul.edu

### West

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<td>Washington</td>
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**West RCs:**
- 3rd Year: Regina Langhout, University of California at Santa Cruz; langhout@ucsc.edu
- 2nd Year: Joan Twohey-Jacobs, University of LaVerne; jtwohey-jacobs@laverne.edu
- 2nd Year: Dyana Valentine, Dyana Valentine.com; info@dyanavalentine.com

**West SRCs:**
- Graduate: Danielle Kohfeldt, University of California at Santa Cruz; dkohfeld@ucsc.edu

### INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL LIASONS

#### Canada

(10 Provinces, 3 Territories)

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<td>- New Brunswick</td>
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**Canada IRCs:**
- Robb Travers, Wilfrid Laurier University; rtravers@wlu.ca

#### Latin America

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**Latin America IRCs:**
- Tesania Velázquez Castro, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú; tvelaza@pucp.pe
- Nelson Portillo, Universidad Centroamericana (UCA); nportillo@uca.edu.sv
<table>
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<th>Australia/ New Zealand/ South Pacific</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Papua New Guinea</th>
<th>Island nations below the equator in the S. Pacific (e.g., Cook, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, etc.)</th>
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</table>

**Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific IRC:**
Katie Thomas, Curtin University of Technology, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research; katiet@ichr.uwa.edu.au

**Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific SIRC:**
Undergraduate: Kendra Swain, Curtin University; kendra.swaine@gmail.com

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<th>Europe/ Middle East/ Africa</th>
<th>European Countries</th>
<th>Middle Eastern Countries</th>
<th>African Countries</th>
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**Europe/Middle East/Africa IRCs:**
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**Europe/Middle East/Africa SIRCs:**
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United Kingdom: England, Ireland, Scotland, Whales
Eylin Palamaro Munsell, University College Dublin; eylin.palamaromunsell@ucd.ie

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**Asia IRC’s:**
3rd year: Toshi Sasao, International Christian University; tsasao@sd6.so-net.ne.jp; tsasao1@gmail.com; sasao@icu.ac.jp

**Asia SIRC’s:**
1st year: Kotoe Ikeda, Ochamomizu Women’s University; kote.harp@gmail.com
The Northeast Region of SCRA is looking for a motivated, faculty-level individual to serve as a regional coordinator. Coordinators provide regional leadership and guidance to the processes of membership development, activities, and communication; and to facilitate communication between the membership (directly through the Regional Network Coordinator) and the Executive Committee.

Regional Coordinators serve for three years. The term of office will begin in early September and end in late August. Tasks and responsibilities include: 1) organize or facilitate local membership activities (e.g., dinners, guest speakers, discussion groups; 2) send newsletters or other forms of communication to all regional members, including student members, at least twice per year; 3) encourages and facilitates regional and local membership activities (e.g., organize and hold sessions relevant to community psychology at local conferences such as EPA); 4) coordinates with regional student representative(s), and involves them in regional activities; 5) attend the APA Convention and/or the SCRA Biennial Conference whenever possible and participates in Regional Coordinator events at the conferences. Each region should be represented by at least one Regional Coordinator at SCRA Biennial Conference.

For more information, please contact current Regional Coordinators
Michelle Ronayne at michelle.ronayne@gmail.com
or Suzanne Phillips at Suzanne.Phillips@gordon.edu.

Rural Issues
Edited by Susana Helm and Cecile Lardon

As mentioned in prior columns, we are seeking to highlight the work of community psychologists in their rural environments, from theory development and research, to teaching and curriculum development, to rural practice. If you are interested in featuring your rural work, please contact us or simply submit a 1200 word submission to Susana (HelmS@dop.hawaii.edu), who will follow up with you directly. Below we feature the curriculum development and teaching efforts of recent RURAL Interest Group member, Ms. Eta Lee and her colleague Dr. Darby Sewell, Dean in the School of Human Sciences at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia.

Teaching Community Psychology in a Rural Studies Program at the Undergraduate Level
Written by Etta Lee,
Associate Professor of Psychology
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
M.Ed. Counseling and Guidance from Valdosta State University
Darby Sewell,
Dean, School of Human Sciences
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
Ph.D. Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Iowa State University

The Bachelor’s Degree in Rural Studies offered at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC, http://www.abac.edu/ruralstudies/) is an innovative and unique academic program addressing the social, economic, cultural, demographic, and political aspects of rural communities. It is the only undergraduate degree in Rural Studies in the United States, and it is perfectly congruent with ABAC’s location in the rural South, and history as an A&M School, whose mission is to contribute to a better educated Georgia. The interdisciplinary Liberal Arts degree includes four concentration areas that combine traditional classroom experience with external projects, internships, and study abroad opportunities to give students a broad theoretical and practical understanding of rural issues, challenges, and opportunities in national and international settings. The Rural Studies program educates students to work in agencies focusing on rural development. Internship and job opportunities exist in economic and downtown development, social and community agencies, arts councils, and government or corporate
agencies focused on rural issues. The four areas of concentration within the program are:
- Politics and Modern Cultures
- Business and Economic Development
- Social and Community Affairs
- Writing and Communication

At the inception of the Rural Studies Degree Program in 2009, administrators and faculty recognized the need for a related psychology course because the premise of the Rural Studies Program is that individuals behave differently in a rural setting versus an urban area. The first issue I had to address when creating the course, *Psychology in the Rural Community*, was the limited view of traditional psychology focusing on individual behavior. The existing Rural Psychology classes I found through internet searches and discussions with faculty from other institutions in the University System of Georgia focused more on the concerns of practitioners and were taught at the graduate level. Historically, James Mickel Williams, a Social Psychologist, noted differences in rural communities and the need to study this area in *Our Rural Heritage* (1925). But Social Psychology still did not reach the scope of the intended course. In 2009 when the Regents Advisory Committee for Psychology discussed the proposed course based on Social Psychology, several members who were familiar with Community Psychology suggested using this avenue instead. Following this branch of psychology fit well into the overall goals of the proposed class. Not only were individual behaviors addressed, but community issues and their interdependency were addressed also. Because the overall goal of the program is to prepare students to improve rural communities, the seven core values of Community Psychology are also the basic core values of the program. Having the basic goals and direction for the course led to the question of how to design and teach the course.

My academic and career background is in education with additional course work in psychology and sociology, but the largest influence on the course development was my personal background. I am the seventh generation to live in a rural South Georgia community. According to the 2010 census, my native county of Clinch has an average of four houses and approximately eight people per square mile. It has one of the lowest population densities in Georgia, and the population decreased from the 2000 census count. ABAC is located in the larger community of Tifton which is the county seat of Tift County Georgia. Tift County has approximately 154 people per square mile based on the 2010 census report, and still is considered a rural area. My personal background also led to a feeling of resentment toward well-meaning academics from metropolitan areas analyzing and dissecting my culture. The discipline of Community Psychology addresses concerns with research which paralleled my own. This again supported the Community Psychology direction for the class and allowed me to recognize myself as a participant-conceptualizer with a need to address my values when teaching the course. The active role played as teacher and individual living in a rural area hopefully serves as a model to the students to enable them to address their values and issues.

Upon teaching this course, the students’ various community associations have played a major role in the threefold learning process utilizing textbook, journal articles, and class discussions. This learning process was used when a student discussed issues he faced being gay and living in a rural community. The class reviewed information on building communities and the need for diversity from the textbook, *Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities* (2012). Articles including *Coming Out, Visibility, and Creating Change: Empowering Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People in Rural University Community* (D’Augelli 2006) were presented in class by the student, and parts of the film *Milk* were shown demonstrating ways of building a LBGT community. This interaction of information was also very helpful to me as an advisor of the Gay-Straight Alliance group on campus. Multiple issues surfaced when the group attempted to be chartered in 2010, and the group is still struggling against the resistance to diversity. Other rural communities represented in the Rural Studies course include Hispanic, African-American, political, educational, agricultural, and many more.

An additional dimension of the course includes projects that are used to link Community Psychology principles to the students’ own communities. One project is based on the approach used by David Hackett Fisher in *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989). Folkways are broken down to multiple patterns of distinctive characteristics, or ‘ways’, separating the original European settlements in America. The students are required to define a rural community and gather data on different ‘ways’ in that community. The students are encouraged to be creative in finding sources for their projects. One student who is looking to “naming ways” is gathering data from local cemeteries, phonebook, and family members. Another student who is concerned with the culture of drugs in a local neighborhood is videoing different neighborhoods to demonstrate the presence of environmental stressors. In this project, in class discussions, and other outside activities, the students bring their unique perspective to the course based on their life history and courses.
taken in the program. Several students were able to study in Nicaragua, and some have completed internships working in local rural communities.

Challenges are ongoing, especially as the students work to learn the basics of Community Psychology and apply these principles to the unique and understudied rural community. Learning is facilitated in the Rural Studies Program by having personal examples and shared stories to analyze, a connection between courses in the program, and small class sizes allowing for interaction between students. Outside the confines of our rural community, the SCRA RURAL Interest Group, Journal of Rural Community Psychology, and various other resources are giving students an opportunity to review applications in a global context.

References

School Intervention Interest Group
Edited by Melissa Maras and Joni Splett

Greetings from the School Intervention Interest Group! In this issue, we present an article on motivational interviewing as an intervention for youth with a range of problem behaviors written by faculty, graduate students, and recent graduates of the University of South Carolina and University of Houston. The article briefly summarizes motivational interviewing as an effective and feasible intervention for youth by school and community mental health professionals. The authors point out that motivational interviewing will likely be a particularly useful tool for community psychologists working with youth given its feasibility and potential for effectiveness.

This issue marks the official “passing of the torch” of leadership for the School Intervention Interest Group. Joni Splett will be replacing Paul Flaspohler, who has served as co-chair of SIIG since 2007. Joni received her Ph.D. in School Psychology from the University of Missouri and is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the University of South Carolina and Richland School District Two in Columbia, SC. Joni and Melissa Maras will serve as co-chairs and column editors for SIIG.

Motivational Interviewing: Ready for Adults and Emergent for Adolescents
Written by Gerald Gill Strait1, John Terry1, Samuel McQuillin2 and Bradley, H. Smith1

School and community-based mental health professionals face many obstacles and capacity limitations when implementing interventions with youth and their families. These include high caseloads, budget cuts, and a widespread absence of evidence-based practices that are ecologically feasible to implement. Moreover, youth themselves often have competing academic demands and can be highly transient within systems poorly designed to promote continuity of care. Therefore, school and community-based mental health professionals need brief, efficient, effective, feasible, and readily disseminated treatments. Motivational Interviewing (MI) could potentially fill this need.

MI is a “collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reason for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion” (Miller & Rollnick, 2012, p. 29). MI is an evolving approach to change, with substantial revisions to the first (1992), second (2002), and third editions of the definitive book, Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). The early editions describe the spirit of MI as evocation, collaboration, and autonomy; the newest edition maintains this description but adds acceptance and compassion.

Motivational Interviewing with Adults
MI was originally developed in the
1980s as a brief intervention for the reduction of alcohol use and related problems. Based on three decades of research, multiple meta-analyses on MI have found significant effects for treating addictive behaviors with effect sizes ranging from .25 to .57 (Burk et al., 2003; Lundahl et al., 2010). SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (2011) gave MI for substance and alcohol use ratings of 3.8 to 4.0 for readiness for dissemination and ratings from 3.3 to 3.9 for quality of research (on a 0 to 4 scale). Owing to the high readiness for dissemination, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, MI should be a standard practice in community-based interventions for substance use and addictive behaviors (e.g., gambling). In addition, there is growing evidence that MI can be effective for a variety of problems other than those related to addictive behavior. For instance, MI has been a successful addition to family therapy (e.g., Stormshack & Dishion, 2009) and teacher consultation (Frey et al., 2011).

Research Support for Using MI for Adolescent Substance Use

There is growing evidence in using MI in community settings to treat adolescent substance abuse behavior; however most of these studies are with older adolescents. Leary-Teyaw and Monti (2004) concluded that motivational enhancement interventions (i.e., MI) for adolescents appear to be related to a decline of alcohol-related problems. They also noted that some studies have indicated that motivational enhancement interventions may have a small effect on an individual’s amount of alcohol consumption. Of note, only two of the studies in their review contained participants younger than 15 years old. No study was cited that had participants younger than 13 years old, creating questions concerning MI’s efficacy with younger adolescences (e.g., middle school students).

A number of studies investigating MI have targeted tobacco use in teens. McCambridge and Strange (2004) found that teens receiving a one-hour MI session made significant reductions in their tobacco use when compared to a control condition. The authors also found significant differences in the perception of tobacco use between the two groups. Kelly and Lapwworth (2006) found that high school students receiving a one-hour MI session on tobacco use demonstrated significant short-term tobacco use reduction in comparison to students who received an advice-oriented intervention. These significant differences were not maintained at three and six month follow-ups. Colby et al.’s (1998) also compared MI to an advice giving intervention and did not find significant differences in tobacco use at a three month follow-up, raising some questions about the long-term effects of MI for preventing tobacco use and the possible need for follow-up sessions.

Overall, the alcohol and tobacco intervention literature provides support for using MI directly with older adolescents and there is some support for using MI with younger adolescents to reduce tobacco use, alcohol use, and related harm. Further research is warranted, especially with younger adolescents and regarding long term effects. It is also encouraging that cognitive and neurodevelopmental research supports adolescents’ cognitive readiness to complete MI related cognitive tasks (Strait et al., 2012). However, when considering some of these social-cognitive factors, it appears that the lower age limit for being a direct recipient of MI is about 12 (Strait et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2011).

School Application for MI with Adolescents

Presumably, like with adults, MI should work for issues such as health promotion in adolescents (e.g., fitness, healthy foods, hours of sleep). Likewise, MI could help with adolescent issues such as gang resistance, bullying, academic failure, school attendance, and inappropriate classroom behavior (e.g., off-task and disruptive behavior). All of these issues could be addressed in educational settings, but almost all of the pertinent research has been done with teachers and parents to increase their acceptance and use of evidence-based interventions (Frey et al., 2011). Thus, with the exception of substance use problems, using MI directly with students is largely untested. In fact, we could only find one published experimental study on the topic.

Strait et al. (2012) studied the efficacy of MI for promoting academic achievement by randomly assigning 103 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students to either a MI (n=50) or wait list control condition (n= 53). Students in the MI group participated in a 45-minute long semi-structured individual interview which embodied the spirit of MI (e.g., evocation), incorporated the main techniques of MI (e.g.; developing discrepancies), and supported and evoked change talk (e.g., disadvantages of the status quo; Miller and Rollnick, 2002). More specifically, interviewers (i.e., graduate students with MI training) prompted each student to evaluate their academic goals, current academic achievement, and academically related behaviors (e.g., their study time and their peers study time). Students were then given support and feedback (e.g., support and a summary of everything discussed) and a choice to create a change plan (i.e., a step-by-step guide for goal achievement) or to end the MI session. Of the 50 students in the treatment group, 86% chose to create a change plan. In addition, students in the MI group reported significant improvements in class participation and overall positive academic behavior and obtained significantly higher 4th
quarter math grades than students in the control group. Pending further study, MI could become an efficient and effective new approach for improving academic performance.

**Conclusions and Future Implications**

In summary, MI is ready for widespread dissemination to adults and emerging as a promising intervention for adolescents. This is important because there is a significant need for brief and effective interventions that target problem behaviors and are deliverable in school and community settings. Based on numerous studies and reviews, there little doubt that MI is an effective and feasible intervention that should be used in a variety of community settings with adults as a stand-alone intervention or as an adjunct to strengthen other interventions (i.e., motivational enhancement). However, the research is limited and less clear until further study is conducted to determine if MI is truly effective for a range of adolescent problem behaviors, especially for younger teens.

**References**


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**Self-Help and Mutual Support**

*Edited by Louis Brown*

**Innovative Extensions of Self-Help: Leadership, Empowerment, and Advocacy Project**

*Written by Vicky Lynn Collins*

The central objectives of this article are to compare the advantages, disadvantages, similarities, and differences of traditional self-help and mutual support groups such as Alcohol Anonymous or Schizophrenia Anonymous with the Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy Project (LEAP); a three semester college class for students challenged by mental health disorders. The class was taught by myself, an individual with a Master’s in Social Work; licensed with the state of Kansas, and challenged by a severe and persistent mental illness. Our shared challenges created an academic environment for learning from each other by building healthy personal boundaries; by incorporating the core values of servant leadership;
by developing a better understanding of how to advocate for self and others; by claiming their unique strengths; and by living a life motivated by empowerment. All of which are needed to successfully pursue the journey in reaching one’s full potential. In this way, the class is very similar to self-help because this journey stands at the heart of self-help and mutual support. The overall experience cultivated possibilities for formal and informal mentoring and role modeling benefiting everyone even in ways unknown. In today’s literature these relationships embraced the basics of peer mentoring (Schwiebert, 2000). Gradually, students started to believe in themselves, thinking they could be successful in college and life despite a lifetime subjected to the false self-image imprinted within their belief system from years of being told their existence amounted to staying out of the hospital. Due to society’s stigma of mental illness individuals have been affected by internalized stigma causing victimization. In the beginning, students started to grasp the reality of being a college student rather than just being a mental patient. This positive transformation with one’s identity gave them the boost they needed to overcome the negativity ingrained from years of believing their lives were worthless and hopeless.

In the beginning, students were fearful of actually being in a college class because they did not know what was going to be expected of them or where they would fit among the other students. At the root of all this uncertainty among the students was the question, “Can I trust this teacher to lead me down a path along an uncharted journey with the focus on recovery?” In order, for this to be possible I had to build trust by cultivating beliefs that I was competent, honest, respectful, knowledgeable and accountable. A favorite quote of mine by John C. Maxwell, “People don’t care about how much you know, until they know how much you care.” (Maxwell, 1993, p. 7). My main role at this point was to support and encourage bonding between students and between students and myself. As far as self-help it was very important at this time to establish the understanding that everyone would learn from each other including myself as the teacher. Students respected my servant leadership. The fact I was earning an income from teaching was more of an inspiration than a hindrance to the group dynamics. One student approached me about me working full-time without Social Security Disability Insurance and asked if I was afraid of getting sick again. My response was that I wanted to work as it had been twenty years and I was willing to take the risk. Further, I told her sometimes in life you have to take risks to reach your goals and if you never try you will never know the accomplishments life offers. The most inspiring characteristic of the classes was the fact that although I performed roles such as planning the lessons, grading homework, and assessing performance, the focus was on the commonality of the relationships with no one feeling or believing superiority. Having similar challenges helped everyone: develop new ways of thinking by being more open in an atmosphere of empathy for one another’s pain; have a non-judgmental attitude; and make efforts toward unconditional acceptance. Participants also respected diverse perspectives by recognizing the richness individual opinions bring to a better understanding of the self. Over time, students began facing their fears and sharing, which was very risky in that individuals challenged with a mental health disorder often feel alone and misunderstood so they try to cope by isolating themselves thinking no one could ever know what it means to live in their world. The burden was lifted as they learned they had more in common with each other than they could have ever imagined. Knowing they were not alone and isolated enabled them to take those first steps in learning leadership qualities; in experiencing empowerment for the first time; in learning how to advocate for self and others; in learning how to protect and enforce their boundaries; in learning how to listen to their inner voice; and in learning how to trust and believe in their talents and gifts.

LEAP and self-help groups have numerous similarities within the structural purpose and positive outcomes experienced by individuals participating in both formats. In order for individuals to benefit from self-help and mutual support groups the focus must be on recovery. Both provide the opportunities for the building of supportive relationships inspired by hope in learning from each other. Once again we have the basic mechanism of peer mentoring as interactions include encouragement and respect. In addition, both programs are at no cost to individuals, including the students’ tuition, books, and supplies were paid for by a grant with the State of Kansas. Further, during LEAP classes, the chairs were set up in a circle encouraging face to face communication unlike traditional classrooms. Beliefs in the importance of celebrations are recognized by both forms of self-help. Further, confidentiality is also believed to be the main ingredient in providing a safe environment for honest and open discussions. Finally, in both examples of self-help and mutual support participants share their life stories in an effort to influence each other to move beyond their challenges and start believing they can succeed in accomplishing more than they ever thought was possible.

However, the LEAP classes and self-help groups also have numerous differences none of which alter the similarities mentioned above. The students met in a classroom within
a university and earned nine college credits in psychology by reading a total of five books (listed below), writing papers on how the lessons impacted their attitudes about themselves based on past, present and future life experiences; and exams measuring their level of performance which was actually an indication of my effectiveness as a teacher. Daily lesson plans were tailored from students’ feedback. They thought they could best grasp the knowledge and information by using power point presentations on a LCD projector with paper copies of the slides provided to students. Further, each semester of the LEAP classes followed a flexible syllabus. Two major differences include the ongoing time frame of traditional self-help groups and the expectation of students to attend LEAP classes regularly with as few absences as possible. Students benefited from having the same individuals present at each class, which helped to create opportunities for stronger bonding and accountability with each other; whereas members in self-help groups typically change more frequently. Finally, LEAP was designed to stimulate growth in leadership by exposing the students to current literature in becoming future leaders; in empowerment by building confidence in one’s identity based on their strengths and aspirations; and in advocacy by learning the importance in defending and protecting their own boundaries inspiring within them the abilities to advocate for vulnerable individuals in our communities. The strategies within self-help groups in promoting leadership, empowerment, and advocacy are in some ways different, however; the outcomes are compatible. Developing leaders in self-help groups supports the life span of the group and gives everyone the opportunity to grow in their recovery. An example of this in action is the rotating of individuals to lead the meetings.

Students were exposed to new and challenging ways of thinking about life and themselves. Based on student feedback The Four Agreements written by Ruiz (1997) taught them to “Be Impeccable with Your Word;” “Don’t Take Anything Personally;” “Don’t Make Assumptions;” and “Always Do Your Best.” For the third and final semester students gave four workshop presentations at the 2007 Kansas Recovery Conference on the following topics: “Learning, Thinking, Working Styles;” “Experience the Liberation of Learning how to Defend and Protect your Boundaries while Enjoying Healthy Relationships;” “People with a Personal Mission Statement Succeed in Reaching their Goals by Empowering them on a Journey of their Choice;” and “Mastering Servant Leadership takes a Life Time of Commitment to Serving Others Rather than Satisfying Individual Wants and Desires.”

In conclusion, the vital purpose for the LEAP classes was to equip the students with the necessary tools and skills to join in the fight against society’s stigma of mental health disorders by promoting recovery for all consumers of mental health services. I believe the LEAP classes were a success for students based on the anonymous and mandatory teacher evaluations by the university I received every semester wherein the feedback was instrumental in the continual evolution of a life changing experience. Several students were encouraged with the desire to continue their college education. To date, I know of one student who has graduated with her undergraduate degree. The following quotes from LEAP students help to sum up some of its successes.

“The LEAP class taught me many great things about education and leadership. I felt very comfortable working with an instructor in the LEAP class who also had a severe and persistent mental illness. The teacher was very dedicated to her work and taught me a lot about advocacy. It is important to get involved and to learn as much as you can about your goals in life to become a better person. It is never too late in life to do the things you want to do – you can accomplish anything you put your mind to.”

“What LEAP has meant to me. When I enrolled in LEAP I was not in recovery. I was in limbo. Through the LEAP class I realized I did have potential as a human being. I began to feel empowered and worthwhile. LEAP taught me to reverse the drag of self-stigma. I am now off of disability and working full time as a Certified Peer Support Specialist. LEAP taught me how to be a leader and a role model working with individuals dealing with SPMI. All of us including the instructor had SPMI; but that did not stop us. I suffered from self-stigma so I had a difficult time getting through the classroom door. I made it and have forever been grateful.”

References

Books Assigned in the LEAP Classes
Student Issues
Edited by Jesica Fernandez and Danielle Kohfeldt

Egbo-o Ho Ho! A Cry for Crisis Intervention: Women Arbitrating Peace in Rural Eastern Nigeria
Written by Oyedolapo Anyanwu, Gordon College

Even though people generally view conflict as a negative thing, it can actually turn out to be a good thing. According to Schellenberg (1996), conflict is good for stimulating new thoughts, for promoting social change, for defining group relationships, for helping us form our own senses of personal identity, and for many other things we take for granted. In part, conflict is good because it creates an opportunity to exercise conflict resolution, defined as all formal and informal activities that parties to a conflict or outsiders undertake in order to limit or reduce the level of violence in conflict, and to achieve some acceptable compromise on the crucial issues in the conflict (Berovitch & Jackson, 2009).

Over the years and across many cultures, women and women-led civil societies have been at the forefront of conflict resolution. This increasingly positive role of women in arbitrating for peace in their communities led the United Nations Security Council to pass Resolution 1325, on women, peace, and security, in October 2000. Commonly referred to as “1325,” this resolution, among other things, recognizes the remarkable contribution of women to peace and security. The resolution further stipulates the need for a gender-sensitive approach to conflict prevention and resolution. It also calls for the protection of women in armed conflict (Schirch & Sewak, 2005).

However, long before 1325 was passed, women in rural eastern Nigeria have been at the forefront of maintaining peace and harmony within their communities.

In rural Eastern Nigeria, a cry, “Egbo-o Ho Ho!” sets in motion the process of conflict resolution. Egbo-o-Ho Ho is an onomatopoeic expression that someone makes when in a fight or in any social conflict considered a great injustice. At the shout, “Egbo-o Ho Ho,” all the women in the community drop whatever it is they are doing and rush to the scene of the incident. All the women are committed to coming out to help any member of the community in distress. Upon arrival, they will inquire from the person who gave the shout what it is all about. They will then seize some valuable items from the homes of both parties involved in the case and set a date to arbitrate the matter. On the day of the case, the people involved in the conflict appear before the women. Then, each one states his or her case, and the women will decide who is at fault and whether the shouting of Egbo-o Ho Ho was justifiable in that instance. They will then place a fine on the offender. Since it is a rural community, the fine is not usually monetary. It could be a goat, or gallons of palm oil, or clothing materials. Where the offender is not able to pay, the women have the liberty to sell the goods belonging to the offender that they had earlier seized. The funds from the sales will then be used to fund social projects for the community.

I had the privilege, on two occasions, of being in my husband’s village when women had to intervene at the shout of Egbo-o Ho Ho. One such occasion was just after our wedding, when we were back in the village to greet the relations. I heard the cry, and was told I have to go with the women to the place where the call was made. When we arrived there, I saw the woman who made the call. She was disheveled and was obviously in a fight with an older man also present at the scene. They all soon began to talk excitedly and since I do not speak the Igbo language, I could not understand what it was all about until later. What the women did at this time was just to hear her story, and then fixed a time for the hearing. In this particular case, the father-in-law, the older man at the scene, accused the woman of trying to kill the child of her husband’s second wife, since she, the woman who made the call, is childless.

Domestic squabbles like this are quite common in polygamous homes, where the husband has two or more wives. My family and I are not resident in our home country, Nigeria, and we only have the opportunity to visit our relations once every few years. Yet, we happened upon such cases in about two out of four visits. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that incidents that warrant the cry of Egbo-o Ho Ho occur fairly regularly in my husband’s village.

Since conflict is inevitable in any social group, it is important to learn to deal with it effectively. When a group does not have agreed mechanisms to deal with conflicts, the tension that builds up, spoken or unspoken, inevitably brings about distancing (McCurdy, 1999). Egbo-o Ho Ho provides this kind of social mechanism for the rural communities in which it is practiced. In urban settings in Nigeria, where the culture is more individualistic rather than communal, this kind of mechanism for dealing with internal conflicts is often absent. In such settings, social conflicts are usually resolved through the courts or other government agencies charged with that responsibility.

The importance of such a social mechanism as Egbo-o Ho Ho for any culture is illustrated by the tragic story of Kitty Genovese. On March 13, 1964, Kitty Genovese was repeatedly raped and eventually murdered outside her home in New York, before the fearful gaze of
neighbors who looked on from behind their closed windows. This incident helped social psychologists to discover the bystander effect, defined as the tendency for any given bystander to be less likely to give aid to someone in need if other bystanders are present (Myers, 2010). In Kitty Genovese’s case, each neighbor thought the other one was going to help, and in the end, no one did. Egbo-o Ho Ho, on the other hand, calls every bystander to participate, effectively avoiding the type of tragedy Kitty Genovese experienced.

Apart from helping to curb domestic violence and social injustice, Egbo-o Ho Ho is a valuable phenomenon in other respects. It elevates the role of women in the community. They are given the respectable roles of adjudicating and peace building in the community, in addition to raising children and being domestic hands. Egbo-o Ho Ho also helps to build social responsibility and a sense of belongingness in the community. By rallying together to help each other when in need, all members of the community know they are not on their own. Someone is there looking out for them, and they are also responsible for the well being of others. Furthermore, it helps the women to generate funds for development projects in the community.

Urban administrators can learn from rural practices such as the one described above, where the social mechanism for keeping peace lies with the common people in the society. The formal methods of internal conflict resolution employed by the government in urban societies are often made in accessible, financially, for some members of the population to gain access to. As King Hussein of Jordan often says, “It should never be forgotten that peace resides ultimately not in the hands of governments, but in the hands of the people” (Noor, Her Majesty, 2005, p. 110).

Although conflict is often inevitable in any society, it is important to have effective social mechanisms for maintaining internal peace. A cry code, Egbo-o Ho Ho, is helping the women in rural eastern Nigeria to keep peace within their communities as well as generating funds for communal development. Urban administrators could work towards decentralizing the formal and complex methods of crisis resolution by empowering common folks to be each others’ keepers.

References

Strategies to Minimize Attrition in Longitudinal Research
Written by Sarah Callahan and Leonard A. Jason, DePaul University

An important part of the research activity for community psychologists involves recruiting and retaining participants in studies, sometimes over long periods of time. We can learn from other disciplines and professional fields about how we might improve our tracking methods in order to decrease attrition rates among participants in community trials. For example, there is an entire profession called skip tracing, and professionals in this area might have unique insights for our field in terms of innovative and creative strategies for finding and retaining community samples.

A skip tracer is defined as an investigative professional. Derived from the colloquial “skipping town,” the crux of skip tracing is to find individuals; a task that is frequently engaged in by community psychologists, although the reasons for attempting to locate individuals is very different for our field. In addition to trying to find the location of individuals, skip tracers also perform pre-employment screens, credit worthiness evaluations, and reference checks. They are hired by businesses, attorneys, private investigators, law enforcement agencies, and financial institutions (clients that are quite different from those whom we usually collaborate with). Though commonly retained for legal, personal and business purposes, skip tracers may be employed for any number of reasons and some of their methods are worth considering by community psychologists given that both fields have an interest in finding or retaining participants.

As we know, significant attrition can compromise the findings from
longitudinal research studies. Even worse, selective attrition can distort the interpretation of community intervention outcomes. Attrition can skew intervention results, and ultimately lead to non-representative groups (Hobden, Forney, Wyszacki, & Toro, 2011), which can decrease external validity (Coday et al., 2005). A number of community psychologists have examined methods to enhance efforts to track participants. For example, Sullivan, Rumptz, Campbell, Eby, and Davidson (1996) proposed that retention can be enhanced by acquiring good contact information, developing rapport, making phone calls, entering the community in order to make personal visits, and focusing on participants’ social networks. Mychasiuk and Benzies (2012) used Facebook to locate participants, and this strategy successfully decreased their attrition by 16%. In addition, these investigators improved the representativeness of their sample, as participants located with Facebook differed on measures of receptive language and self-esteem as compared to those not identified via Facebook. In addition to the methods aforementioned, there are other approaches used by skip tracers that might be helpful to community researchers in order to reduce attrition. In this brief article, we will examine how skip tracers access large amounts of public information online, and use methods of communication and rapport building to integrate into various communities in order to locate people. The inclusion of these provisions into community interventions and research may allow community psychologists to enhance their tracking efforts.

### Online Tools

In tracking efforts, community psychologists often obtain current information via online databases, but some methods for tracking participants might be outdated or produce ambiguous results. For example, database searches for “James Smith” may return hundreds of possible profiles. Moreover, studies of populations that are prone to transience provide real challenges to internet searches. Many databases scan real property records, credit reports, and published telephone records, but transient and at-risk individuals are less likely to purchase property or take out lines of credit, which limits the relevance of these databases. Furthermore, a study on technology uses among urban, HIV infected individuals showed that

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employed, and had completed post-high school education were more likely to report having cell phones (Shacham, Stamm, & Overton, 2009). As some at-risk populations might not have land line telephones or cell phones, databases associated with such ownership might be less useful.

Skip tracers do not rely on only one database. Because databases are managed and updated at different intervals, the information retrieved from one may not be as current or accurate as the next (McGlivrey, 2012). In practice, skip tracers conduct internet searches through a variety of free and paid databases in a regular rotation to ensure that they are obtaining the most current information. They also conduct searches for the references of those they are trying to locate when other methods fail. If family members and friends of the participants are more likely to own property, have cell phones, social networking accounts, or online presences, they will be easier to reach. These individuals are often aware of the location of whomever the skip tracer is trying to find.

Community psychologists can benefit from expanding the number of paid and free database services that they access when tracking participants. Similar to what skip tracers do, community psychologists can use a combination of social networking sites, and paid and public databases to ensure that all the sites are searched for missing participants. Further, when a participant cannot be found online, it may be prudent to conduct internet searches for the participants’ contacts. Table 1.1 provides a list of databases and online tools often used by skip tracers that may be beneficial to community psychologists in their search efforts.

Sending Mail

Another strategy used by skip tracers involves sending a letter to the last known address of someone they need to locate with the ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED in large type on the front upper left hand corner underneath the return address. If the person is forwarding his or her mail to a new address, the letter will not be sent to him or her. Rather, the post office will return the letter to the skip tracer with a yellow sticker on the front indicating the person’s new address (Scott, 2003). Community psychologists could also benefit from using this low cost method to obtain new addresses for their lost participants.

Communication and Community Visiting

Skip tracers also frequently go into the community in order to locate individuals, either directly or through family members, employers, or known contacts and affiliates (McGilvrey, 2012). When entering the community, skip tracers build rapport (Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007), which can be accomplished verbally (i.e., appropriate word choice), and paralinguistically (Mackenzie & Wallace, 2011). Skip tracers develop cultural competencies that enable them to navigate through various communities and obtain information from the friends and family of those that they need to find. In so doing, they often mirror another person’s speech patterns or paralanguage to build rapport (McGilvrey, 2012), matching the rate, volume, and pitch of a person’s speech, along with using similar and culturally appropriate word choices (Sandoval & Adams, 2001). Mirroring helps to build rapport and interpersonal connection and gives the participant the feeling of being understood. These methods to build rapport are a prominent skill among skip tracers, and certainly many community psychologists use this method as well to build relationships with their community partners and collaborators. For example, a study into the feasibility of community research showed that having cultural competencies is a critical facilitator of success (Oscós-Sánchez, Lesser, & Kelley, 2008).

Discussion

Skip tracers often search for people who are difficult to find. Their jobs frequently require them to speak with others that may be reluctant to share information. They have developed a number of strategies to overcome obstacles to reaching people, and several of their strategies were highlighted in this article. Expanding and rotating the databases may produce more accurate results, and the inclusion of participants’ contacts in those searches enhances efforts to locate participants. Using rapport-building techniques like mirroring could prove to be useful for community psychologists, especially when they are trying to obtain information about participants through reluctant family and friends. Finally, visiting the community to communicate with the family and friends of participants could produce better ways of reducing attrition in community studies.

Attrition in longitudinal studies is a threat to producing valid outcomes in community research, and interpretations of the data can be skewed without the inclusion of often contrasting results from hard to find participants. Though methods of tracking are practiced and often effective in increasing retention, community psychologists can consider the adoption of alternative strategies used by investigative professionals. However, there are ethical challenges that community psychologists face when using these methods. Questions of confidentiality, privacy rights and concerns, and consent to search are all considerations that need to be taken when tracking participants. As an example, community researchers must have written consent from a participant in order to use their social security number to perform online searches for them. Additionally, it is critical that community psychologists
keep information regarding their participants confidential should they choose to contact their family or friends telephonically or through community visiting.

In summary, community psychologists’ tracking efforts will only be as good as the tracking information that is obtained, as well as the breadth of the consent given to search for additional information should contact with the participant be lost. If consent to search with a social security number is not given by a participant, then many of the online tools outlined in this article will not be applicable. However, when a community psychologist has the requisite consent from the participant to use their personal information to search for them, they may benefit from the incorporation of some of these skip tracing strategies examined herein.

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Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Incarcerated Urban Youth
Written by Nisha A. Sachdev

Incarcerated Youth and Mental Disorders
Individuals from minority populations have less access to receive quality mental health and prevention services; however they often have a higher prevalence of mental disorders and psychological problems due to exposure to adversities such as poverty, violence, and isolation (WHO, 2001; Burstein et al., 2009). More so, incarcerated youth are often at higher risk for mental disorders than the general youth population due to exposure to institutionalized settings, lack of mental health services, the misdiagnosis of symptoms, and exposures to traumatic events or conditions that predisposed them and/or occurred during the crime committed that led to incarceration.

In the United States, over 120,000 adolescents and children are living in juvenile justice institutions (Sickmund, 2004). For most of these youth, violent, aggressive, and antisocial behaviors led to placements here. Multiple studies have found that although aggression and violence are the main problems that are often involved with diagnosis of mental disorders in incarcerated youth, they in fact suffer from one or more mental disorders which is usually anxiety or depression (Abram, Teplin, McClelland & Dulcan, 2003). In fact, over 70% of these youth fit the criteria for one or more mental health disorders (Otto, Greenstein, Johnson, & Freidman, 2002). This high number has led incarceration to become an alternative to providing the services that these youth are really in need of — especially mental health services.
prevalence of PTSD symptoms in this population is between 16% and 32% in boys and 49% to 55% among girls (Vermeiren, 2003).

**Increased Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Incarcerated Youth**

PTSD occurs at high rates in juvenile delinquents (Steiner, Garcia, & Matthews, 1997). Although the consequences of being exposed to a traumatic event, including PTSD, are more commonly studied among adults, an increasing amount of research is being done on traumatic exposure and symptoms of PTSD. It was also found that while over 90% of incarcerated youth has been exposed to at least one traumatic event, only 12% of the sample met diagnostic criteria for PTSD (Abram et al., 2003). In addition, approximately 1 in 4 children who witnessed or experienced an arrest had elevated symptoms of posttraumatic stress (Phillips & Zhao, 2010).

Furthermore, children who have a history of traumatic exposure and PTSD are more likely to show problematic and delinquent behavior, such as substance abuse, engaging criminal activity, school truancy, and aggression (Steiner et al., 1997). Also, in one study it was found that almost all incarcerated youth had experienced at least one adverse life event and, on average, they said that they had been exposed to six different traumatic events, such as physical abuse. This led to the finding of them having high levels of PTSD symptoms (Steiner et al., 1997). The same researchers found that these PTSD symptoms (and not the level of traumatic exposure), was associated with the number of arrests and level of delinquent behavior in the past year which further exacerbates their exposure to the cycle of incarceration (Steiner et al., 1997).

Lastly, a longitudinal study following incarcerated youth from the ages of 11 to 32 years found that adults with PTSD histories of conduct disorder showing how issues in childhood lead to PTSD in adulthood (Phillips et al., 2010).

In general, within the mental health realm, there is a tendency to ignore the social and environmental stressors and socio-culture backgrounds that urban youth face. This can lead to misdiagnosis and a general alienation and poor use of mental health services (Xanthos, 2012). This is further intensified in the population of youth incarcerated due to the lack of mental health services available to them. A study conducted by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) found that in just a six month period about 15,000 youth (or 8% of the total number of incarcerated youth in the United States) waited an average of six months to two years in juvenile detention facilities because of the lack of mental health services available (Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), 2010).

This leads to further issues that exacerbate the already present mental health symptoms that the youth possess that could increase the symptoms of PTSD. For example, the increased use of incarceration “as a holding ground” causes crowding of institutions that leads to unsanitary living quarters, inadequate education, meager medical and mental health treatment, anger, depression and physical danger. Furthermore, there is a lack of staff (therefore attention provided to the youth) to work in these juvenile settings leading to more intimidation and violence between the youth. It has even been found that youth who have had no previous history of violence or gang involvement, may need to fight or affiliate with a gang for self-preservation (CDF, 2010). All of these could create or manifest PTSD symptoms (that may even have been present prior to incarceration).

**Personal Reflection**

Working with urban and/or incarcerated youth has provided me with firsthand experience in seeing the mental health problems that often go untreated. In addition, it has shown me how events that lead to incarceration are often undermined or seen as a way of life in their communities. Of major concern to me is the issue of homicide and link with PTSD. Here in DC the homicide rate is almost nine times higher than other urban areas. Through multiple roles, I have worked with or been involved with families who have experienced homicide – often through the loss of the sibling and child. I continue to see major cultural norms and influence the grieving process or time after these losses. For example, when talking to youth that were friends or family of the victim many are not surprised or are “used to” losing a loved one. I believe that they just do not know how to express their feelings as this may be an issue they are “frequently” exposed to. I remember my most recent loss of a youth and talking with his best friend for days after. The friend kept saying “Naw, I’m good… Things like this happen all the time.” When checking in on this friend for months after I saw a decline of his social interactions, fear to be around others, and avoidance of talking about the death which still have not been addressed.

In addition, I have been exposed to youth who have been a victim of gun-related crimes. Once again when speaking with many of them they avoid talking about it, have a hard time concentrating, remove themselves from places where they can seek help, and believe that it is a “normal thing” to be involved in gun related violence and it was their fault for being in the wrong place. While reading the section on PTSD, I found that I was naive to how many of the symptoms that can be seen with these youth that might often not be considered in diagnosis because of the cultural norms around violence.
or the lack of obvious portrayal of these symptoms. More research needs to be done on my part on homicide, victimization, grieving, and PTSD as it of importance in the incarcerated and/or urban youth population.

**Conclusion**

It is important to look at the connection between PTSD and delinquency. This is especially important with incarcerated youth because untreated symptoms could lead to lower self-esteem and making poor decisions. In addition, youth with PTSD and/or symptoms are more likely to experiment with alcohol or drugs and are at greater likelihood of taking risks (Otto et al., 199). By dealing with these issues early, later issues regarding PTSD can be alleviated.

**References**


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**Mid-Western Eco Conference Reflection**

**Eco Conference Travel Award**

Recipient 2012

Written by Samantha Flores

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University of DePaul

The theme for this year’s Midwest Eco conference was “ECOllaboration”. The 2012 planning committee from Michigan State University was thoughtful and purposeful in creating a comfortable space to promote conversations from multiple perspectives about the successes and challenges of engaging in collaborative work. It was obvious to me that bringing the conference back to the retreat-type setting, as opposed to the university setting, was very intentional to promote community network building. Despite the rainy weekend, the Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) was a beautiful fall scene, conveniently and remotely located in a forest in Hickory Corners, Michigan. For me, the three-hour ride from Chicago, Illinois to the KBS was really where the conference began. I carpooled with three graduate students from Chicago and we talked the whole way about the work we do, the graduate programs they were in, we even talked about the upcoming presidential elections and criticized the candidates on important social issues. I spoke with other people at the conference who also shared a similar experience with their carpool mates and roommates. Given that all of the buildings for Eco (e.g., the conference building, cafeteria, and dorms) were within walking distance, the KBS maximized the opportunities for interacting with other conference members. The organizing committee was successful in planning to host Eco in an environment that would promote building of new relationships and the potential for future collaborations with one another.

As a group of community-interested
funds, these conferences give us the opportunity to share the passion and excitement we have for our work. I met so many interesting and inspiring people at the conference. The keynote address was particularly inspiring for overcoming a number of persistent challenges over 17-year community based participatory research partnership. It is exciting to see the passion and commitment others have put forth for what they believe in. I was also able to participate in a number of lively conversations at the roundtable discussions I attended. A few community psychology veterans left a lasting message that I would like to share to my fellow peers and young professionals. In a well-attended roundtable, we were talking about the benefits and obstacles of collaborating with experts in other disciplines. This veteran said that, for young professionals coming into the field it is very hard to do good research when we believe the best research is a true experiment, but in reality, the world is not a laboratory, and at the end of the day, we have to believe in our work. Another veteran added to this comment saying, that young professionals should first find what it is that we are passionate about and that feeling will form the foundation to allow us to make the commitment required for long-term term social change. Whenever I leave a conference I always want to be refreshed with the community spirit and motivated to do more work in the areas that are so important to us all. Thank you to the planning committee for hosting such a conference.

Mid-Western Eco Conference Reflection
Eco Conference Travel Award Recipients 2012
Written by Corrina D. Simon csimon5@uic.edu,
Mark Relyea,
and Brittany Meyers,
University of Illinois, Chicago

Successful collaboration involves a dedication to creating a safe and mutually respectful atmosphere where diverse ideas and feedback are encouraged. From this standpoint, the Midwest ECO conference this year, hosted by Michigan State University, was a great example of its own theme, “ECollaboration.”

As I stood in front of my PowerPoint slides and the audience of Midwest ECO attendees who had come to hear a few of us speak about culture and diversity, I found myself taking a moment to reflect. “We’re doing a good job,” I stated. I shared with my colleagues that I would be presenting results from research that I had analyzed with a statistical method that I had been learning. For most of us, presenting on something for the first time can be nerve-wracking. However, I chose to present this project because I felt ECO was a safe and inviting atmosphere where I could feel supported in practicing my new statistical skills. Brittany Myers, another graduate student, felt similarly, stating “it was a very supportive and collaborative environment, which allowed me to present my research in a low-pressure but still constructive environment. There is no better place to debut your work if you want professional feedback that is simultaneously encouraging and cooperative.” This collaborative encouragement within the field makes graduate students, such as Myers and myself, feel supported to branch out and take risks.

The conference also showed that “we are doing a good job” in our dedication to collaborate with other fields. For instance, I participated in a roundtable discussion, “Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Community Psychologists: Benefits and Obstacles of Utilizing the Expertise of Other Disciplines” (Brown, Jason, Belyaev-Glantsman, Anderson, Sunquist, Im, & Schafer). We had a lively discussion about how community psychologists find that interdisciplinary collaboration is a necessity, yet can be difficult.

We talked about challenges to collaboration and offered possible solutions, such as taking the time to assess the readiness of all parties to engage in a collaborative process before moving forward too fast.

Lastly, the conference keynote highlighted what it looks like when “we are doing a good job” collaborating with the community. The keynote speakers, Angela Reyes and Barbara Israel, discussed the productive relationship of a Community Based Participatory Research project in Detroit that had been strong for more than a decade and involves numerous governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. In the spirit of successful collaboration, Reyes was one of the community members. She pointed out that without the long term dedication of Israel and her colleagues to researching with - not on - the community, the research would not have been as successful or useful to the community as it has been.

By showing successful collaborations within community psychologists, with other academics, and with community members, the Midwest ECO conference truly highlighted that “we are doing a good job.” Yet collaboration is an ongoing process that takes hard work and commitment. The roundtable members concluded that we need to continue to support and build collaborative efforts. The atmosphere and content of Midwest ECO left me hopeful that we can do exactly that.
North-Western Eco Conference Reflection
Written by Joyann Song
bsongpeterson@gmail.com, and Sonia Patel

How research in Community Psychology can impact our community

The 2012 NW Eco Conference held at the Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Counseling Psychology was a success! This year, the conference had multiple presentations relevant to the Community Psychology field. This year, the theme of the conference was research and how they impact our community directly. For example, the keynote speaker Janice Haaken shared her work with women refugees in England.

Here is what a volunteer/attendee had to say about this year’s conference:
“...was my opportunity to learn about the innovative and exciting community research being conducted both near and far by other members of the counseling community. I was truly impressed with the dedication and depth of knowledge with which they conducted their research. Their commitment to building successful programs and developing new theories is inspiring to those of us in the helping professions. I encourage more students and community members to participate as well as attend this conference next year. You will leave inspired by the sheer enthusiasm of the participants.”

We look forward to next year’s conference!

Graduate Students’ Reflections on the First Annual Northwest Community Research & Action Conference
Written by Wendy Viola and Erin Stack, Portland State University

The first annual Northwest Community Research and Action (NWCRA) (formerly Northwest Ecological-Community; NW Eco) conference was held at Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling in Portland, Oregon, on Friday, October 12, 2012. In some ways, we were reluctant about the name change because of the positive relationship NW Eco has always shared with the broader SCRA community. The organizers explained that while it was important to keep that connection, it was equally as important to understand the needs of our community and its impact in spreading the news about the conference. Fortunately, despite the change in the conference’s name, the spirit of community, collaboration, and exposure to the field of Community Psychology that has defined NW Eco for the last six years remained. The relatively small number and geographical dispersion of the Northwest’s Community Psychology and related programs produced a pool of attendees with varying familiarity with Community Psychology as a field and with each other’s work. NWCRA served as many attendees’ first exposure to the field of Community Psychology, and all attendees were exposed to Community Psychology work being conducted throughout the expansive region.

A unique feature of this year’s NWCRA was that its host, Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling, is not a Community Psychology affiliate. As a result, many of the graduate students who helped organize and facilitate the conference are students of Community Counseling, whose professional lives will entail the provision of direct service to community members. The collaboration between Lewis and Clark and the region’s Community Psychology programs provided an opportunity for conference organizers and participants to strengthen bridges between Community Counseling and Community Psychology.

Through discussions and conference presentations, it was evident that Community Psychology values are present in the work of the Lewis and Clark students and faculty. It was a great space to learn from one another on how to effectively and ethically apply Community Psychology values to our diverse work.

Many of those attending NWCRA were undergraduate students from Portland State University and Lewis and Clark College, either currently enrolled in their first Community Psychology courses, or with little to no formal knowledge of the field. For many of the undergraduate attendees, NWCRA provided not only their first formal exposure to Community Psychology, but their first experience at an academic conference. Recognizing the curiosity of these attendees, the conference included a panel discussion of Community Psychology researchers, teachers, and practitioners. We sat on the panel as graduate student representatives to exemplify one pathway of becoming a Community Psychologist. As a panel, we discussed the impact of Community Psychology within our lives. Specifically, we discussed our journey to Community Psychology, the opportunities available to us, the social implications of our work, and how Community Psychology values affect the work we do and the settings in which we work. The panel was facilitated by Steven Lucas, an undergraduate student curious about applications of Community Psychology, and was intended to provide clarity and concreteness about the roles and opportunities to which training in Community Psychology provide access. Dr. Eric Mankowski, Dr. Allen Ratcliffe, and Dr. Tod Sloan provided insight on being Community Psychology researchers, all at different stages of their careers, within and outside of...
academia. Being a part of the panel provided us a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the moments when we both discovered Community Psychology and the ways it has transformed our lives in relation to the way we look at the world. We feel grateful that we had the opportunity to encourage other students to get involved in the field of Community Psychology and push for research that is ecological, strength-based, and socially relevant. Even as graduate students, we are still learning about the diversity of topics and contexts to which Community Psychology can be applied, and it was exciting to hear from other panelists about the range of opportunities that lie ahead of us as future researchers and community practitioners.

Wendy and her research team from Portland State University, including PI Dr. Eric Mankwoski, Sylvia Ferguson, and Brian Jacoby, also facilitated a round-table discussion of gender-based action research in community settings, encouraging participants to draw on and contribute their own experiences as gendered beings within communities. The premise of the round-table provided a space for all attendees to interact as peers, and to consider their own experiences from a Community Psychology perspective, in some cases, for the first time. It was very satisfying to see undergraduate students and faculty members contributing equally to the conversation. The discussion drew our attention to the importance of role models and mentorship in developing gender identity, concepts that our team’s research is yet to address directly, but may feature more prominently in our future work. It was a great opportunity to identify some of our own blind spots, while simultaneously getting students new to Community Psychology excited about the potential for the field and their own experiences to mutually inform each other.

The programs that comprise SCRA’s Western region are dispersed among Alaska, California, Hawai’i, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, and the challenges of being so far-flung make it difficult to stay abreast of research and practice occurring at other universities within our own region. This year’s NWCRA physically brought together participants from across the region, providing an opportunity for scholars up and down the West Coast to be exposed to and learn from the work of colleagues based far from home. Considering the great distances that many members of SCRA’s Western region would have to travel in order to attend NWCRA, the conference organizers also facilitated presentations via Skype. Laura Kati Corlew presented her research on Tuvaluans’ responses to climate change’s impending destruction of their island nation from Hawai’i. Dr. Ratcliffe participated in the panel discussion of the application of Community Psychology from Tacoma, WA. It was wonderful to see our colleagues’ dedication to exchanging ideas and maintaining contact with each other, and the creative ways that we are able to do so.

The presentations at NWCRA represented a wide range of research contexts and methods, exposing attendees to research conducted overseas and in other areas of the United States, in addition to that of researchers currently located elsewhere within the Western region. Presentations addressed a reconstruction and reconciliation project in Rwanda, the challenges facing asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, youths’ perceptions of tourism in Costa Rica, the work of the Highlander Research and Education Center in Tennessee, and community participation and inclusion of individuals with psychiatric disabilities in the Carolinas. Many of these programs of research also used less common methods, exposing attendees to the use of interviews conducted through translators, documentary film as a means of motivating social change, adolescents’ engagement in photovoice, and Geographic Information Systems. We were astounded by the number of communities around the country and world whose stories were represented at the conference, and proud to belong to a group of professionals who are dedicated to helping the world’s less powerful and less visible communities articulate and disseminate their stories.

As we look forward to SCRA’s 14th biennial conference in Miami next year, NWCRA was a great reminder of how important it is to continue to spread the news of Community Psychology work and values. The intimate space allowed students and faculty to engage, ask questions, and contribute in meaningful ways to several presentations. The collaboration throughout sessions positively reflects the openness and pride many of us have in Community Psychology values and demonstrates how these values do not only manifest within our research teams but also across disciplines. In the spirit of Eco conferences across the country, the initial NWCRA conference provided an accessible, friendly, and collaborative environment for undergraduate students to experience their first conference, for future counselors to gain exposure to Community Psychology, and for Community Psychology students, faculty, and practitioners to learn about the work that their colleagues are conducting in their own region and beyond. Personally, it allowed us to continue to grow as young Community Psychology scholars and researchers and reflect on the positive influences of Community Psychologists across our region.
Principles of Social Change is written for those who are impassioned and driven by social justice issues in their communities and seek practical solutions. Leonard A. Jason, a leading community psychologist, demonstrates how social change can be accomplished and fostered by observing five key principles: (1) determine the nature of the change desired, (2) identify who holds the power, (3) create coalitions, (4) be patient but persistent, and (5) measure your success. Describing these principles through first-hand accounts of the experiences of people who have worked on a range of social justice issues, Jason gives unique insight and presents a comprehensive approach toward the development of social and community interventions, such as protecting the well-being of children, providing affordable housing, combating abuses of power, and cleaning up the environment. Principles of Social Change provides answers about what citizens and community action groups can do in collaboration with healthcare professionals to address these seemingly intractable problems. It is essential reading for community psychologists, social activists, policy makers, and students and trainees in these fields.
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