Expanding Our Presence

“The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.” – Mark Twain

Within the past year, at two separate conferences, different psychologists have reported that they thought community psychology had died. In each case, they had positive memories of community psychology, but both thought we had kicked the bucket some time ago.

If you compare the number of programs we list in 2007 vs 2011 as providing training in community psychology, there were 76 programs listed in 2007 and 71 in 2011, with the largest declines in clinical-community MA programs (from 8 to 3 programs) and interdisciplinary PhD programs (from 17 to 12). This was offset by increases in the number of community psychology graduate programs (from 13 to 17 PhD and 13 to 18 MA). Clearly, the existence of 71 programs providing training in community psychology suggests we’re not on our collective deathbeds.

I would guess that much of the reduction in clinical-community programs is due to issues involved in APA accreditation, a growing emphasis on “biological” bases of behavior, and the perception that there is more money available in biological research. But the small reduction in programs, given the continuing need for people with systems and preventive orientations, points to the need for us to find ways to support and expand our graduate programs.

To do this, SCRA is starting to focus on several different tasks, including:

- helping existing graduate programs improve their training (through consultation with programs and development of practice competencies);
- supporting faculty, many of whom are the sole community psychologists in their departments (through planned small grants and mentorship);
- increasing the presence of community psychology in introductory and other textbooks;
- enhancing demand for community psychology graduates among employers (through the value proposition and employer survey); and
- expanding the pipeline of students who are interested in and applying to our graduate programs (through better communication with Psi Chi, the Idealist organization, and a better Web presence).

In our strategic planning effort at the Mid-Winter Meeting, the Executive Committee (EC) identified steps to move on all of these fronts. But a key effort that will facilitate all of these is the development of a visibility campaign to help the world see us as the vibrant, exciting, discipline that we are. We want people to see that community psychology can help them make a difference in their worlds. I’m reminded of the “Ten Years After” band’s song with lyrics saying: “I’d love to change the world, but I don’t know what to do, so I’ll leave it up to you.” We can help people know what to do, but first we have to let them know what we can do.

I’ve never been a big fan of public relations campaigns, and I’ve been openly critical of some efforts that have spent lavish sums on “rebranding” or minor changes in name or logo. I always thought that substance was what we should focus on, and the rest would take care of itself.

However, I’ve changed my mind.
I don’t think we can afford to do that anymore. To avoid being a “dead” discipline (or more specifically, one that is viewed as dead, since we’ve really been very much alive, albeit “stealthy”), we need to do better at letting people know about us.

One major effort is headed by Bill Neigher and Roger Mitchell, who are taking steps to improve our Web presence. We need to use electronic media in its many forms to tell our story, and help potential students who share our values and interests to learn how community psychology training can enable them to make a difference. Social media can also help potential employers see what we can do and help increase demand for our graduates. We welcome your inputs and will enlist your help in improving our Web site and increasing our visibility. Yet, while we are using SCRA resources to improve visibility of community psychology, there are a number of things that every program and member can do. Let me tell about our local efforts, as some examples of what we all can do.

For a relatively new Ph.D. program like ours at UNC Charlotte, which is a community psychology program housed within a health psychology program, increasing our visibility is a major challenge. We’ve been working to create a greater awareness of community psychology, our graduate program, and the quality of our students and their work, with a desire to have more applicants and more students and to grow the program. As a component of a health psychology program, many people initially think we’re focused on medical or physical health issues, which is not true. I often argue that everything that community psychologists do is directly related to health, but the name and structure of the program have limited our visibility as a community psychology training program.

We recently enlisted our college’s public relations person to help us identify audiences and messages. We’ve looked at other programs’ Web sites. We’ve identified several main audiences: prospective students, nationally; faculty around the country who might suggest that students consider our program; university administrators who control resources; our departmental colleagues; and our current and potential community partners. Messages include: a description of community psychology, what our program entails, characteristics of the people (faculty and students) involved in the program, our community partnerships and projects, the scholarly products of our students and faculty, and the impact of our students and faculty on the community.

So how are we sharing these messages with our audiences? We’re revising our Web site, adding in more information about community psychology as a discipline. We’re using the SCRA pamphlet (see the SCRA Web site), the great description of community psychology written by Sharon Hakim that is posted on Idealist.com (http://www.idealist.org/info/GradEducation/Resources/DegreeOverviews/CommunityPsychology) and the article in Eye on Psi Chi “Community Psychology: Using the ‘Big Picture’ Perspective to Help People” article by Pia Stanard (http://www.psichi.org/Pubs/Articles/Article_806.aspx). These are great resources that anyone can link to.

We’ve changed all the text that described our program as a “Community Health Track” to call ourselves a community psychology program, everywhere. We’re working to have a consistent message that search engines will find, and adding in more images (since much of what we do isn’t terribly photogenic, we have to struggle a bit and I have to nag everyone to use the cameras on their phones and get over being photo aversive).
As a way to better target our potential student audience, I created a “Community Psychology at UNCC” Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CommunityPsychologyatUNCC) which I’m encouraging students and faculty to use to post projects, awards, etc. While I have to confess that I really don’t like Facebook, given peoples’ tendency to share more information than I ever wanted to know, I’ve been trying to learn how to use social media because of its great potential for helping people connect and engage. We’re working to highlight our partnerships with community groups for our mutual benefit. The Facebook page is linked to our program Web page to make it easier for people to find us. Our hope is that everyone “likes” our page and our program gets more exposure. We’ll see how that works out.

To make sure we’re providing a clear message to our local partners, we’ve taken steps to have our research team label itself consistently in local publications and with our community partners. We’re now calling ourselves the Community Psychology Research Lab at UNC Charlotte, consistently. This is a deliberate effort to describe ourselves as practicing community psychology, while focusing on the science/research aspects of our work and capitalizing on our university’s inclination to support “lab sciences.” I’ve heard some people express concern that the term “lab” might turn some people in the community off. We haven’t seen that happen, but we’re monitoring it to try to make sure that isn’t a problem.

Within the university, I take advantage of every opportunity to make sure my chair and the rest of the department know how many graduate students we fund (more than the rest of the department), and how we have been consistent in obtaining external funding. I make sure they know what we do, and regularly provide counterpoints to assumptions about the inherent greater funding potential for biological research.

At an individual level, I just noticed that, for a presentation to a multidisciplinary group of scholars from around the world, I had neglected to include a slide that told them what community psychology is. We can’t assume they know unless we tell them. We’re working on our students’ presentation of themselves when in the community, to get them to change their introductions from “I’m a graduate student...” or “I’m in the community health program...” to “I’m in the community psychology program...”. I make sure that every time I introduce myself, or give a presentation, or am in the press, I’m described as a community psychologist. Whenever dealing with reporters, I make it very clear that they need to say that specifically. Several years ago I was pleased to hear one of our community partners describe us to local officials as from the “department of community psychology.” Clearly, he got the message.
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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.
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CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES
The Children, Youth & Families Interest Group facilitates the interests of childhood 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.
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COMMUNITY HEALTH
The Community Health Interest Group focuses on health promotion, disease prevention, and health care service delivery issues as they relate to the community.
Co-chairs: Daniel Lounsbury,
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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 Lijenquist,
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Erin Stack, erinestack@gmail.com
ENVIRONMENT & JUSTICE
The Environment & Justice Interest Group is focused on research and action related to global climate change and environmental degradation. With a focus on environmental justice, particularly how environmental change affects and often perpetuates social inequality, this group explores the role community psychology can and should play in understanding these urgent changes to our ecology.
Chair: Courte Voorhees,
(505) 306-7323
INDEPENDENCE
The Indigenous Interest Group is hosted by the Australian, New Zealand and Pacific branch of the Society for Community Research and Action. The aims of this group are intertwined.
Firstly, it wants to support SCRA members who are conducting indigenous research by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, literature and experience. This will assist the Group’s more specific focus which is to utilize our combined resources more effectively to conduct strengths-based praxis towards raising public awareness of the plight of indigenous people and addressing the social justice issues they face in oppressive dominant societies.
Co-chairs: Brian Bishop,
B.Bishop@curtin.edu.au;
Lizzie Finn, lfin@curtin.edu.au
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, & TRANSGENDER (LGBT)
The LGBT Interest Group increases awareness of the need for community research and action related to issues that impact LGBT people, and serves as a mechanism for communication, collaboration, and support among community psychologists who are either interested in research/service/policy related to LGBT people and communities, and/or who identify as LGBT.
Co-chairs: Richard Jenkins,
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Maria Valente, valent60@msu.edu
ORGANIZATION STUDIES
The Organization Studies Interest Group is a community of scholars who are interested in community 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,
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PREVENTION & PROMOTION
The Prevention & Promotion 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,
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RURAL
The Rural Interest Group is devoted to highlighting issues of the rural environment that are important in psychological research, service, and teaching.
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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,
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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 point of all of this is that there are many things each of us can do to advance our discipline and promote our work. We just have to determine how we can expand the presence of community psychology and then make a point to do so. The EC is working to help support community psychology training and we can use your ideas and help. But we can all do something. I hope our local and national efforts will make it easier to argue for hiring more community psychologists, to obtain more high quality students, to strengthen our partnerships, and to enhance our ability to fund our students.

I know I’m a novice at this, particularly in social networking (and I really find much of it personally annoying). But this is increasingly a tool for community change efforts, as evidenced by their importance in the Arab spring and the Occupy movements. Share your suggestions about how we can get the word out. Email me at jcook@uncc.edu. Or go to our Facebook page.

Jim

From the Editor
Maria B.J. Chun,
University of Hawai’i at Manoa

“Mahalo!”
On behalf of David Jackson, Associate Editor, and myself, we would like to thank you for granting us the opportunity to serve SCRA. The past three years have been a truly wonderful experience for us. We’ve been a part of some significant changes to TCP -- with regard to 1) format, with a crisp, professional look, 2) content, with new, amended, and revised columns, and 3) delivery, with posting on the Web immediately upon finalization of the draft.

We wish the incoming Editors -- Sylvie Taylor and Gregor Sarkisian -- the best of luck. We know they will do an excellent job and make TCP even better. Like us, they are fortunate to have the support of Roger Mitchell and the Publications Committee. David and I will still be around assisting with the transition. Please keep in touch with us if you are visiting Hawaii – maybe APA 2013?

I’ll be doing my part to promote SCRA at the APA SLC. In the past as a partially-funded Diversity Delegate and now as Diversity Chair for the Hawaii Psychological Association, I am proud to represent myself as a community psychologist. I am quite certain that I am the only community psychologist among the Diversity Delegates, who are almost exclusively clinicians; however, I am welcomed with open arms and many attendees have asked me to tell them more about community psychology and even note the importance of inviting and including more community psychologists.

Vince Francisco had also recently invited me to serve as an Associate Editor for the Community Health column in GJCCP. I am looking forward to working with him and the other Editors over the next three years.

Borrowing a line from my son’s friend on the eve of their fifth grade graduation — Aloha for now, but not forever — Maria

Book Review

Methodological Approaches to Community-Based Research
(Jason and Glenwick, 2012)

Guest Reviewer Patrick W. Corrigan,
Illinois Institute of Technology

The ring psychologists must keep to the fore as we seek to impact communities is to remember that essentially we are scientists. It is hard to do, sometimes, when faced with the overwhelming concerns of our real world partners. Still, we must be mindful of the research methods and analytic paradigms we might use to keep an empirical focus on our work. This focus is essential for us to communicate community practices shown to be effective. The methods need to be incorporated into our evaluation strategies as we seek to demonstrate the worth of strategies in the real community. They are the foundation of our extra-community efforts, too; the rigorous science we do to add to the evidence base of what might generally work out there in the real world.

The challenge: much of what we learned in our experimental psychology class does not easily translate to the world. Kurt Lewin knew this: ‘Theories of psychology only make sense in context, in the setting or the community in which real groups of people interact. Research methods for community-based research, therefore, pose
significant conceptual and technical challenges. Fortunately for us, in their book entitled, *Methodological Approaches to Community-Based Research*, Jason and Glenwick (2012) gathered together an able group of psychologists and peers to meet the challenge. Research methods need to extend beyond the positivist notions of some sciences, wholeheartedly integrating the perspectives of the communities we seek to assess. Theirs is a wise text where psychologists boldly admit to the need for mixed methods to achieve this integration. This book is useful, however, in not just simply asserting that qualitative methods need to be added to the community psychologists’ armamentarium. The text provides a sophisticated discussion of the many different ways this kind of effort proceeds. Anchored in community-based participatory research, the book provides a reasoned discussion of the benefits and limitations of qualitative/quantitative pluralism, and conservative ways in which the cost ratio might be maximized. A chapter by Campbell and colleagues, for example, provides an insightful review of the strengths and challenges of coming to the research table with qualitative and quantitative research tools.

The book’s editors believe community research is done by wisely expanding beyond psychological methods to the purview of other social sciences: population strategies of sociologists, cultural context of anthropologists, and cost concerns of economists. Community psychologists often need to look beyond their behavioral science comfort zone to collect and make sense of data that answer the questions of the community they seek to serve. The book does this by organizing the panoply of principles and practices into four parts. The first is philosophical in intent, nicely contrasting, for example, basic considerations of pragmatism and perspectivism. Parts II through IV then organize research practices into three meaningful arrays: the grouping of data (e.g., separate chapters on cluster and meta-analyses), change over time (e.g., time series and survival analyses), and context (multi-level modeling and epidemiologic approaches). Jason and Glenwick asked authors to similarly format chapters in these four parts: first, an overall review of the approach followed second, by an example when the approach was masterfully done.

I must admit, the book crossed my desk at an especially poignant moment; I am in the midst of retooling my fall, graduate course in research methods for clinical, community, and rehabilitation psychologists. Jason and Glenwick’s book rises to the challenge of what I want for such a diverse group of students. At this stage in their careers, I want to balance mastery of technique with appreciation of the principles underlying the techniques. Regardless of where our graduates go, I want doctors of psychology to understand the different “ways” they might approach real world questions, and the varying strategies to realize these ways. The editors got their chapter authors to do this. I also believe *Methodological Approaches* will become an often sought resource for me and the next time I want to trigger a recollection about an effective strategy to address a difficulty community question. Jason and Glenwick, in this single work, have accomplished this mutual goal: a book for both students and scientists.

Reference

Community Action
Edited by Bradley Olson, National Louis University

Engaging the Occupy Movement Through Worker Cooperatives
Written by Joyce Sinakhone, DePaul University and Bradley Olson, National Louis University

In reaction to an unforgiving financial environment and other economic realities, the Occupy Wall Street movement burst into the national consciousness in the Fall of 2011. Since then, community psychologists have discussed ways to support Occupy—from serving as an empirical bridge between grassroots movement and policy change, to shedding light on inequities within academia. A stated aim of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) is to have a “global impact on enhancing well-being and promoting social justice for all people by fostering collaboration where there is division and empowerment where there is oppression” (SCRA, n.d.). One of the many possible avenues for achieving these goals may be, paradoxically, by focusing on a seldom studied alternative business model: the worker cooperative.

Community psychology values include an inherent appreciation for a setting’s history, culture, and social and economic influences. In striving to promote well-being, diversity and social justice, researchers have been drawn to member-run alternative settings such as Delancy Street and Oxford House. The principles of worker cooperatives are not terribly different. Empowerment, wellness, collaboration, community participation and enduring change are integral to sustaining employee-owned enterprises. Occupy advocates have decried corporations’ unethical business practices. Corporations are known for quickly cutting down the
workforce or cherishing profit over integrity. Worker cooperatives, in contrast, can thrive while creating prosperity for their own members and the broader community. The U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives points out that cooperatives are fundamentally different from traditional corporations:

Worker cooperatives tend to create long-term stable jobs, have sustainable business practices, and be connected and accountable to their community…workers own their jobs and they have a direct stake in the local environment and the power to decide to do business in a way that creates community benefit rather than destroying it. (US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, n.d.)

**Equal opportunities exist in most cooperatives for community involvement and empowerment through member education, training and economic participation.**

Unlike exclusive corporate hierarchies, these democratically-run businesses welcome anyone who can accept the commitment required of membership. Equal opportunities exist in most cooperatives for community involvement and empowerment through member education, training and economic participation. While employee-owned cooperatives are for-profit, equal value is placed in innovation, transparency and concern for the broader community. Much like some self-help groups, cooperatives can connect with government agencies and other external networks in ways that allow the collaboratives to maintain autonomy through sustained democratic control. Majority-owned collaboratives tend to also challenge the economic inequalities and unethical practices perpetuated by corporate forces. As Rothschild (2009) states:

Worker–owners of cooperatives have generally chosen to limit the difference between top pay and bottom pay in their enterprises to a 5:1 ratio. This is a far cry from the nearly 600:1 ratio that a recent Wall Street Journal survey found prevailing in corporate America…Cooperative enterprises tend also, empirically, to insist on ‘sunshine rules,’ making the books and other relevant information accessible to all owner–workers and the subject of open discussion, thereby eliminating the corruption that is known to arise from official secrets. (p. 1027)

In countries outside the U.S., employee-owned enterprises have a long and successful history. One of the most known examples is Spain’s federation of 256 companies: the Mondragon Corporation. Mondragon has employed over 83,859 people, and produced over $19 billion in revenue in 2009. Membership-based organizations have also prospered in developing countries such as India. The Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), an organization of about 700,000 women, helps poor, self-employed women combat poverty through employment. Mondragon and SEWA operate in very different cultures, yet both have encouraged economic development by running cooperative community banks. Seed capital is produced that creates critical resources back to the community—resources for skills training, health care, and new cooperatives.

Millions of working class Brazilian citizens have organized through the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) (‘Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra’ in Portuguese; Patel, 2008). While Brazil leads the world in soybean production, decades of soy plantation expansion pushed millions of families off their land. The MST formed in 1984 to peacefully occupy unused rural land. The movement represented a number of causes: the promotion of food sovereignty, land reform, ecological sustainability, income equality and the elimination of worker exploitation. The democratic encampments of the MST offer members opportunities to produce and sell their own food through farming cooperatives. Basic necessities including education and healthcare are also provided through these innovative community structures.

Fortunately, the concept of democratically-run companies is gaining momentum in the United States. Michael Moore’s 2009 documentary, “Capitalism: A Love Story,” featured two American worker cooperatives: Isthmus Engineering and Alvarado Street Bakery. Community psychologists can highlight existing resources that aid in the startup of cooperative businesses. For example, the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Center for Cooperatives and the Ohio Cooperative Development Center at Ohio State University offer guidance and support to new cooperatives. Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson welcomes the opportunity to, as he says, create careers, not just jobs, and combat the city’s longstanding history...
of economic hardship: “Having people able to participate in the creation and access to wealth that would normally be excluded is really the best part of this” (Evergreen Cooperatives, n.d.). Edward Code, an Evergreen Cooperative employee, describes that cooperative as an “opportunity program.” “This is not just me getting back into a work habit or something like that. This is an opportunity for me to get ahead” (Evergreen Cooperatives, n.d.).

Community psychologists can also support the Occupy movement by initiating research on, and advocating for, policies that facilitate the creation, maintenance and growth of worker cooperatives. Rothschild (2009) suggests that the federal government can provide support through the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), which provides support to workers whose jobs have been affected by international trade:

“The federal government could effectively support the development of viable worker cooperatives in the nation by (a) offering direct financial and technical assistance to aid their formation, especially for groups of employees who could organize to request such support in the face of plant or office relocations to other parts of the world, and (b) offering some type of contract preference to cooperative enterprises that bid on infrastructure or other public works so in need of attention at this time. (p. 1034)

Government initiatives have also been achieved at the state level. In 2007, Indiana State Treasurer Richard Mourdock supported the creation of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) by offering $50 million to help banks fund ESOP transactions. Companies that utilize these plans offer employees rights to stock shares as a kind of benefits plan upon leaving the company. Community psychologists could encourage change in America’s corporate culture by calling attention to democratically-run ESOPs that function under worker cooperative principles, such as Once Again Nut Butter, a company in western upstate New York.

Most people would likely agree that the ethos of American culture relies upon one essential belief: upward mobility can be achieved with a tireless work ethic and a democratic system. What, then, could be more American than a worker cooperative? This business model is a path for second order change that promotes social equity and human rights, has the mutual management-employee benefit of financially sound business practices, helps inform citizens of existing community assets, and promotes increased political involvement. Worker cooperatives represent a viable economic second order change solution to social inequities, for employees and community members alike. Research collaborations with employee-run businesses could bring about tangible changes in our country’s excessively capitalistic culture, and put the shared values of both community psychologists and members of the Occupy Movement into practice.

References

a field of psychology it is much newer than clinical psychology, but the skills and competencies needed to practice community psychology have been nonprofit operational essentials as old as clinical psychology. This factor makes it easier to practice community psychology in the nonprofit setting than other disciplines.

Practicing community psychology in the agency I lead starts with community engagement. Rodriguez (2009) defines community engagement as “bringing together community building, community organizing, and community leadership to improve lives and strengthen communities” (para. 1). To remain sustainable and valued by the community, it is critical that nonprofits engage every stakeholder in the community in helping to solve its greatest challenges. For example, members of the community who are homeless must have a seat at the decision making table regarding community needs, the same as members who are housed.

The community psychology competency of policy analysis and advocacy is also a practice I am using more frequently in the nonprofit setting. As our nation continues to battle challenges with current political issues that impact nonprofits, to not get involved with helping inform and shape public policy is not an option. Nearly every day I receive emails from one advocacy group or another requesting letters or telephone calls be sent to legislators to restore funding for human services, or push for increases in line items of local, state and federal budgets. Additionally, effective public policy advocacy requires having and using good research skills, intrinsic to practicing community psychology as well.

Looking to the literature in policy making and other areas such as identifying evidence-based program models keeps me on point with crafting influential position statements and developing and implementing quality programs. Other skills and competencies of community psychology I practice in the nonprofit setting include program development and implementation, empowering staff and consumers, and program evaluation. Quality program evaluation is a huge factor in today’s nonprofits as public and private funders are increasingly mandating quantitative and qualitative evaluations as part of grant agreements.

To ensure that others are aware of and value competency in the nonprofit setting, I promote furthering of education, through formal colleges and universities, informal learning through workshops and seminars, gaining the proper licensures when applicable, and staying abreast of approaches that are evidence-based such as harm reduction and housing-first approaches to homelessness. I also facilitate in-service workshops for my staff on a wide range of competencies including cultural sensitivity, subjective versus objective thinking, and empowerment versus enabling. As we move forward into the future with more and more students becoming community psychologists, I believe the industry will be strengthened and the communities and its members served will experience this impact as well!

References

A Lorax Metaphor: How Community Psychology Values Guide Work with Nonprofits
Written by Dawn Henderson, North Carolina State University

Considering the recent release of The Lorax, I chose to use this metaphor to elaborate on how work in some nonprofits is guided by values of “caring, compassion, and support for community structures that involves a concern for the welfare of others” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005, p.32).

Nonprofits collectively account for about 9 percent of all wages and salaries paid in the United States (The Urban Institute, 2009), yet there is a higher value of unpaid work contributed to nonprofits by individuals who care a whole awful lot. What drives individuals to enter the nonprofit sector is debatable; research, however, suggest that factors such as intrinsic motivation play a vital role in this decision making process (Schepers et al., 2005). Wittmer (1991) discovered earlier that nonprofit employees are motivated by a concern for others and a desire to serve public needs rather than extrinsic rewards such as income. Consequently, one can argue that individuals who enter into nonprofits are often engaged in actions and behaviors that drive them towards becoming effective agents of change.

I have worked in the public service sector for more than twelve years and, after leaving teaching, had the opportunity to work in a community-based nonprofit for an adolescent pregnancy prevention project. I was hired as a curriculum coordinator but that quickly evolved into additional positions including academic coordinator, community outreach coordinator, newsletter editor, and on some occasions “baby sitter.” In an attempt to maintain the goals and objectives of the project, I wore many hats and was often underpaid or not paid at all. More than ten years later, I find myself back in a nonprofit, volunteering as an evaluator in a youth-serving organization and trying to manage “fuzzy boundaries” as I slip into roles from program developer to grant writer to tutor.

I have written on the importance of managing boundaries within these settings


Applying Community Psychology Knowledge in Nonprofit Settings
Written by Christopher Corbett

Nonprofit (NP) settings provide many opportunities to apply community psychology (CP), yet present challenges as well. This article seeks to detail various opportunities by identifying some roles a CP can play in an NP setting.

NP settings vary widely from small, local settings to large multi-million dollar national and international organizations. A CP’s opportunities and experience in these settings also varies depending on the role played, such as: intern, employee, consultant, volunteer, member, and board member. A CP can also influence these settings by conducting research that informs NP operations or practices. Roles I’ve played as an MA level practitioner include: intern (to learn workplace wellness skills for NY’s model Employee Assistance Program (Duffy & Wong, 1996, p. 251; 259), volunteer (committee role in an environmental NP, legislative committee chair in a disability NP, and grant writer in a suicide prevention NP), board member (disability NP), and researcher (informing NP operations or practice by publishing research relevant to NP settings). In each, I exercised CP skills. My choice of roles followed my desire to: apply CP values and skills to implement social change, intervene at highest levels, promote enduring system change, influence legislators and public policy, and seek resources to support disability services or suicide prevention.

Another factor impacting my role choices was potential impact - limit to one NP or a full population, like disabled NY citizens? The latter required advocacy and public policy skills and competencies, specifically, engaging face-to-face with federal and state politicians such as senators, members of Congress, state senators, and assembly members. This also required testimony in hearings twice, subject to questioning by such state officials. It was at that first hearing in 2001 when “Advocacy and Public Policy” became a “core competency” to me - as it has been ever since. Legislative intervention greatly expands your potential influence far beyond NP behavior settings - to both formal and informal settings where public policy decisions are actually made.

A CP can also influence these settings by conducting research that informs NP operations or practices. To influence NP managers, executives and board members, I sought publication in Nonprofit Management & Leadership, their key management practitioner journal, in the areas of evaluation (Corbett, 2000) and public policy (Corbett, 2005). More recently, I aimed for the same audience to improve NP governance, preventing dysfunction by modifying the NP’s “behavior setting” (Corbett, 2011).

Many roles enable exercising CP skills and training, as in: evaluation, grant writing and advocacy & public policy. All three are critical areas of NP need, and although all have not been consistently part of CP training, fortunately, all clearly fall within evolving “core competencies” (Scott, 2007). A core belief of long ago from the various roles I have played in NP settings is: all nonprofits should have at least one CP on the board, with others

References


in management, as well as on their staff. Due to overlap of key NP needs with CP skills and evolving “core competencies,” opportunities abound for CPs to powerfully influence many NP settings - and beyond.

C. Corbett is a master’s level CP and member of ARNOVA, ISTR and SCRA since 1994.

References

Practicing Community Psychology: Struggles Applying the Principles of Community Psychology In Nonprofits as a Nonprofit Worker and as an Academic
Written by Suzette Fromm Reed, National Louis University

From the moment I shifted my focus from clinical psychology to community psychology, I never envisioned myself in academia. I knew I had to be in the community (as I understood it at that time). My nonprofit work has ranged from the local to the national level and I have worked at every level within nonprofits from intern, to director, to Vice President. Each organization and position came with a unique set of advantages and disadvantages.

At the national level, I learned how to bridge the gap between research and marketing/communications. I learned the benefits of Social Marketing and Media Advocacy and could see the clear applications to many issues viewed through a community psychologist’s lens. Press releases were more important than publications. Building and maintaining relationships with foundations were critical. You spend a lot of time seeking or seeking to maintain funding. At the local level, for my work, meeting state funding and reporting requirements was at the heart of every daily task.

As I moved “up” the organizational hierarchy to VP, I assumed, somewhat naively, I would have more control to apply the principles of community psychology throughout the organization - and then there was the organizational structure that was not taught in textbooks or classrooms. Staff and board members liked doing what they had been doing for years -- focusing on deficits and not changing the programming. I don’t believe this was unique to any specific organization. It is difficult to encourage an organization to continually evolve when many agencies are worked beyond their limits simply filling out the necessary paperwork to keep the doors open. Stepping in and asking staff and board members to consider what aspects of their programming work and what impact they are having on the lives of their participants was beyond their focus. Not to mention, asking over-worked staff to take time to consider what has been learned from best practices, or worse, asking staff or board members to consider if what they are doing is actually making a difference, is not an easy task. As Henderson noted in this practice column, intrinsic motivation (Schepers et al., 2005) and concern for others (Wittmer, 1991) are what drive individuals to work in nonprofits, not income. By asking staff to consider if all the time-consuming, emotionally demanding work that they have been doing has actually made any difference, you are questioning the meaning in their lives. It does not have to go to that extreme, but this is the delicate territory you are entering. After moving into the academic world, I presumed these struggles of practicing community psychology would be easier, and in some ways they are. However, I have learned that it tends to be easier to ensure these principles are applied when you are the principal investigator and in charge of how the funding is allocated - a benefit I took for granted while in the nonprofit arena. When you are serving as a research, or evaluation consultant, your skills are valued, but not understood. I have had community members clearly state that they just don’t see the value in having children spend their time “testing” (as they see it), rather than just playing. They could see the programs were working because the children were happy and it made them feel good to see the happy children. We are again entering that delicate territory of questioning whether or not all their hard work matters only now you are an outsider, rather than a boss.

The process of not being in charge of resources and working on a community grant is also challenging. As a community psychologist, you have spent years studying all of the principles and practices we know scientifically to be “best.” However, to get to that point in a meeting where you can begin to discuss outcomes, theoretical frameworks and the like, you need to get past the time needed to decide on the color of the banner used to market an event, or other issues not covered in the textbook and perhaps not at the top of your priority list. Whether you are working with nonprofits from the inside, or as an academic, patience and understanding should be your primary guiding
principles. It is only after you have mastered these skills that you can begin to open your “community psychologist” toolbox.

References

Disabilities Action
Edited by Kendra Liljenquist and Erin Stack

Building a Classroom Community
Written by Jennet Liljenquist

Federal mandates for special education require students be placed in the least restrictive environment. The intent is to ensure that students have as normal an experience as their academic, physical, and developmental circumstances allow. The concerns of the general population regarding this are how it may negatively affect the normally developing peers in the classroom, especially if behavior issues are a factor. In fact, the opposite may ultimately be true. With proper intervention, all students can benefit from the experience by becoming more tolerant, socially sensitive members of our diverse society.

A case in point is that of Rebecca, a seven-year-old second grade student with high-functioning autism. Since preschool, she attended school in a self-contained classroom outside her attendance area with other students with disabilities. It was determined, however, that beginning with second grade, her least restrictive environment was a general education classroom at her home school. She would be supported academically two-and-a-half hours a day for reading, writing and math in a resource room. She would spend the rest of the day, including lunch, recess, and specialist times for music, library, and P.E., with general education students. Normally, communication between the two schools and a meeting with both staff and the parents precedes a transition like this. In this instance, unfortunately, the staff at her school thought the family was moving and did not contact the receiving school. As a result, Rebecca showed up at her classroom on the first day of school without alerting the teacher to her special needs.

It became immediately clear that Rebecca had never participated in a general education classroom and her behavior was very disruptive. She made noises at her desk, interrupted the teacher, and refused to complete the assignments. When the class gathered on the floor for reading time, Rebecca would lie down and roll around. The other students were visibly perplexed and disturbed by this. They did not know how to react to such unexpected behavior. During each display, Rebecca drew their attention. Rebecca had never received this kind of attention before and it reinforced her behaviors. Soon her outbursts escalated and she actively sought to attract attention to herself by dumping out the book bins, throwing items, and running around the room. Clearly, some kind of intervention was needed to restore order.

In previous times, the thought would be to protect the other students from Rebecca’s out of control behavior by removing her from the classroom. However, she never directed her behavior toward the other children, only at inanimate objects, and they were never in any immediate danger. The teacher decided to enlist the help of her students to help modify Rebecca’s behavior. The first thing the teacher did was to identify the issue. While Rebecca was at the Resource Room, the class discussed her actions. The feelings first verbalized by the students were negative. The consensus was she deserved punishment since she constantly broke the rules. Then the teacher asked the students if any of them had a younger brother or sister or knew a younger child. Most answered affirmatively. The teacher then asked if Rebecca’s behavior was similar to younger children. Again, the answer was yes. The final question was did the class think young children should be punished when they acted that way. Most students understood at that point that their brothers and sisters were just learning how to act and needed guidance. When put in this perspective, the students were able to see that Rebecca had not learned how to act like a second grader, and it was the job of the teacher and the students to help her learn. Her teacher did not try to explain why Rebecca acted that way she did. This would have breached confidentiality. The focus was on the observable behavior and the conviction that students in the classroom should receive whatever help they needed, be it extra reading, math or writing assistance, help tying their shoes, or encouragement to keep trying. In Rebecca’s case, she needed help learning how to do school and the class agreed they were experts at this.

In order to enlist the students’ cooperation, they received rewards for exhibiting positive behavior toward Rebecca. A point system
was in place as part of the classroom management and so students were awarded points whenever they helped her. As a result, most students offered to help whenever it was elicited. For each activity, Rebecca could choose someone to help her from the volunteers. Each time, she needed to choose a different person. The tendency at first was for the students to do the task for Rebecca, so it was important to teach them how to support Rebecca without doing too much. In this way, Rebecca received the attention she sought without having to resort to negative behaviors. As time went on, many students no longer sought to help Rebecca for the points. They began to do so because it was the natural thing to do.

From time to time, Rebecca still had meltdowns. When this happened, the students worked together to modify the environment and diffuse the situation. If she started to dump the book bins, the students each got a bin and put it under their desks. When she ran around the room, the students ignored her and continued their work, inviting her to join them. When she blocked the door to recess, the students quietly left through another exit. One student did voice his objection to the special treatment Rebecca received. The teacher’s response was to offer to give him the same opportunities, if he needed them. He quickly told her that he did not. The teacher then reassured him that if he did need some kind of assistance, the class would help him, too. In this way, the student came to understand that things may not be equal, but they can still be fair.

It is very evident how Rebecca benefited from her placement in the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom. She learned how to function in an environment where previously she did not have access. She began to want to be part of the group and she modeled her behavior after the other students in an effort to fit in. Rebecca is now in fourth grade and is doing very well. She very rarely has meltdowns and if someone walked into her classroom, she would not look any different from the other students. What is not as obvious is how the other students have benefited by her presence, but it’s there. Each student in some way has gained an increased understanding about people with special needs. They have become more tolerant and accepting. They know that although some people may look and act differently, in many ways they are all the same. If students learn to accept others at a young age, it will become the norm rather than the exception. It is hoped that this will influence how society accepts everyone as a whole, beyond just those with disabilities. Although the intention of the least restrictive environment was to benefit special education students, in the end it can have positive rewards for everyone. ☺

It is very evident how Rebecca benefited from her placement in the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom.

Education Connection
Edited by Jim Dalton,
Bloomsburg University

Susan McMahon Named 2012 SCRA Outstanding Educator

The SCRA Council on Education Programs (CEP) is very pleased to announce our selection of Susan McMahon, of DePaul University, as the 2012 recipient of the SCRA Outstanding Educator Award. Susan possesses an outstanding record of leadership, commitment, and achievement in education-related activities – at DePaul, in her work in communities in Chicago, and in SCRA. She has mentored many undergraduate and graduate students, and is warmly esteemed for that work by DePaul colleagues, graduates, and students. She has chaired both the community psychology program and the psychology department at DePaul, and been a leader in developing the undergraduate community psychology program there. Susan also has been a leader in the development and success of the Council on Education Programs, including chairing the CEP. She has led and contributed to biennial sessions and published work on teaching and learning community psychology. Susan possesses a true knack for bringing out the best capabilities of individuals, while also helping to establish and sustain settings that facilitate innovation and learning by students, faculty, and others. Many of you know Susan personally, and the CEP encourages you to join us in congratulating her on receiving this award!

What Does the Council on Education Programs Do?

Would You Like to Join in Our Work?

Written by Jim Dalton,
Outgoing CEP Chair and Editor,
Education Connection

The mission of the SCRA Council on Education Programs (CEP) is to support and advocate excellence in education in community psychology and community research and action, at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The CEP strategic plan includes three goals, which are to:

- encourage information exchange between education programs;
- provide support, advocacy,
visibility, and enhancement for education programs; and
• recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and innovations of education programs and educators in our field.

CEP membership includes community psychologists and students.

**CEP Initiatives**

CEP members, often working with others in SCRA, are currently involved or will soon be involved in the following initiatives. CEP welcomes involvement by any SCRA member for work on a specific project related to our mission. Several upcoming projects will include both CEP members and others, including students. If you are interested in joining CEP members on any of these initiatives, please contact one of the CEP members listed at the end of this article, or email me at jdalton @ bloomu.edu. (I am rotating off the CEP but will be happy to put you in touch with CEP members.) The list of initiatives are as follows:

• coordinating the Education Connection pages on the SCRA Web site, including materials on graduate study and what community psychologists do, resources for teaching community psychology, and resources to build the online visibility of community psychology and SCRA. On today’s SCRA Web site, the following resources are sponsored by CEP: the Graduate Training Spotlight (scrolling notices about graduate programs); listings of graduate programs and internship and postdoctoral opportunities in community psychology; brochures and PowerPoint presentations on “What is Community Psychology?” in Spanish and English; ratings of introductory psychology textbooks’ coverage of community psychology; and a deep, broad collection of resources for teachers of community psychology courses (graduate and undergraduate), including sample course syllabi, class projects and exercises, reviews of videos for classroom use, sample community service learning projects, and resources for weaving community psychology content into other psychology courses. View these resources at: http://www.scra27.org/resources/educationc;

• conducting the newest version of the CEP periodic survey of graduate programs, to be published online as an overview of graduate programs and a guide for prospective students;

• establishing liaison relationships and other regular communications between CEP and every graduate program in SCRA. Note: the liaison network can involve SCRA members outside CEP who are affiliated with a graduate program;

• building awareness of community psychology among prospective students, through APA, Psi Chi, Idealist.org career fairs, relationships with undergraduate and community college programs, and other initiatives. CEP recently succeeded in gaining inclusion of material on community psychology careers in print and online resources published by the APA Education Directorate. You can view two further examples of our outreach on the SCRA Web site: an article on community psychology that appeared in *Eye on Psi Chi*, written by Pia Stanard, and an online article about careers in community psychology, written by Sharon Hakim, for the Idealist.org website, an important Web site on graduate study and careers involving social justice and community engagement. Pia and Sharon were student members of CEP when they initiated these outreach efforts;

• increasing coverage of community psychology in undergraduate psychology textbooks and courses, broadening awareness of our field among undergraduate students who take introductory psychology and other psychology courses. In this area, we are working with publishers’ managing editors and with textbook authors. CEP also arranged for Beth Shinn to be a featured speaker at the National Institute on Teaching of Psychology, an influential teaching conference;

• collaborating with the Community Psychology Practice Council on several initiatives to promote education for practice in community psychology. The Practice Council, CEP, and the SCRA Executive Committee have developed and soon will disseminate a document on competencies for community psychology practice, for discussion and use by students, graduate programs, community psychologists, and employers. Items on opportunities for learning practice competencies will be included in our upcoming survey of graduate programs. You will hear more about this document soon;

• bringing together the Education Connection and Community Practitioner columns in *The Community Psychologist* to publish discussions by practitioners, faculty, and students on how competencies
for practice can be developed during graduate school and beyond. Since 2009, we have published several joint columns;

- partnering with the Practice Council on a pilot project to provide consultation to graduate programs on educating for practice competencies. In the past year, this pilot project has provided consultation by leading practitioners of community psychology to Pacifica Graduate Institute and the American University of Cairo, Egypt;
- working with others in SCRA to develop and broaden initiatives to promote competencies in state-of-the-art community research methods and scholarship. This is an exciting new area for CEP; we hope to build on existing efforts to help promote pre-conference workshops and other skill-building opportunities and, ultimately, help make community psychology the principal resource for cutting-edge research methods in community psychology and community science;
- initiating the SCRA-T listserv for announcements, discussions, and resource exchange among teachers of community psychology courses;
- sponsoring and leading presentation and roundtable sessions on education in community psychology at SCRA biennial and international community psychology conferences; and
- selecting winners of the annual SCRA Outstanding Educator Award and the biennial Outstanding Educational Program Award.

**CEP Membership**

Current members of CEP are listed below with their terms of service.

**Ashley Anglin,**
University of Hawai‘i, Manoa (2012-2014)

**Christian Connell,**
Yale University (2012-2015)

**James Cook,**
University of North Carolina, Charlotte (2010-2013)

**Carie Forden,**
Clarion University of Pennsylvania (2012-2015)

**Beiyue Gu,**
Delaware County Community College (2011-2014)

**Robert Gutierrez,**
DePaul University (2011-2013)

**Andrew Hostetler,**
University of Massachusetts, Lowell (2011-2014)

**Rhonda Lewis,**
Wichita State University (2010-2013)

**John Peterson,**
Georgia State University (2011-2014)

**Toshi Sasao,**
International Christian University, Japan (2012-2015)

**Sylvie Taylor,**
Antioch University Los Angeles (2012-2015)

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**Environment & Justice**

*Edited by Manuel Riemer*

**How community psychology can promote deep level knowing about ecological sustainability: A faculty and a student perspective.**

*Written by Charlotte Blythe and Niki Harré, The University of Auckland*

**The Faculty Perspective - Niki**

There are (at least) two ways to know. In academia, we focus on intellectual knowing, that is, being able to correctly describe objective information. A second way to know is in the biblical sense, which is “to experience [something], to engage deeply with it, to intensely come to understand it from the inside out” (Jon M. Sweeny, cited in Harré, 2011, p. 163). As I will explain soon, I think as university teachers we need to facilitate more of the latter.

First, a bit about me. I have a faculty position in the Department of Psychology at the University of Auckland, and identify as a community psychologist. I was drawn to environmental issues seven years ago when I realized there was a massive problem with how we were using resources. (I am not sure what planet I was living on before!) The implications of climate change hit me like a sledge hammer. I also realized that this was absolutely my business. There was, and is, none of that queasy ambivalence about being an outsider trying to “help” those I consider oppressed. Environmental degradation, and climate change in particular, are caused by us and will ultimately affect us. We are the oppressors and the oppressed.

So what next? As a tenured academic I had the luxury of gradually moving from my previous focus on traffic injury prevention toward one
If we really want to transform ourselves and our students and encourage knowing, in the biblical sense, we have to “be the change” and encourage our students to be the change, too.

it means showing our students our personal commitment to these issues in how we run our classes and research projects and blending this living demonstration with discussion of the statistics, surveys of people’s attitudes, programme evaluations, theories and other business-as-usual aspects of university life.

In 2008, I set up an action research project at a high school in central Auckland. I had mixed motives, which made me feel slightly guilty at first. My children went to the school, it was 10 minutes by bike from my home, and I had just finished a term on the governing board. This project allowed me to be a good mother, community activist, and academic, all in one. Now, rather than feel guilty, I suspect it is because the project draws on three of my key identities that I have been able to give so much to it. I soon got some enthusiastic graduate students on board, including Charlotte who is still with the project and took the lead on several activities from the second year. It is probably not a coincidence that Charlotte also lives near the school and her brother is an ex-student. From the beginning, our project has involved living what we are advocating. I will hand over to Charlotte now to give a student’s perspective.

A Student’s Perspective
– Charlotte

I am currently a third year doctoral student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Auckland. When I first came on board with the high school project in my first year as a graduate student, I had no experience whatsoever in conducting research. I had written numerous theoretical essays and research proposals in my undergraduate classes, but my way of knowing was very much restricted to the intellectual mode Niki mentioned earlier. In a department largely dominated by laboratory research, the idea of going into a real-world setting to do action research was novel. Initially, I was drawn to the project because of the convenient location and appeal of contributing to my own community. What I did not anticipate was how much the project would transform me as a person; indeed, it would be one of the most positive, identity-shaping experiences of my life.

I think I grew up being vaguely aware of environmental issues. I went to a primary school that was very anti-litter, and my family always recycled, composted, grew vegetables, and donated to Greenpeace. We were also a one-car-family for nineteen years (not bad for 5 people) made possible by my dad cycling to work daily and living near the bus route to town. I can say with 100% confidence that I have never littered (I do not count throwing biodegradable food scraps into bushes!). I know I went through phases of being keen on hiking, orienteering, and trail running. But, before 2008, environmental advocacy was never really on my radar as something I could or should sink my teeth into.

As Niki described, the project officially began when the governing board set a goal “to work towards environmentally sustainable practices in all areas of school life” and Niki set up an action research project that bridged a partnership between our department and the school. Over the past five years, we have had a number of graduate students come on board, each focusing on a different angle. It is a mutually beneficial partnership as the school is accountable to the community to meet their strategic goals, and we benefit from the opportunity to explore what is possible in a high school setting.

On a practical level, we have supported the initiatives of staff and students who are interested in sustainability and collaborated with them on a number of joint projects. The most significant of these was a campaign in 2009 to improve the school’s waste management systems. Although recycling facilities were available, a survey our research team conducted showed that students were engaging in considerably less recycling at school than in their homes. The student environment leaders were
also concerned about the amount of littering at the school, and felt that their peers would take more responsibility for their waste if they had more attractive bins. So together we designed and constructed twelve new waste stations with separate compartments for compost, recycling, and landfill, which were beautifully painted with murals by students. Having had a bit of experience on film sets, I took the lead on three short film projects to publicize the new waste stations and teach people how to use them (see our YouTube page: http://www.youtube.com/user/gogreenwithgumby). I also worked with another graduate student to organize two after-school workshops for students. These included discussions about mass consumption, littering, and environmental protection, a demonstration waste audit, and a photographic investigation of the school grounds and the waste situation.

As Niki noted earlier, our project has involved living what we are advocating, or “walking the talk.” This means trying to be sustainable role models in our visits to the school, particularly in terms of our transport choices and the kinds of food we provide at meetings and events. At first I found this explicit role modeling a bit of an effort. I did not want to ride my bike and get “helmet hair!” I did not have time to bake organic muffins! But, as I became more immersed in the project, my priorities changed. With the project being so focused around waste, I became acutely aware of how wasteful western society is. I began reading up on landfills and recycling plants, spending twice as long at the supermarket so I could scrutinize the packaging on every product, and investing in reusable containers and coffee cups so I could model alternatives to the disposable culture around me. I strived to make the film shoots in the project as waste-free as possible, which required a lot of extra planning and communication with cast and crew.

Over the last five years, I have completely converted to living an eco lifestyle. I have taken up cycling, become vegetarian, joined an organic cooperative, and have started gardening. I seek out and support businesses that visibly demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. I volunteer for the Green Party, and I chair the meetings of a sustainability group in my department.

I am incredibly grateful to have chanced upon a supervisor who has supported my personal development as much as my intellectual learning, and for the opportunity the high school project has given me to know about the everyday practicalities of promoting ecological sustainability.

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**Living Community Psychology**

**Written by Gloria Levin,**

**GloriaLevin@verizon.net**

“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 one of the most committed and energetic figures in our field, devoted to social activism.

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**Featuring:**

**Brad Olson, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
National Louis University  
Chicago, Illinois  
bradley.olson@nl.edu

Echoing many who have appeared in this column over the years, Brad Olson says: “Although it was a long progression for me to find my way to Community Psychology (CP), the field is a perfect fit.” How this played out for Brad makes for an interesting story.

Brad’s memory of his early life was an overwhelming experience of being an underdog, especially in contrast to his older, smarter and athletic brother, Eric. Brad was the more sensitive, fragile, and fearful child -- the target of some teasing and bullying. Having serious asthma led to realistic fears of death and dying. Having entered school a year early, he now feels he was not developmentally ready, lagging behind his classmates for years. His father, the son of Swedish immigrants, was a looming (6’3”), strict and intimidating figure. Conversely, his mother made Brad feel special, the center of the world. Brad has never stopped identifying with the underdog, “I find CP completely consistent with helping people who are different, not only to be allowed to be different, but also to gain rights and resources like everyone else.”

Brad takes after his father in his community involvement. The family lived in Grayslake, a small, Mayberry-like town 40 miles from Chicago. His father (who also supported six children from a prior marriage) was an economist for Standard Oil. He was very involved in the town’s public park system, organizing elaborate holiday events and screening classic sci-fi movies every Sunday for the children. He was president of the Lions
Club and once ran for town office as a Republican. Brad traces much of his interest in the community to hanging around organizations in which his parents were active.

Brad was a voracious reader. He was intellectually influenced by Ayn Rand’s writings when he was age 12; however, “her ideas of self-interest are the opposite of what I now believe and what I try to oppose.” Although he loved the idea of education, he received mostly Cs and Ds, highly prone to daydreaming. A terrible wrestler in high school, he nevertheless persevered. “My opponents would take me down quickly, but they could never pin me. I wasn’t very aggressive but had a burning desire not to give up.” During high school, he attended a summer wrestling camp with a brutal exercise regimen. He especially remembers a long distance run. “The whole way I was thinking I’d pass out but was shocked when I finished the run, on my feet.” The coaches complimented the finishers on their endurance, saying that that quality should benefit them academically. Returning home, those words had a major impact on Brad, newly devoted to his studies. “From then on, I worked insanely hard, instead of joking around.” His efforts paid off; he earned all As and Bs in his last two years of high school.

However, Brad was clueless about what it meant to apply to college. “My dad went to DePaul University so I figured I’d go there too.” He loved DePaul, entering its honors program, majoring in psychology, intending to be a clinical psychologist. He had an interest in human nature, always very attentive to people and animals, but did not realize that psychology could be broader than being a traditional therapist.

Brad always loved Chicago, and part of DePaul’s mission is serving the community. He never took a CP course there, but DePaul’s community-based values rubbed off on him. The faculty included many radicals and, although DePaul is a Catholic institution, several of his subsequent intellectual mentors have been Jewish. He learned to deeply analyze texts, crediting the Jewish scholarly tradition. In an independent study course, he dug into Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams, 50 pages at a time. “I still have a psychoanalytic heart and brain sometimes,” Brad admits.

With confidence from having graduated summa cum laude, Brad applied to top graduate clinical psychology programs. Upon being rejected by all, he realized that he had misjudged his credentials and that these programs were completely out of range for him. At the same time, he was delving into deeper study of philosophy and science, which seemed a better fit, leading to a reconsideration of his career goals. In addition to his voracious reading, he worked as a cook. “My parents were fabulous cooks, and I still do a lot of cooking.” Brad then changed his career direction to personality/social psychology. He applied to the University of Iowa, with its long tradition of Kurt Lewin and other great thinkers. He was first rejected by Iowa, but they called him in April to offer him a spot that had just opened. There, he was mentored by David Watson (a personality psychologist) but subsequently changed his concentration to social psychology, partly because “there was a lot of anti-personality sentiment around at the time, although, on reflection, that might have been short-sighted on my part.”

Brad met his future wife, Deanne in a class at Iowa. Even as an undergraduate, “She was the most intelligent, eloquent woman I’d ever met.” She stimulated many of Brad’s current intellectual interests. It all started when Deanne questioned him about his fervent pursuit of science, through spirited discussions about race relations. Deanne has a mixed racial background — her mother is from Guam and her father is Jamaican-Chinese. “I was talking about laboratory studies of group polarization, in-groups and out-groups, considering them so important. But she challenged me, questioning its relevance. I resisted mightily, but when I look back on it, she was right. I learned a lot from her, me being white, she being a person of color and us having ethnic minority children.”

Newly questioning the value of much of traditional science, Brad felt at a dead end and hopeless, lacking a sense of purpose. He decided that publishing in journals, with very few readers, was insufficient. Caring for his first son during the day while writing his dissertation, he turned to reading nonfiction essays. “I knew that my future writing would have to be interesting, meaningful, accessible, not jargon filled.”

Experiencing a “hole in his life,” he volunteered at a domestic violence shelter in Iowa City, playing with children who had witnessed and been the target of brutalizing violence. “This tapped into my strong feelings about bullying and my having been an underdog. I was fascinated by the kids’ resilience, wondering how they turned out to be so normal and happy. This volunteer experience (plus some therapy) lifted my existential burden. I learned that the only meaningful way to live is to discard one’s ego.” Brad experienced a complete conversion, an epiphany. “I wanted to change the world rather than add to scientific knowledge. This is what I was meant to be doing all along. My depression lifted when I found meaning in social activism, fighting injustice in the system.”

Upon receiving his Ph.D., he applied for many faculty positions.
in personality and social psychology. “Here, my resilience really paid off, after taking hit after hit. It was getting down to the last hour when I was invited to interview at a prestigious college. Although I did not land the job, it gave me hope that they were even interested in me.”

Despairing about finding a job, out of the blue he was called by Lenny Jason and Joe Ferrari for a job as project director on a newly awarded NIAAA grant to DePaul, to study Oxford House (www.oxfordhouse.org) “I was impressed with the group’s dedication to psychology and seriousness of purpose. Also, I was dying to move back to Chicago and to be near my family.”

Impressed with the Oxford House model, Brad recalls: “It was real world stuff, using innovative methods and a randomized design.” The

“I wanted to change the world rather than add to scientific knowledge.”

residents, who were recovering from substance abuse, lived in a communal, democratic environment and followed a 12-step treatment model. He could draw on his experience working on domestic violence and his innovative research methods, including his diary studies. “I was thrilled to be able to do this work and also return to Chicago to live.” Deanne (who has a master’s in higher education) has always been able to find work wherever they moved.

Brad did a lot of good thinking, met great people (including his now close friend and colleague, Judah Viola) and, with the team, published solid research on the Oxford House model. Lenny had hired several Oxford House residents to provide their unique insight; supervising them, Brad observed their strong sense of ethics and morality. With them, he advocated for substance abuse issues.

As the Oxford grant ended, he applied for academic jobs but usually ended up the second or third choice. To stay in Chicago, he accepted a three-year faculty position (later extended to a fourth year) at Northwestern University to work with Dan McAdams, whose Life Stories method used mixed research methods. These nicely connected to the community narratives tradition of Julian Rappaport. Given a lot of freedom, Brad was able to pursue his outside interests such as establishing, with his former Oxford colleague, Judah Viola, a consulting practice. “Throughout my life, I had longings for career prestige. But, although I loved the people, Northwestern was a bit of a disconnect for me, being ivory tower-like and located in a wealthy suburb of Chicago. I just needed to experience the prestige for a while, to get it out of my system. The prestige gradually became meaningless to me.”

At the end of his third year at Northwestern, National Louis University was beginning a CP program, being developed by Suzette Fromm-Reed and others. Judah was hired as the second community psychologist. A year after Judah’s arrival at National Louis, a third position opened there, and Brad was hired. Having fought and struggled for years to be in academia, Brad finally feels he has a home. A few years from seeking tenure, he says: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career here. I love my colleagues. The doctoral students come to the program with master’s degrees, are employed and are mostly ethnic minorities—all consistent with my values.” The position involves teaching two courses a semester and supervising field work. He teaches community organizing, community development, planning, policy and theoretical advances of community psychology; with Judah, he teaches advanced statistics. He credits Julian Rappaport for inspiring the core of his teaching in empowerment and community narratives. “My bible is Julian Rappaport’s Values, Research and Action; I continually refer to it as the source of inspiration and strategy.”

Brad’s service to SCRA is legendary. He started by contributing articles to the SCRA newsletter and listserv comments. Observing that little direct action in SCRA was being reported, he made the topic of protest his niche, using psychology to fight the power structure, and he volunteered to chair SCRA’s Community Action Interest Group. Being known as a workhorse, Brad was named by the then SCRA president, Cliff O’Donnell, to an ex officio position on SCRA’s Executive Committee (EC). When a vacancy arose from the resignation of a member-at-large, he was appointed to

Much of what Brad learned about social action derives from his involvement in local politics.

fill it, serving on the EC seven years in all.

Brad knew of SCRA’s difficulties in finding a site for the 2011 biennial conference. He assembled a consortium of CP programs in Chicago to sponsor the conference collaboratively. “One proviso we made was that SCRA should not expect us to turn a profit so we were surprised that it did.” His service to SCRA continues as co-editor of SCRA’s new book series, with Nicole Allen, which he reports has already attracted several promising book proposals.

Brad grew concerned about America’s stance toward post 9/11 security and its impact on human rights. Beginning in 2005, he represented SCRA within a coalition of twelve APA divisions who were concerned with social justice issues.
Joe Trimble had started the group, called Divisions of Social Justice, and Brad soon became its chair. Along the way, he was involved with APA’s position on psychologists working in military intelligence, concerned that the APA task force on this issue was stacked with military psychologists. He mobilized members of the Divisions of Social Justice on this issue and wrote a letter to the APA president. He collaborated with like-minded people and organizations, including Bernice Lott, Steve Soldz, Steven Reisner and, notably Jean Maria Arrigo, the only member of the APA task force who shared their concerns. “APA became concerned with our mobilizing, but we stayed tough and formed the Coalition for Ethical Psychology. We encouraged APA members to withhold dues, and, along with two colleagues, led a successful member-based referendum to change APA’s interrogation policy for psychologists. I became obsessed with the issue, never tiring of it.” Brad is now president of Psychologists for Social Responsibility (http://www.psyr.org).

Much of what Brad learned about social action derives from his involvement in local politics. Of enormous impact was his participation in a 2004 campaign to obtain signatures for a nonbinding referendum for a treatment on demand initiative for substance abusers who are unable to afford inpatient treatment. He learned that collaborative social action – in this case, a coalition of organizations – requires that you remove your ego from the equation. A local politician headed for a U.S. Senate race, Barack Obama, exhibited courage and principle in backing the referendum, encouraging the activists to continue the struggle without regard to its impact on his political fortunes. The effort yielded 118,000 signatures – enough to put the question on the Cook County ballot but too few to be a State-wide referendum. The referendum won by 76% in Cook County, with 1.2 million “yes” votes. Because of this result, the State increased its financial support for addiction treatment. “I could not have been as successful in that work without CP principles.”

Six years later and based on a long-standing relationship with Congressman Danny Davis of Chicago, Brad volunteered for Davis’ Democratic primary mayoral campaign. He served on several of Davis’ advisory committees and, although usually being the only white person on the campaign staff, he earned trust, eventually becoming Davis’ Chief of Policy. “We ran an incredible campaign which gave more voice to lower income African Americans. I worked nonstop.” Not having sufficient funds to challenge Rahm Emanuel, who had recently left the White House as Chief of Staff to run for Mayor, Congressman Davis dropped out of the race. “In that experience, I had fully utilized my CP experience in research, values, action and participatory methods. I learned so much more about corruption, big money, banks, corporations and the Chicago machine.”

When asked what he feels will be his main contribution to CP, he predicts it will be in the action component of CP’s model of theory and action. “To live authentically in SCRA, we need to engage the ‘action’ part, especially to fight injustice.” He notes that students want to see CP live by its values. “However, academic norms and funding issues tend to be contradictory to our better natures.” Another goal is to develop an approach that combines the best aspects of critical psychology (which he finds to be unduly critical) and strengths based approaches (too soft). For a comparison, he turns to Gandhi and Saul Alinsky, both of whom he considers tricksters. The difference, however, is that Gandhi emphasized strengths and critical kinship, whereas Alinsky engaged in insult and degradation.

Brad and Deanne; their sons, Sidney, Oliver and Sebastian; and their Golden Retriever live in his grandmother’s bungalow in Chicago, purchased from her estate. His mother and brother (a photographer and marketing VP) live nearby; his father is deceased, but Brad sees his six half-siblings frequently. Brad spends quality time with his family and friends (and paints) but otherwise he works all the time. He is able to juggle so much because he tries to combine his energy with efficiency.

“I am somewhat creative, but otherwise, my intelligence is more a result of hard work than natural capacity. Like many of us, failure is common in my life. It harkens back to wrestling where I was constantly fighting against getting pinned to the mat. I started out shy, scared, and unhealthy, at a time when treatment for asthma was less effective. Teased and pummeled, I identified with the underdog. Over time, I became braver and stronger. My mom remembers me as being a sweet and happy child. However, the world is a tough place, and I’ve had to toughen up to confront the bad in the world.”  ●

**Public Policy**

*Edited by Judah Viola*

National Louis University

**Brief Policy Committee Update:**

*Written by Michea Caye, Antioch University New England*

The Policy Committee continues to make progress on several initiatives, and in this column, I wanted to highlight three of them.

1. Policy Connection Website: http://www.scra27.org/policy
The Policy Committee Web site now has the infrastructure to add a variety of content that we hope will serve to build capacity among SCRA members as well as inform members and non-members alike about policy issues relevant to community psychologists. This is being sent out to request content from YOU.

At the moment we are looking for:

- examples of models, policies, or legislation that our members have been involved in developing or promoting. The idea is to have a repository of work that SCRA members could use for ideas or adopt directly in their communities; and
- stories from our members of their successes in developing and promoting specific pieces of public policy.

If any of our members have such examples or stories we would love to post them on the Web site.

2. SCRA Policy Committee Small Grant Program’s 2012 CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

To encourage, promote and support public policy work by its members to benefit communities, the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) has initiated a small grants program.

Proposals may address a wide variety of public policy issues, affecting communities at the local, state, national or international levels. Projects may take many forms, but preference will be given to collaborative projects and those that increase the capacity of SCRA and its members to engage in effective and innovative policy work. All applications will be subject to blind review.

Who may apply?

Anyone may apply, though the lead applicant on the proposal must be an SCRA member. Collaborative projects and partnerships with community organizations are strongly encouraged.

What is the maximum grant?

The maximum request is $5,000 each with a minimum of three awards expected to be granted during a funding cycle. The Review Committee will determine the number and amount of the awards.

What is the deadline for proposals and timeframe for completion?

All grant requests must be received by August 15. The Review Committee expects to notify all applicants of final decisions by September 30. The expectation is that all projects will be completed within two years of funding approval. Recipients must provide brief status reports (two pages max.) to the Review Committee by January 1 and June 1 of each year until the project is completed.

What are the specific standards and criteria upon which Proposals will be evaluated?

No activities may result in a violation of SCRA’s 501(C)(3) status or its by-laws. Proposals will be evaluated based on how well they:

- address a current public policy issue of importance to the community of interest;
- connect to community psychology (CP);
- address a policy area where CP has a contribution to make;
- demonstrate the potential to establish or build upon relationships with other organizations and their resources;
- demonstrate potential to have a successful impact;
- increase capacity of communities/groups to influence public policy;
- increase capacity of SCRA to influence public policy;
- articulate an appropriate budget that effectively supports the proposed activities and ensures accountability of expenditures; and
- demonstrate effective dissemination of results or outcome, such as including, but not limited to, publication in AJCP or TCP, Biennial and/or APA Conference presentations or dissemination to other relevant publications and stakeholders.

How will the grant funding be disbursed?

Generally, recipients will be awarded 25 percent upon the start of the project, with the balance spread over the duration of the grant, after receipt of the status reports due January 1 and June 1 each year. All applicants shall include a timetable with deliverables, as appropriate, and may propose other timing with justification.

Filing process

Requests shall include a cover letter and a Grant Proposal (5 to10 pages) with all identifying information removed for blind review, in Word document format, sent to: scrapolicygrant@gmail.com by August 15.

3. SCRA Prevention-Based Policy Initiative: Jean Hill is heading up an effort within the Policy Committee. More details to come in the near future.

If you have an update or are interested in joining the policy committee or in writing a policy related article to be featured in the column, please contact the policy committee chair and column editor, Judah Viola, at judah.viola@nl.edu.
Regional Update
Edited by Susan Dvorak McMahon,
Regional Network Coordinator,
DePaul University
smcmahon@depaul.edu

I hope you are enjoying your summer to regenerate as well as accomplish your goals. I enjoyed meeting up with many of you at the 4th International Conference of Community Psychology in Barcelona to discuss research, policy, practice, and events going on in your region. What a wonderful opportunity to share innovative research and effective practices with our national and international colleagues. Please do let me know if you are interested in a regional leadership role within SCRA. We are always looking for new students, faculty, and practitioners to serve in these roles and get involved with others who have shared interests. I would like to thank Sarah Brunelle for her service as an undergraduate student representative in the Northeast region and Ray Legler for his service to the Midwest, and encourage people to join the Northeast and Midwest leadership teams.

Northeast Region, U.S.
Regional Coordinators
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Lauren Bennett Cattaneo, lcattane@gmu.edu, George Mason University
Michele Schlehofer, mmschlehofer@salisbury.edu, Salisbury University
Student Regional Coordinators
Samantha Hardesty, hardesty1@umbc.edu, University of Maryland at Baltimore County
Sarah Brunelle, sbrunelle848@students.ccsnh.edu, Nashua Community College

News from the Northeast
Written by Michelle Ronayne

Hello from the Northeast Region! In March, we convened in Pittsburgh, PA for the annual Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) conference. SCRA had a full day of programming and a great turnout. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Ed Mulvey of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, gave a talk on the benefits of taking a community psychology approach to addressing youth violence. Following Dr. Mulvey’s talk was a panel on community-based careers. We were fortunate to have several very accomplished professionals on our panel, including Richard Garland of One Vision One Life, Dr. Wendy Etheridge Smith of the Higher Achievement Program, and Frederick W. Thieman of the Buhl Foundation. SCRA was well-represented by several paper and poster presentations, including a mixed poster and presentation session by Dr. Joe Ferrari and a team of his undergraduate students from DePaul University, and a workshop on the Occupy movement led by Dr. Holly Angelique and her graduate students from The Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg. We concluded the evening with a group dinner and social hour. Thank you to all who participated and made it such a success!

The Northeast Regional Coordinators are undergoing a transition, and we need your help! Two of our coordinators, Lauren Cattaneo and Michele Schlehofer, have completed their terms. We are in need of two coordinators to fill their shoes. Graduate students are welcome in these positions, so please help us out by getting involved! The time commitment for most months is minimal, and you get the opportunity to develop leadership skills and work to broaden community psychology’s influence among psychologists living in the Northeast Region. Our undergraduate student coordinator, Sarah Brunelle, is also rotating off, and we are in need of an undergraduate student to serve a one-year term to replace her. To help better connect community psychologists in the Northeast Region, we are also considering a smaller regional SCRA mini-conference, retreat, or network. To volunteer or share other ideas and news with the NE Regional Coordinators, please contact Michelle Ronayne (michelle.ronayne@gmail.com) or Samantha Hardesty (hardesty1@umbc.edu). Thank you and have a great summer!

Southeast Region, U.S.
Regional Coordinators
Sarah Suiter, Sarah.Suiter@centerstone.org, Centerstone Research Institute
Ciara Smalls, Csmalls@gsu.edu, Georgia State University
Student Regional Coordinators
Virginia Johnson, vjohns27@uncc.edu, UNC Charlotte
Rebecca Rodriguez, Rrodriguez12@student.gsu.edu, Georgia State University
Christopher Langeler, Christopher.J.Langeler@vanderbilt.edu, Vanderbilt University

News from the Southeast
Written by Virginia Johnson

SCRA Southeastern Division members at University of North Carolina at Charlotte recently completed a
What would you like others to know? These guiding questions allowed youth to share their personal narratives. The pictures allowed them to communicate and explore emotions when it was hard to find the right words.

At the end of the program the youth shared their presentations with the public at Occasio, a local nonprofit organization that helps emerging artists in the Charlotte area show their work. Many youth reported amazement and a sense of pride that their photographs could be shown alongside community artists’ work. Several youth reported that it was not until the gallery event that they felt they had produced truly meaningful projects. Some of this positive experience might have been because the youth were able to speak to and interact with the general public in a way in which their deficits or struggles were not at the forefront of the discussion. Instead, who they are as people, their strengths, what their interests are, and what their daily lives look like took hold as topics of conversation.

Among other things, the project demonstrated that photovoice is more than a basic research method. It can be piloted as a multi-media intervention that facilitates participant empowerment. It does so by allowing youth to participate and gain control over the process of shaping their narrative and builds the capacity of participants through numerous skill-building activities. As a female participant commented, “I loved this experience. I got to show everybody me.”

Midwest Region, U.S.

Regional Coordinators
Nathan Todd, ntodd@depaul.edu, DePaul University
Andrea Flynn, aflynn1@depaul.edu, DePaul University
Ray Legler, rlegler@depaul.edu, DePaul University

Student Regional Coordinator
Abigail Brown, abrown57@depaul.edu, DePaul University

News from the Midwest
Written by Nathan Todd

The SCRA-affiliated meeting at the Midwest Psychological Association was held this past May. Thank you to everyone who attended and presented. There was an excellent turnout with over 20 roundtable/symposia presentations and over 40 poster presentations. Congratulations to Lindsey Back, Kate Calabra, and Anne Fuller for receiving the SCRA MPA student poster awards. The event concluded with the annual tradition of a dinner (as shown in the accompanying picture) with over 35 in attendance. Thank you also to Annie Flynn for organizing the SCRA affiliated meeting.

Ray Legler will be finishing his term as a Midwest Coordinator this summer. Thank you to Ray for his three years of service!

We are searching for another Midwest Regional Coordinator to begin September 2012. Serving as a regional coordinator is a wonderful way to become more involved in SCRA and to connect with colleagues. For more information, or to send nominations (including self-nominations), please contact Nathan Todd.

Announcements or information for inclusion in future Midwest updates should be sent to Nathan Todd (ntodd@depaul.edu).

West Region, U.S.

Regional Coordinators
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Joan Twohey-Jacobs, jtwohey-jacobs@laverne.edu, University of LaVerne
Dyana Valentine, info@dyanavalentine.com, DyanaValentine.com

Student Regional Coordinator
Danielle Kohfeldt, mkcal1@yahoo.com, University of California, Santa Cruz

News from the Bay Area
Written by Danielle Kohfeldt and 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 Spring Colloquium, held April 27th at UC Santa Cruz, had two very engaging presentations. Cindy Cruz, Assistant Professor of Education at UC Santa Cruz, spoke on “Making
Curriculum from Scratch: Using Testimonio in Urban Classrooms.” We also heard from Susannah Smith, Social Documentation MA candidate and Producer/Director of People Live Here. Both presentations sparked interesting dialogue and were very well attended. 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 (dkohfeld@ucsc.edu) or Gina Langhout (langhout@ucsc.edu).

**Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific**

**International Regional Liaison**

*Katie Thomas:*

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**International Regional Student Liaison**

*Kendra Swaine:*

Kendra.Swaine@dsc.wa.gov.au

**Poverty and Inequality: Trans-Tasman Community Psychology**

**Written By Katie Thomas**

On May 18th and 19th, the Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa, New Zealand (NZ) hosted the Biennial Trans-Tasman Community Psychology Conference at the Tapu Te Ranga Marae in Wellington. Tapu Te Ranga Marae was the dream of a Maori man, Bruce Stewart. At a time in his life when he felt lost he read in a Maori Magazine, “The Marae is my home…it is my place of work. The Marae is my kindergarten right through to my university…it is my Museum…my church…my Art Gallery. It is where I was born and where I will be buried.” In 1974, he began to build his Marae from recycled materials. It is now ten levels and 27,000 square feet, built mainly from the labour of young unemployed Maori - some of them homeless. It was therefore a fitting place for a conference focusing on the impacts of poverty and inequality. Bruce comments on his home, “They needed to have a place to make a stand. It has been said that she (the Marae) is the largest and highest wooden house built of recycled materials on wooden piles anywhere on earth.” Bruce and his family welcome anyone who desire to “live in a sharing way” and explain that the concept of sharing with all races and creeds is central to the Marae concept. Thus, the Marae was a perfect venue for the Trans-Tasman Conference highlights included a conference focusing on poverty in NZ and their proposed solutions - Charles Waldegrave from the NZ Family Centre and a range of community psychologists working in government and non-government organizations across the Pacific. Charles Waldegrave is known for his work developing the NZ poverty measure and for his book, “Poor New Zealand: An Open Letter on Poverty.” He gave a vigorous and spirited presentation on the importance of poverty measures and of strategically influencing government policy. The conference highlighted the high proportion of poverty for indigenous people in Australia and NZ and mapped the spread of child poverty. In New Zealand, Samoan families fare worse than Maori families, and Maori families fare worse than whites in percentage of population living below the poverty line. Mr. Waldegrave pointed out that poverty is still a problem for whites because the largest numbers of the poor are white. Australian speakers spoke about their own national poverty patterns and the impacts of Australia’s policy of mandatory detention, and referenced Cathy McCormack who describes poverty as the “war without bullets.” This biennial event was a great opportunity for activists in the region to consolidate relationships and form new partnerships. The advantage of SCRA membership was offered to students and those of indigenous heritage. We are hoping this will lead to expanded and consolidated SCRA networks and links in the region. Attendees were treated to an excellent and stimulating conference of great value to all.

The Trans-Tasman Conference was also a Professional Development (PD) activity that could be used by Australians who must maintain their obligations as psychologists under the new national regulations administered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the Psychology Board of Australia. SCRA will continue to offer PD activities on a regular basis that can qualify for PD points. Regional members who would like to propose or organize a Community Psychology PD activity are encouraged to contact their State representative.
It was both exciting and powerful to see community psychology students and faculty engaged in scholarship that examines these ripple effects and their collective impact on increased injustice, shifts in quality of life, and changes to personal and community well-being. At a session entitled “One Hundred and Sixty Years of Learning About Social Justice Work,” Dr. Ed Bennett, founder of Laurier’s Community Psychology program, spoke about the need to stay focused on the “contextual factors” that shape people’s problems. Dr. David Hallman spoke of the importance of “finding that interplay between praxis and policy...finding the balance between documenting lived experience and working toward policy change.”

As we might expect in community psychology, topic areas in the conference were diverse and cut across the key issues of: neoliberalism and increasing inequality in Canada; sustaining oneself in progressive work; prevention versus the capacity to repair; issues facing LGBT and newcomer communities; youth engagement in health and justice work, including environment, health and bullying interventions; innovative mental health housing initiatives; and a diverse array of issues facing our First Nations’ Peoples.

Students were a driving force behind the conference – taking on primary organizing of the event under the leadership of Dr. Colleen Loomis and showcasing their innovative work in poster sessions, in “3-minute thesis presentations,” and in half-day workshops designed to create innovative strategies for social change. And, of course, there was considerable focus on participatory action research, with two site visits to local organizations that promote community-university partnerships for better health and well-being – the Centre for Community-Based Research, and the Laurier Centre for Community Research and Action.

Networking and organizing – two central strategies of community psychology work – were built into the three days through more structured activities, as well as a terrific community meal at the local St. John’s Soup Kitchen.

Out of our collective dialogue, we identified some significant challenges ahead of us, including promoting and sustaining community psychology in Canada. We struck a task force, charged with designing a national strategy for that purpose and I will be reporting on its work in the coming columns!

By the end of the three days, we were tired, yet inspired – but all of us there from this field we call community psychology in Canada walked away with a renewed energy to honour Dr. Blackstock’s call to take action against injustice.

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**Canada**

**International Regional Liaisons**

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University of Quebec at Montreal

Robb Travers,
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Wilfrid Laurier University

**Canadian Community Psychology: Justice and Social Change**

May 4 to 6, 2012, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario (in partnership with the University of Ottawa, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université Laval, and the Adler School of Professional Psychology)

**Written By Robb Travers**

“It’s not enough to care. Do something.”

Spoken by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, those words resonated considerably with attendees at the Second Annual Canadian Community Psychology Conference. Community members, students, alumni, and faculty representing community psychology programs across Canada came together for three days under the theme of “Justice and Social Change.” Blackstock’s inspiring and passionate keynote address kicked off the event and also highlighted (along with the second excellent keynote by Dr. Joseph Gone, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan) the significant focus on the injustices experienced by Aboriginal communities in both Canada and the United States.

Long regarded as one of the world’s more progressive nations, Canada has certainly not been immune to the significant right-wing shifts that have accompanied the implementation of neoliberal policy across the world. We face significant challenges as a society, including deeper than ever inequality, increased poverty (especially for communities already disadvantaged by other forms of marginalization), increased alienation, more criminalization of marginalized people, and a greater shift towards individualism and blame.
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News from the Middle East
Written by Amy Carrillo and Hana Shah

The American University in Cairo’s Community Psychology M.A. program would like to send a big thank you to the Community Psychology Practice Council (CPPC), the Council of Education Programs (CEP), and SCRA for their support of the only community psychology program in the Middle East! We are grateful to Susan Wolfe and Greg Meissen, our Education for Community Psychology Programs (CEP), and SCRA for their support of the only community psychology program in the Middle East! We are grateful to Susan Wolfe and Greg Meissen, our Education for Community Psychology Practice Consultants, for their assistance in helping us refine our practice competencies. Susan’s recent visit to Cairo was a great success!

In helping to translate research to practice, the community psychology graduate students from the American University in Cairo are launching an online toolbox to provide prevention and evaluation resources to NGOs in the Cairo area. The Web site will be used to disseminate useful information consistent with community psychology values. NGOs working on a variety of social issues have been invited to attend the launch and learn more about the online resources as well as training opportunities.

Rural Issues
Edited by Susana Helm and Cécile Lardon

Rural Interest Group

Theory, Research, Teaching/Learning, Service, Practice. For the upcoming Rural TCP columns we will be highlighting the work of community psychologists in their rural environments. In addition to polling our current members, we are also soliciting submissions for the upcoming issues. Among other areas of interest, we would like to know…How did you become a rural community psychologist? What type of rural activities are you involved in now? Were there critical aspects of your training that influence(d) your commitment to improving rural wellbeing? How do you incorporate a rural voice in your teaching? What theories best inform your rural endeavors? Please send 1200 word submissions to Susana (HelmS@dop.hawaii.edu) and Cécile (cslardon@alaska.edu) by July 1, 2012. We will notify you by July 15, and final edits will be due on August 1, 2012.

International Rural Community Psychology
For the 4th International Community Psychology meeting in Barcelona, Spain (June 2012) we have organized a “SCRA Rural Interest Group Symposium: Rural and Indigenous Community Psychology”. The symposium abstract is as follows: The Rural Interest Group, Society for Community Research and Action, American Psychological Association has organized an international symposium (Australia, Canada, Hawai’i/US, New Zealand, Portugal). The first papers focus on rural quality of life (Ramos, and Guerreiro), while the latter consider unique aspects of rural indigenous populations (Lavoie, and Helm). The prevention research is a collaborative effort between community and university partners. Community partners include the County of Hawai’i Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (Helm, et al. 2008; Helm, Okamoto, Medeiros, Kimura 2008) and the State of Hawai’i Department of Education and school complexes on Hawai’i Island (Helm, Okamoto, Medeiros, Correa, Delp, 2010).

The prevention research is a collaborative effort between community and university partners. Community partners include the County of Hawai’i Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (Helm, et al. 2008; Helm, Okamoto, Medeiros, Kimura 2008) and the State of Hawai’i Department of Education and school complexes on Hawai’i Island (Helm, Okamoto, Medeiros, Correa, Delp, 2010).

The voice of rural Native Hawaiian and other local youth on Hawai’i Island will add to the needed diversity in drug prevention that is critical for eliminating persistent ethnicultural health disparities evident in rural and indigenous populations in the US and Hawai’i (Edwards, Giroux, Okamoto, 2010; Rehuher, Hiramatsu, Helm, 2008). With funding from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse (K01 DA019884, R34 DA031306), a video-enhanced drug prevention with Rural Native Hawaiian Youth & Communities.
a youth directed introduction. The second part includes scripted drug prevention vignettes directed and produced by a professional film maker/director. These vignettes are based on the prior six years of research on drug offers and drug resistance according to rural Native Hawaiian youth and community stakeholders (e.g. Okamoto, Helm, Poa-Kekuwela, et al, 2010 & Okamoto, Helm, Delp, et al, 2011; Okamoto, Helm, Giroux, Edwards, & Kulis, 2010; Okamoto, Helm, Giroux, Kaliades, Kawano, Kulis, 2010; Okamoto, Helm, Kulis, Delp, Dinson, In press; Poo-Kekuwela et al 2010).

The youth directed introduction consists of footage shot by high school aged youth who have been trained in video production and interviewing. The youth shot footage for a “making of” type documentary: footage of the scripted vignettes being filmed, as well as interviews with the local youth and adult talent (actors and actresses in lead and extra roles), local youth and adult production crew, and their family members who came to support our work. Interviews highlighted the following questions:

a) What is it like to be a part of a drug prevention project that has been co-created by kids on Hawai‘i Island?

b) Why do you think it is important for local youth and adults to have key roles in this drug prevention project?

c) Why do you think the middle school youth attending Hawai‘i Island schools will like the stories shown in the videos?

d) In what ways do you feel your culture, learning style, and reality is portrayed in these drug prevention videos?

e) What effect has your participation in the creation of these videos had on your attitudes and beliefs related to substance use on Hawaii Island?

The youth directed introduction is an important element of the overall video-enhanced curriculum for school-based drug prevention. As described by drug prevention researchers/educators using media messaging as a core curricular component, the youth voice has been shown to be theoretically and empirically more effective than adult-centric and culturally-neutral messaging (Holleran, et al, 2002; Holleran Steiker et al, 2011; Jumper-Reeves et al, under review; Reeves et al, 2008). The youth voice enhances authenticity in terms of the developmental reality, as well as geographical, linguistic, and cultural validity upon which the project has been built. The youth voice is evident in the youth’s directorial efforts and interviewing, as well as from the interviewees. Pictured here are a set of photos from the video production held in February 2012.

References


School Intervention Interest Group  
Edited by Paul Flaspohler,  
Miami University  
and Melissa Maras,  
University of Missouri

Call for TCP Article Submissions

The SCRA School Intervention Interest Group is soliciting original articles for publication in The Community Psychologist. The School Intervention Interest Group column publishes scholarly articles on issues related to research, policy, training, and practice in schools with a particular emphasis on interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration across health, mental health, education, and related fields. Please visit http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/scra/index.htm for more information about the School Intervention Interest Group and to review past columns.

Submissions may include theoretical and research pieces from academic authors, including students and faculty, practitioners, and policymakers. Authors are encouraged to contact column co-editors, Melissa Maras (marasme@missouri.edu) and Paul Flaspohler (flaspopd@muohio.edu) about potential topics for consideration. Submissions should be approximately five double-spaced pages and should follow APA guidelines. Images are highly recommended but should be limited to two images per article. The School Intervention Interest Group column is published quarterly. Submission deadlines for upcoming editions are: July 15, 2012; October 15, 2012; January 15, 2013; and April 15, 2013. Articles should be submitted to Melissa Maras (marasme@missouri.edu) and Paul Flaspohler (flaspopd@muohio.edu) for initial review, followed by subsequent blind review by external reviewers. All authors will receive timely communication from the column co-editors regarding the status of their submission.

Student Issues
Edited by Todd Bottom,  
DePaul University  
and Jessica Fernandez,  
University of California, Santa Cruz

Support Systems for Graduate Student Parents
Written by Sarah E. DeYoung,  
North Carolina State University

There are many similarities between being a parent and being in graduate school that it is sometimes comical. For example, during my pregnancy the question of, “How far along are you?” was almost always confusing because sometimes the inquirer meant my pregnancy and sometimes they meant the status of my graduate school coursework and research. Imagine the looks I got when someone wanted to know about my dissertation and I responded with: “I’m almost in my second trimester.” Though slightly comical, this is a reflection of the constant role switching of student-parents. Similarly, a friend of mine in the human factors psychology program (M. Bryant; personal communication, 2012) expressed her thoughts on student-parenting:

“I feel like I’m two people. I have this drive to be the best mother I can be, but separately from that I have this drive to be the best graduate student I can be. Those two people conflict with each other so much and I never know how much I would want to be with my daughter. I even often forget about school to spend time with her, and I have to actively not think about her in order to get any work done. It’s so bizarre.

This ambiguity creates a specific set of needs and obstacles on the journey of degree completion. There has been a lot of work on work-life balance for faculty members, researchers, and practitioners (Gerten, 2011; Norrel & Norrel, 1996;
There will be future invitations to similar events (Mendoza, 2006). Yet, it is crucial to understand what kind of support system surrounds those who are both parents and graduate students. The academic climate and interpersonal lessons learned during graduate school can impact not only choices about career and research endeavors, but also the direct retention rate of graduate students (Oh & Lewis, 2011). Being a graduate student and a parent can be surprisingly isolating. For graduate students, the experience happens like this: you come to orientation and at the end of the day you go to a restaurant or bar for the social hour. Senior students and current faculty members are eager to get to know about you and your research interests. This experience often comes somewhat prepackaged with social settings and connections. In truth, these connections take work and maintenance. There will be future invitations to similar social gatherings, but the enthusiasm from orientation experiences may not always be recaptured. This is only natural and, yet, that does not make it any less shocking, especially to students who came from smaller undergraduate schools with a small student body ideal for facilitating social connections. The parallel for new parents is, of course, the birthing class. Everyone is eager to know the sex of the baby and your due date.

Once the babies are born, only the most committed and extroverted members of the birthing class are likely to remain in touch with one another, and, like graduate students new parents are stuck in the paradox of wanting new friends who can empathize and relate, but also being too busy to actually maintain these friendships.

Another complexity of being a graduate student as well as being a parent is that there is an invisible wall between you and the rest of the world, at least when it comes to certain conversations. I do not mean this in an elitist way, I mean this more in the way that the technical terms, milestones, and jargon that are specific to advanced degrees and parenting often cause a lot of failed communicative exchanges. Try explaining to your grandmother or acquaintances from high school what it means to write a dissertation and you will be just as frustrated if you try to explain to a non-parent exactly why it is so hard to accomplish day-to-day things (as I am writing this, my daughter is snugly asleep in her sling-style carrier that I am wearing, while I am standing in my kitchen with the laptop perched on the counter and this can be considered to be one of the easier moments of parenting). The truth about being a graduate student and a parent is this: you never really know exactly quite how challenging it is until you are living the experience. In addition to the separation between the groups of parents, nonparents, students and nonstudents, there are also divisions within groups that add to the complexity. Parenting groups debate choices on parenting styles just as passionately as graduate students adhere to their theoretical research values (e.g., behaviorists versus cognitivists).

We are community psychologists and community-focused scholars. Therefore, as with all of our other pursuits of social justice we should also focus on solutions for particular role strains and possible social isolation that parent-students encounter. In what ways can we support student parents? Context is important, but, overall, I have heard common themes from other student-parents, mainly about the graciousness we feel towards those advisors, faculty members, and colleagues who remain sensitive to our unique life circumstance(s). For example, the primary instructor for which I am a teaching assistant allows me to bring my infant to our meetings. There are lactation rooms on campus and colleagues that inquire about my baby as well as the progress of my research, and the general climate is that I am not a second-rate graduate student because of my status as a parent.

However, this supportive environment does not exist in all departments and all universities. We should ask ourselves how we can broaden this support system to parent-students throughout various departments and at more universities (particularly in those that focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Also, even when policies evolve, there should still be a bottom-up approach to designing these support systems, and the policies that do exist should be flexible enough to support unique situations. For example, even though the Family Medical Leave Act applies to university faculty and staff, the terms and conditions about graduate student maternity leave are less clear because many students are supported on research grants and are not technically considered to be staff of the university (Crenshaw, 2005). This vagueness can work in favor of or against the student depending on the climate within the department.

Another way to empower graduate student parents is to address social isolation at the local level by creating networking and mentorship opportunities between student parents. Just as academic networking requires nourishment and maintenance, so does parent networking. For example, a faculty member on my dissertation committee connected me with another student mother who is outside of my department who had recently completed her PhD. These types of connections and acts of support are essential for the well-being of student-parents, because when we become encouraged we are more likely to persevere to degree completion (and then to go on to be a productive member of the research and action community). Therefore, the overall goal of describing the striking similarities between parenting and being a graduate student is not only to engage in cathartic processing.

Oh & Lewis, 2011). Yet, it is crucial to understand what kind of support system surrounds those who are both parents and graduate students. The academic climate and interpersonal lessons learned during graduate school can impact not only choices about career and research endeavors, but also the direct retention rate of graduate students (Mendoza, 2006).

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about my personal experiences, but also to start a conversation about social and academic support for the student-parents.

References

The Community Student
Edited by Jesica Fernandez,
University of California, Santa Cruz
and Todd Bottom,
DePaul University

Bridging Facilitation and Community Psychology: Promoting Meaningful Community Collaboration Through Facilitation
Written by Nkiru Nnawulezi,
Echo A. Rivera, and Katie Gregory
Michigan State University

Community psychology is defined by core values that drive our research and inquiry. Two important core values focus on effective collaboration with community partners and building upon existing community strengths (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007). Yet, graduate students who are passionate about collaborative research often remain unsure about how one co-creates a collaborative research study with a community. Students early in their graduate careers ask questions such as: How can I bring multiple stakeholders with diverse agendas to consensus? How do I address the power differences and create an equitable environment? How can I promote stakeholder investment in the project? These are important questions to ask because effective community engagement is an acquired skill and, therefore, few people intuitively know how to engage with community groups. In our experience as graduate students, we found that facilitation bridges the gap between learning the value of community engagement and actually practicing it. In this paper, we describe core components of facilitation and link them to community psychology. We conclude by discussing how facilitation should be an integral part of community psychology graduate training programs.

Broadly, facilitation is “a form of leading and communicating with the intent of achieving maximum creativity, involvement, and commitment to the task at hand” (Rees, 2005, p. 17). Similar to community psychology, effective facilitators have core values and assumptions called “values in action” (Schwarz, 2002, p. 332). First, facilitators challenge traditional definitions of who holds valid information. Facilitators assume that the group’s knowledge is more comprehensive and valid than the facilitator’s knowledge alone. Second, facilitators value free and informed choice and sharing power and control over the process with group members. Third, facilitators make an internal commitment to the group’s process of reaching consensus, over and above their own personal agendas. Fourth, facilitators are compassionate and hold people accountable in an empathic way. This last value strengthens the previous three and encourages respectful engagement of group members. Furthermore, facilitators are: transparent about their own values and viewpoints, curious to learn from all group members, able to think and act systematically, committed to increasing accountability and ownership among group members without fostering dependence, and dedicated to establishing conditions for mutual learning (Rees, 2005; Schwarz, 2002). Facilitation is more than a set of values, however, because it is also about enhancing group processes.

The focus of facilitation is on the collaborative process, not necessarily the end result. Effective facilitators emphasize group cohesion and work toward building trust among all group members as the foundation for any group process. Facilitation increases group effectiveness by enabling groups to identify problems and goals, collaboratively brainstorm ideas to reach goals, and provide insight into future directions for the group.

Facilitation increases group effectiveness by enabling groups to identify problems and goals, collaboratively brainstorm ideas to reach goals, and provide insight into future directions for the group.
and the groups they are facilitating, but work towards addressing these dynamics. Mackewn (2008) argues that facilitators are often in a paradox. They must recognize how power operates within groups and within themselves and then release their own agendas in order to establish an equitable group process. She states, “Facilitators do not control or dominate. They provide opportunities. To be effective, you have to let go of the need for power: the ability to control, direct, impress, inspire, command, and influence the core actions of others” (Mackewn, 2008, p. 362). Graduate students who hope to collaborate on a project with a particular community or organization could be in a similar paradox, particularly due to the constraints within academia.

Regardless, it is likely that multiple stakeholders who occupy different positions within a power hierarchy will come together within one group. The facilitator’s job, then, is to design collective processes that ensure equitable participation, consensus, and decision-making (Mackewn, 2008). Thus, effective facilitators help groups recognize their collective power. As Rees (2005) stated, “Power comes from unleashing the group’s power...group members experience the collective power of synergy” (p. 363).

Finally, a good facilitator acknowledges how contextual factors influence the group process. In addition to the group-level dynamics, facilitators should constantly consider the larger context in which the facilitation occurs and the ways in which it influences how people work together in a group. Everyone enters into a context with an idea about how the world works and this framework enters consciously, or unconsciously, into the group dynamics (Mackewn, 2008). Group processes are hardly value-free, and it is important to understand how group members’ and facilitators’ values influence the process.

Many of the components described above are also described in the field of community psychology. The core values and actions of facilitative leaders described above are consistent with community-based participatory research (e.g., Israel et al., 2008). Both value diverse perspectives among participants and view community members/participants as experts. In addition, both frameworks value empowerment, learning, commitment, and partnership. Finally, both sectors value approaching tasks (e.g., meetings, research projects, social issues) through group-based collaboration.

Graduate students interested in community-based research must learn both methodological skills and group facilitation skills simultaneously in order to create viable solutions to solve social problems. We advocate that graduate training in facilitative skills could be one method to bridge the gap between our vision and our practice. Greenwood and Levin (2007) assert that:

To work in human inquiry, the researcher must develop good facilitation skills and have an understanding of group processes. All the formal social science training in the world can be useful but it is not sufficient. The student of human inquiry must come to terms with group processes, must seek to develop herself as a facilitator and partner, and must continually strive to combine excellence as a research with ethical and political commitments as a co-subject with local partners. (p. 214)

Community psychology graduate students can benefit from learning effective facilitation skills. Facilitative skills can: a) improve public speaking and presentation skills, b) increase confidence when working with groups to conduct research—especially when uncomfortable group dynamics are paramount, c) promote a change from self- and research-centered to community-centered, and d) foster positive connections with community partners in facilitating processes that move communities toward self-identified goals.

Graduate programs that incorporate effective facilitation into their curricula build a foundation for effective and respectful community-based researchers. Regardless of the graduate training program, community psychology students should seek out opportunities to be trained in and to practice facilitation skills—both within and outside of their graduate programs.

Correspondence should be submitted to Nkiru Nnawulezi, Department of Psychology, Michigan State University: nnawulez@msu.edu.

References


Women’s Issues
Edited by Pamela Mulder and Rebecca V. Robinson

News from the Women’s Committee
Written by Michelle Ronayne
Women’s Committee Chair (michelle.ronayne@gmail.com)

The Women’s Committee has been hard at work setting goals and priorities for 2012. Our major aims include: a) making better use of the TCP column by writing more and requesting that you write as well, b) working to create more opportunities for women to support each other, c) following up on our family-friendly workplace survey, and d) creating a new outreach/research project making use of Photovoice.

This column has been quiet lately, and that is why we thought it was important to provide an update. We would like to use this space to share information and research on women’s issues. If you have a topic that you would like to see covered here, please contact the committee chair or the column co-editors (Pamela Mulder and Rebecca Volino Robinson). Anyone on the committee would be happy to collaborate to write a piece for this column. We have an idea for the fall edition with a focus on images of women in the media (many areas to explore here) and would love feedback from those of you that might have something you want to see discussed.

We also want to reach out and find out what the women of SCRA want in terms of networking and support. Katherine Cloutier, a graduate student representative, has expressed an interest in building a network of graduate students, building bridges to those in programs that may not traditionally be reached. We also like to see more relationships and mentorships develop among women, as higher education is often such a competitive process steering women away from tendencies to collaborate.

Last year at the Biennial, the Women’s Committee presented some of our findings on the family-friendly workplace survey that we distributed. It is our plan to continue that work and prepare it for publication. Additionally, we plan to begin a new project that is both outreach (support) and research. We plan to make use of the Photovoice methodology, further exploring Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Lauren Lichty’s online adaptation of this approach. It is our goal to explore issues related to being a woman in higher education. The process will ask female academics, in particular, to respond to questions through photos and narratives and participate in discussions about their experiences.

Finally, we thought it would be good to let you know who we are and include some of our interests. Michelle Ronayne, PhD, is our current chair. She is interested in research that focuses on power, empowerment, and empathy in many forms. Her current research is focused on media depictions of mental health and whether they serve to reinforce stigma or create empowering and empathic views. Katherine is in the community psychology program at Michigan State University. She is also working on a graduate specialization in gender, justice, and environmental change and is dedicated to using arts-based approaches to CBPR. Rebecca Volino Robinson, MS, is a doctoral candidate in clinical-community psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Her research interests involve the intersection of health and culture with a specific focus on resilience among marginalized populations. She is committed to humanitarian justice, nationally and internationally, and envisions her future work focused in this arena. Pamela Mulder, PhD, is a professor of psychology at Marshall University where she is committed to student development and the study of rural community health. She is the editor of the Journal of Rural Community Psychology. Debra Trude-Suter is Director of Training, McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University. She has a master’s degree in psychology with special focus on women and children’s studies and has submitted her doctoral dissertation to complete her studies in community psychology. She has more than 25 years of work with positive team management in both the profit and non-profit industries, and has focused her energies over the past fifteen years on diversity and social justice issues.

We hope that this introduction of the Women’s Committee members and the clarification of our present aims entice involvement from the SCRA community. If you would like to contact the Women’s Committee, please email Michelle Ronayne, Women’s Committee Chair at michelle.ronayne@gmail.com.
Announcements

Winner of the Best Dissertation on a Topic Relevant to Community Psychology

**Trajectories of Psychological Distress Among Low-Income Female Survivors of Hurricane Katrina**

Sarah Lowe, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Massachusetts Boston Boston, Massachusetts (2011)

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate trajectories of psychological distress among low-income women, primarily unmarried and African American, who survived Hurricane Katrina (N = 386). Data were collected in the year prior to the hurricane, as well as approximately one and three years thereafter. Using Latent Class Growth Analysis (LCGA), we detected six distinct trajectory groups. Over half of participants fit into a trajectory consistent with resilience; that is, they maintained low levels of psychological distress over the course of the study, but experienced an elevation in symptoms at the first pre-disaster time point, followed by a return to pre-disaster levels. The other trajectories reflected the range in psychological responses to disasters, and suggested pre-disaster functioning as having a major influence on post-disaster psychological outcomes. Exposure to hurricane-related stressors, experiences of human and pet bereavement, perceived social support, and socioeconomic status were significant predictors of trajectory group membership. Based on these findings, we recommend policies that protect against hurricane exposure, promote the rebuilding of social support networks, and assist survivors in identifying employment and educational opportunities, as well as empirically supported clinical interventions that help survivors cope with longstanding or emergent symptoms. Further longitudinal quantitative studies, as well as qualitative analysis of survivors’ accounts of post-disaster psychological experiences, would advance our understanding of resilience and other trajectories of functioning in the aftermath of traumatic events.

**Winner of the Emory L. Cowen Dissertation Award for the Promotion of Wellness**

**The Relation of School Factors to Changes Associated with a Violence Prevention Program**

Allison Dymnicki, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, Community and Prevention Research Division, University of Illinois at Chicago Chicago, Illinois (2010)

**Abstract**

There is a need to understand how ecological characteristics of a school influence the effectiveness of prevention programs. Researchers have begun to identify initial school-level conditions such as relationships among school members and safety problems that could influence program outcomes. Using multi-facet Rasch analyses, a reliable school-level measure was created with data collected from 368 teachers in 37 schools that participated in the Multisite Violence Prevention Project. The measure included two factors that assessed: a) the quality of relationships among principals, teachers, and students, and b) the seriousness of school problems.

Mixed-effects regression models examined how relationships, school problems, and the interaction of the two predicted four short-term outcomes (norms for alternatives, self-efficacy for alternatives, strategies used in conflicts, and use of problem-solving skills at post) and one long-term outcome (self-reported aggression one-year later). Relationships and the interaction of relationships and school problems were significant predictors of short- and long-term program outcomes. Better relationships among school members were associated with better program outcomes. This main effect, however, was moderated by a significant interaction. The association between relationships and program outcomes was weaker in schools with more serious school problems than in schools with less serious school problems. Contributions of this study include developing a measure that researchers can use to choose promising sites for school-based prevention efforts and providing data on how combinations of school-level factors impact prevention program outcomes.
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