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The Whole is Greater Than the Sum of its Parts: Collaborations for Strengthening Communities

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Table of Contents

Community Organizing as Social Activism <i>Benjamin Shepard</i>	3
Perceptions & Politics in Long Term Commitments to Community Partnerships <i>Beth Warner & Bud Warner</i>	12
Students Building Communities on the Navajo Reservation <i>Susan E. Claxton</i>	22
We Did it Together: Bringing Everyone to the Table for Successful Collaboration <i>Leslie Forstadt & Jessica Esch</i>	26
Student-Community Partnerships: Succeeding in Grant Writing <i>Kelly Felice</i>	29
Transition-Age Youth: Planting Seeds of Change in Alaska <i>Michael R. Sobocinski</i>	33
Resilience in Diverse Youth: Collaborative Strategies <i>Tiana Povenmire-Kirk</i>	42
Improving Professional Development through Supervision <i>Jared C. Schultz</i>	46
Global Citizenry <i>J. Stephen Cockerham</i>	56

Community Organizing as Social Activism

Benjamin Shepard, PhD, LMSW

Abstract

The following offers a short overview of social activism in relation to human services, direct action, and social organizing practices. A subtext of this discussion involves social connection and separation, between individuals and communities, across borders and ways of thinking. From this point of view, social change is realized through active social engagement. Through social activism, we connect with others to expand leadership networks, organize, advocate, generate ideas, foster social bonds, and create solutions.

Introduction

“A politics of play that is engaging...is not just generative, it grows,” explains New York activist William Etundi. Through such work and play, social actors connect individual experiences with broader social forces. They do so through friendships networks, social ties, service learning, organizing, and even social activism. It begins with close social ties among social actors. “Revolution means we need each other,” explains Washington, DC activist Mark Anderson.

We cannot allow ourselves to be kept apart, whether by the system at large or by our own ideology or personal failings. Another way to put it is the Chumbawumba phrase, “Isolation is the biggest barrier to change.” I guess part of what I’m encouraging with this is that we have to see the tension between what feels good for us in activism and what might actually be effective in making the changes. It’s not the one is the be-all, end-all and the other one’s not important. Actually the two are interconnected and they just need to be kept in balance.

While Anderson frames the realm of social activism as a conflict between the socializing and the hard work of organizing, there need not be. The two elements support each other in mutually beneficial ways. After all, the field is in constant flux. Throughout the field of community organization, practitioners experiment with innovations in practice to cope with a range of threats, challenges, and exponential complications. Yet, the ways community organizations and groups respond reflects a model of practice capable of addressing challenges and adopting on the ground. The cases presented here serve as best practice exemplars. Throughout this essay, a seven-stage organizing model is delineated. Out of this model, I would argue there is always room for organizing when organizers are willing to be flexible, while connecting to create alternatives.

A Vital Tool for Communication

Community organizing is a vital tool for those across the political spectrum to speak out about what is wrong with the world and what they want to make it better. Social activism is born of this approach to responding to social challenges in an immediate, direct, unmediated fashion. Section 10 of the Ethical Standards for Human Services specifically suggests we all have an

obligation to engage in such practices, especially if no one else is speaking up for our communities.

Human service professionals are aware of local, state, and federal laws. They advocate for change in regulations and statutes when such legislation conflicts with ethical guidelines and/or client rights. Where laws are harmful to individuals, groups or communities, human service professionals consider the conflict between the values of obeying the law and the values of serving people and may decide to initiate social action (NOHS 1996).

In this way, direct action is recognized as a valid form of practice for those providing services as well as organizing. The point is that changing unjust laws is part of social services and activism, extending from direct care to direct action. In this way, the point of social activism is to challenge mechanisms which control the social body, countering social controls with gestures of freedom and fueled by the social imagination. The point, after all, is to come to understand social connection among people across communities, borders, and ways of thinking. “Human service professionals understand the complex interaction between individuals, their families, the communities in which they live, and society” (NOHS, 1996).

The Core Assumptions of Social Activism

Theoretically, social activism builds on a few core assumptions of humanist organizing and sociology. A few of these include

- common concern for the real life problems of equality, peace and social justice;
- commitment to address all facets of the human condition;
- commitment to use sociology for people, as well as the larger needs of the planet; and
- commitment to humanist values, as they practice in institutions often hostile to such an approach (Dolgan, C. and Chayko, M. 2010).

Conceptually, this understanding finds its expression in a highly humanistic approach to social organizing. Flexible, rather than ideological, it integrates a range of perspectives; yet more than anything it recognizes that at its best, organizing involves core elements of human kindness (Stebner, 1997). In this way, the process counts as well as the outcome. This is not to suggest that practice fetishes process at the expense of outcomes; it does not. “The attention we apply to how we practice does not imply a substitution of process over content” argues social welfare scholar Steve Burghardt (1982).

Economic relationships are paramount factors that affect us in our work, determining the type of choices we face daily. However, the primacy of objective conditions does not make subjective, interpersonal conditions irrelevant.” Instead, this approach links personal needs with attention to issues of the political which are often intimately interconnected with social and cultural forces. In doing so, it includes a diversity of approaches, from direct action to direct services. In addition, it integrates both resource mobilization and contemporary lucid frameworks for creating change (Fineberg, 2002; MacAdam, McCarthy, & Mayer, 1988). To do so, it builds on the lessons of movements, which recognize that play and fun, culture and friendship are vital ingredients of effective organizing (Duncombe, 2007; Stebner, 1997).

After all, pleasure counts. There is nothing wrong with people occasionally just enjoying themselves. This is where play comes in. In recognizing this strength, it is important to remember that there is always more to play than simple diversion. Such activity helps open new ways of looking at the world. It is a free activity, involving hands and heads, stories, moving back and forth between reality and fantasy, experiment and frivolity. Such activity helps us experiment with alternative perspectives on social reality; it is also a lot of fun.

Without a space for engaging creative energies, many find it difficult to cope with life's challenges (Wenner, 2009). Such practices provide energy. Batteries recharge; actors are ready to re-engage, "to get from the outside world whatever is needed for self-preservation" (Lantos, 1943). Play inspires innovation in any number of ways (Weissman, 1990). It helps actors convey a counter-public message by creating situations (Bogad, 2003, 2005; Reed, 2005). Play engenders fun, which is an important end, in and of itself.

Yet, this is not a substitute for a larger, more coherent organizing strategy. Rather, it is one of many tools in the activist toolbox. Such a framework for social change typically includes a clear, well-articulated proposal, research and analysis of the problem, media advocacy, short and long term legal strategies, an element of freshness and surprise, combined with a jigger of play to sustain the campaign. In this way, play is but a complement to a larger organizing campaign. It helps keep people engaged. It keeps ideas flowing, civil society pulsing. It's an easy point of entry to activism. Most importantly, it is simply one of any number of ingredients within a gumbo of methods understood as social activism.

In this way, it is a vital piece of social organizing. Connecting pleasure and activism, social actors connect both friends and networks within the common cause of organizing for social change. Sometimes the process involves game playing or recreational activities such as Anarchist Cricket, or involvement in the Garden, or the Puyallup Daffodil Three-Wheeler Club. In other cases, like the Critical Mass or group bike rides, such activities alter the rules of the game of urban life, challenging the ways cities and people understand themselves. Unlike more formal organizing, everyone is allowed to be a leader to engage power and mobilize together. It involves both skills and knowledge development as well as a strengths-based approach to practice (Saleeby, 2008). In this way, such activism promotes inclusion of multiple voices, many of which are often omitted from contemporary social discourse. Yet, the metaphor is one of a party, rather than a duty bound effort (Duncombe, 2007). Everyone is invited to participate in the process. And many choose to.

Be warned. By inviting everyone, social organizers participate in a profoundly democratic experiment in living. As Cher declares before her class in her tongue and cheek soliloquy in the 1995 film, *Clueless*, based on Jane Austin's *Emma*.

So like, right now, for example. The Haitians need to come to America. But some people are all, "What about the strain on our resources?" Well it's like when I had this garden party for my father's birthday, right? I put RSVP. 'cause it was a sit-down dinner. But some people came that like did not RSVP. I was like totally buggin'. I had to haul ass to the kitchen, redistribute the food, and squish in extra place settings. But by the end of the day it was, like, the more the merrier. And so if the government could just get to the kitchen, rearrange some things, we could certainly party with the Haitians. And in conclusion may I please remind you it does not say RSVP on the Statue of Liberty. Thank you very much (Heckerling, 1995).

It most certainly does not say RSVP on the Statue of Liberty. As she completed her exposition of the party based metaphor for democratic living, Cher bows to a room full of applause. The point of social activism is to break down the lines between policy and practice, work and play, insider and outsider, so more and more are able to participate with social and collective process of authentic democratic living.

Interplay between inside and outside, connection, and separation very much propels the process of social organizing. Many movements must grapple with just such an interplay. Consider the following quotes from observers of the May 1, 2007 police raid on the Immigrant Rights rally in MacArthur Park in Los Angeles.

It was great. There was a band playing cumbias on a large stage, and all around there were thousands of people doing festival stuff. The kids that play Son Jarocho were there getting into the spirit with their jaranas, traditional instruments from Veracruz, Mexico that look and sound a little like ukuleles. There was a theatre group doing a silent skit that looked something like the statue of liberty in a sweatshop... Spanish speakers from many countries, Asian Pacific natives, Aztec dancers, Anglos and others... It was colorful and celebratory. There was no alcohol and everybody seemed to be in good spirits and mellow. I saw someone I knew standing there, and I asked her if she had been there for a while, and if she had any idea what was going on. "Yeah," she said, "The kids were dancing and drumming in the street when the cops just charged them. There was no warning," she said, "they didn't need to do it like that. Everybody was cool."

- Anna, LA Independent Media Center, May 1, 2007

I just want to point out that despite the tragic end, the march was beautiful and it was filled with people from all backgrounds marching for worker's rights no matter if they have "legal status" or not. We all should try to understand that worker's rights have no borders. We all are in this struggle together. We all want to live and enjoy life in peace. We are all human and I think some forget this fact. Sometimes we lose a bit of our humanity and I think that it is time for people to take care of one another. In this world we only have each other. If we do not take care of each other then who will? I think Katrina showed quite well that we cannot rely on our government when it comes to taking care of the people... Know your neighbor; know your community. Take care of each other. There seems to be no justice in this cold system. Just us.

- Nick Napolitano post to LA Independent Media Center, May 1, 2007

Social Movements

As the above accounts attest, social movements are made and broken within the interplay of social connection and separation, contact and isolation. Yet, the cause of social activism is often viewed as a threat to the powers the principalities. If the Mayday immigrant rights rallies were about anything, they were about the rejection of calls for more separation. Instead of discussion about connection, the current immigration debate is characterized in dichotomous terms: naturalization vs. criminalization, legal vs. illegal, citizen vs. immigrant; deportation vs. amnesty. In response to such polarities, supporters of immigrant and workers rights have flowed into streets in cities across the country to call for cross border solidarity. As the quotes above attest, these actions have been characterized by social ethos, an awareness of the interconnection

among differing movements, workers and immigrants, citizens and non-citizens. They highlight a humanist ethos at the center of social activism.

This consciousness, of course, is what propels social movements. “I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham,” Martin Luther King wrote in Letter from a Birmingham jail. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” King recognized. In this way, we are all, “caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” Such a worldview has deep philosophical underpinnings. Yet so does the politics of separation and fear. “Without an order to disperse or a warning shot, all hell breaks loose,” Nick (2007) wrote to the LA Independent Media Center after the May 1, 2007 raid of peaceful parade attendees in MacArthur Park. He wrote about the scene as the police moved in:

LAPD is now firing rubber bullet kisses into a crowd of families gathered for a peaceful cause. LAPD uses absolutely no discrimination in whom they choose to shoot: women, children, men, the homeless, the media, and those who cannot walk without assistance are not safe. LAPD continues to fire round after round until MacArthur Park starts to resemble a scene in a horror film where the a monster has just showed up and everyone is running for their lives and safety grabbing whatever they could to try to get to a safe place without getting hurt.

In the days after the Mayday actions, many suggested the police attack was intended to stifle movement progress. Of course, this politics of fear has long supported social, cultural, and racial separation which supports war rather than reconciliation (Marable, 2003). The separation of people – with borders or fear – remains a central ingredient of neoliberalism (Klein, 2002). Connection is the antithesis of such a politics. Immediately after the May Day attacks, witnesses noted that those who participated in the rally at MacArthur Park provided mutual aid, helping the old and young, those with kids, and everyone else get out of the park and away from the police.

A politics of separation would have allowed participants to leave the weak, while this practice of connection, buttressed by an I-Thou view of interconnection (Buber, 1970), allowed participants to remain together. A politics of connection builds on the IWW notion that an injury to one is an injury to all, while a politics of separation allows the strong to leave the poor to fend for themselves as their fate has nothing to do with them. A politics of separation supports the view that we owe nothing to each other as human beings, while the politics of connection suggests we are all part of a one sprawling mass of workers, parents, students, homeless people – everyone involved in deeply human endeavor of living and trying to making something of this world.

Recent years have presented us with years of failure and connection. The era began with a Global Justice Movement on the ground and running. Cultural play and collective joy were primary ingredients of this global democracy movement. Much of social activism found its expression in the do-it-yourself burlesque of energy and possibility which characterized the movement of convergent actions through the years before Bush’s ascent and the terrorist attacks which followed. For a while there, cities including Genoa, Prague, NYC, LA, SF, Philadelphia, and, of course, Seattle, witnessed a collective encounter with a movement characterized by unbridled wanderlust as countless actors embraced the quirky alliances and pleasure of building a better world, one prank at a time. This is not to suggest that there was not a give and take between connection and separation, movement advance and repressive police baton with each

new convergence action. Yet, forces opposed to such connection were never far from the distance.

Myles Horton, of the Highlander Folk School, experienced it when his school supported movements ranging from civil rights to the environment. Authorities targeted the school for violation of miscegenation laws when Caucasian women square danced with African Americans (Horton 1989). The pattern is not new. The forces of social and cultural repression which opposed episodes of collective ecstasy date back the days of Rome and attacks on the Dionysus cults. They are always lurking, ready to shut down the party (Ehrenreich, 2007).

The sentiment plays out again and again and again. Cultural and communal pleasure emerges and the Savorolla & Comstock's follow, especially when these acts of *communitas* create conditions which threaten the status quo (Turner, 1969). The powers and principalities find ways to shut down moments of collective connection. They rolled tanks into Tiananmen Square in 1989, just as "Bull" O'Conner pulled out fire hoses on civil rights organizers in Birmingham, Alabama. In response, children could be seen dancing (Zinn, 2002).

To the extent that social activism breaks down these forms of social isolation and alienation, such group formations are seen as a threat to a status quo (Ollman, 1977). This is why social organizing is seen as powerful. Revolts are often born of such activities. "Ecstatic rituals still build group cohesion, but when they build it among subordinates – peasants, slaves, women, colonized people – the elite calls out its troops," (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 252).

Recent examples of such repression include May 1, 2007 in Los Angeles, or Mayday 2001 in New York City when the NYPD arrested immigrant workers and their supporters for staging a street performance in support of undocumented workers (Bogad, 2003), or even October 19th, 1998 when the NYPD attempted to shut down a non-permitted funeral march for Matthew Shepard (see Feinberg, 2002)...in all three occasions provoking riot conditions. In each, police moved in to crack down in collective actions among disenfranchised people.

Yet, there is more to this repression than fear of uprisings. The suppression of collective joy is also a distinct form of social control.

Elite hostility to Dionysian festivities goes beyond pragmatic concerns about the possibility of uprising or seduction of the young. Philosophically, too, elites cringe from the spectacle of disorderly public joy. Hierarchy, by its nature, establishes boundaries between people – who can go where, who can approach whom, who is welcome, and who is not. Festivity breaks the boundaries down, (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 252).

Hierarchies establish boundaries, while collective play breaks it down. For this reason, the powers that be find it in their vested interest to maintain boundaries which establish social hierarchies. "At the height of festivity, we step out of our assigned roles and statuses – of gender, ethnicity, tribe and rank – and into a brief utopia defined by egalitarianism, creativity, and mutual love," (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 253).

Without such practices, movements often are limited. While critics reject such forms of social activism, seasoned organizers know that gratification cannot be deferred until after the revolution (Ehrenreich, 2007). Thus, movements have aimed to put the right to party on the table; herein the right to pleasure, as well as its uses, are recognized as vital part of movement tactics and campaigns. Such a strategy also increases means and motivation for long term participation. It is a point in which Stephen Duncombe (2007) concurs. Without some form of pleasure involved in organizing, people simply fail to stay involved over the long term.

From 1998-2004, Duncombe helped organize New York City's Reclaim the Streets (RTS) group which held street parties as political interventions. Here, the parties were also used to communicate political messages through an "ethical spectacle." With RTS, the point of such acts of collective joy was thus twofold, with purpose to sustain the troops and speak to multiple publics. "People must find, in their movement, the immediate joy of solidarity, if only because, in the face of overwhelming state or corporate power, solidarity is their sole source of strength," Ehrenreich concurred (p. 259).

Yet, beyond rational ends and movement strategies, the experience of collective joy associated with social activism allows social actors to find a way to share in the experience of being fully human. In a world of neo-liberal economic policies which depend on walls, borders, hierarchies, and isolation, the impulse to connect remains. As separation recedes, social dichotomies disappear. Anyone who has seen the mariachi bands, flags, and intergenerational connection taking place at one of the recent Immigrant Rights rallies knows that such actions are a driving force bridging the wanderlust of the Global Justice and Immigrant Rights Movements. Despite the obstacles, the collective joy which characterizes these movements feels irrepressible.

Conclusion

So why should students of organizing be interested in social activism? In a nutshell, because such practices break down barriers to action. A primary barrier is, of course, alienation (Ollman 1977). Rather than be alone, social activism invites us all to participate game of democratic living. After all, it does not say RSVP on the Statue of Liberty.

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Perceptions and Politics in Long Term Commitments to Community Partnerships

Beth Warner, PhD and Bud Warner, PhD

Abstract

This article describes an on-going, long term partnership with a public community recreation facility and human services faculty members that demonstrates many of the complex issues and topics that have been identified as important aspects of asset-based community work. The key lessons learned in this partnership include (a) the importance of personal ownership and long term commitment for effective partnerships, (b) the difficulty of getting diverse groups to come to common understandings and commitments to what appear to be great ideas, (c) the need to help students understand and navigate community work, and (d) the politics of complex community partnerships. A discussion of these lessons and their implications for campus-community partnerships supports the asset-based community development approach when working with community groups.

Introduction

Problems in communities, especially low income communities, have come to be seen as intractable. Since the 1960's War on Poverty, debates have taken place over how best to solve needs and problems in these communities (Dorius, 2009). Academics have typically implemented community needs surveys, executed extensive research projects, provided analysis of problems, and presented possible solutions to meet those needs (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Over the last decade, experience by faculty working in communities has suggested that a different approach may be more effective (Leech & Potts, Jr. 2010; Dorius, 2009; McNall, Reed, Brown & Allen, 2009; Newel & South, 2009; Lewis, 2004; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Delgado, 2000).

Transformation in communities is more likely to be achieved using an asset-based model (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Kretzman & McKnight, 1996), by identifying and utilizing strengths and resiliency factors (Norman, 2000) and by becoming co-producers of knowledge and change along with the community (McNall, Reed, Brown & Allen, 2009; Newel & South, 2009). Moving away from the more commonly used problem and deficit approach towards promoting the capacity of communities will provide new resources for students who are eager to become efficacious change agents.

This article describes an on-going, long term partnership with a public community recreation facility and Human Services faculty members at a mid-sized, private university located in the South. The discussion begins with an introduction to models of asset-based community work. A campus-community partnership example is presented that demonstrates many of the complex issues that have been identified as important strengths and limitations of asset-based community work.

The key lessons learned in this case include (a) the importance of personal ownership and long term commitment to projects for effective partnerships, (b) the difficulty of getting diverse groups to come to common understandings and commitments to what appear to be great ideas,

(c) the need to help students understand and navigate community work, and (d) the politics of complex campus-community partnerships.

Asset-based Community Development

Definitions and examples of community work generally support the more traditional needs-based approach to dealing with social problems that focus on problems, deficits and needs. This approach is common but it may inadvertently present a one-sided, negative view of the community one wishes to build and transform. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) note that these negative images influence the way problems are addressed. Norman (2000) identified the outcomes of traditional needs-based approaches as victimization, learned helplessness, dysfunction, deficit, and disease.

When the community is viewed as deficient, deficiency-oriented policies and programs are developed. Kretzmann and McKnight further explain that, “public, private, and non-profit human service systems, often supported by university research and foundation funding, translate the programs into local activities that teach people the nature and extent of their problems and the value of services as the answer to their problems. As a result, many lower income urban neighborhoods are now “environments of service where behaviors are affected because residents come to believe that their well-being depends upon being a client” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996, p. 23). This is a very strong indictment of the work academics do in communities.

Asset-based community development operates from the premise that people in communities have strengths and assets that they, themselves, can use to build capacity and transform their surroundings (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Norman, 2000). Community social assets are individual talents, the social capital found in both formal and informal relationships, networks and associations, and the community’s past successful adaptation to issues and problems. Delgado (2000), building on the work of Kretzmann and McKnight, noted that to apply this strengths perspective in communities requires that those outside the community, whether they are government agencies, donor agencies, or even universities engaged with their broader social context, empower community members to themselves determine issues to be addressed, define success, and utilize talents and competencies already found within the community.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) explain that this does not eliminate the need for additional resources from outside the community; but working in this way can help the local community more effectively use the resources because of their investment in developing agendas for how the resources are obtained and used. Traditionally, outside funding is given to those institutions defined as meeting the externally defined needs rather than those defined by the people of the community itself. Typically, the institutions receiving the outside funding begin to develop a vested interest in maintaining this approach, both to legitimize their efforts and to maintain funding and staffing patterns.

McNall and colleagues analyzed community-university partnership dynamics and found that the more effective partnerships worked together as co-creators of knowledge throughout the process, beginning with assessment and research on community issues and needs, determining the approach to service and development of shared power and resources (McNall, Reed, Brown, & Allen, 2009; also see Newel & South, 2009). Working with community members as co-creators of knowledge may be particularly difficult for governments, whose responsibilities are often viewed in a vertical relationship with those it serves.

Researchers have documented both the desire and the frustrations on the part of government officials to working with and including local citizens in decision-making and planning (Kathi & Cooper, 2005; Portney, 2005; Boviard, 2007; Smith, 2008). Boyte (2003) advocates the idea of *everyday politics*, where interactions between citizens and government have a horizontal orientation to working together to address community needs. Academics following this approach can not only be more effective resources for citizens but can also increase knowledge and material for teaching, utilize genuine civic engagement for students, and demonstrate community capacity building rather than viewing citizen groups as passive recipients of service.

Building or enhancing community capacity requires that community outsiders take deliberate steps to (a) identify community stakeholders and potential leaders who can be involved in projects, (b) identify the most relevant capacity enhancement project based on local assets, needs, and circumstances, (c) provide workers with a better understanding of the community, its history, its culture, previous successes, demographic changes, and hope for the present and future, and (d) lay the necessary foundation for the ultimate development and implementation of a project (Delgado, 2000). Academics, eager to have students experience the “real world” in ways that can enhance their learning, often don’t spend adequate time with community partners to learn what is either needed or wanted.

This issue of time raises an important question for the academic institution. What long term commitments to the community can the institution make? Academic service-learning as a pedagogy has been found to serve as an important conduit for academics and students to gain better understandings of communities while providing tangible services for them (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyer, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). There remain, however, numerous questions about the real utility of such endeavors in building community capacity. Lewis (2004) noted that for most academic institutions, civic engagement works best if a need-based, charity model is used, allowing faculty members and students to step into community problems for a relatively short amount of time (a semester), address needs, and then leave. To truly build community capacity requires a commitment to an asset-based, social justice perspective that by its very nature requires longer time commitments (Leech & Potts, Jr., 2010; Lewis, 2004).

There is clear recognition within the field of human services that students need to learn about the prevention and remediation of problems across a wide array of venues, ranging from individual personal problems to those problems embedded in social inequalities and public policy. While practicum and internship opportunities are designed to give students experiences in the community, they are most often located in social service agencies working with a supervisor who is delivering social services. Students will come to understand and use many of the skills and theories they’ve been taught, but learn them from the perspective of the traditional needs-based approach where service delivery professionals identify the problem and generate possible solutions to the problem. Learning to approach communities from an asset-based perspective requires time in and exposure to the people in the community. Students need to understand that communities are not a locus of problems but have strengths as well.

A final challenge in asset-based development is in determining partnerships. As noted earlier, existing entities, such as governments and service-delivery systems, have an interest in maintaining some form of existing relationships to preserve investments in the community. Stakeholders may not support or actively embrace the approach of asset-based or capacity building. If the community’s experience with academics has been primarily of short term, needs-

based program participation, there may be a natural reluctance to trust that a different group of academics will have a long term, capacity building approach that will truly last. Communities that depend on services provided from a needs-based approach may also be reluctant to upset existing relationships to establish new relationships that, while the possibility for growth and enhancement is present, may or may not bring community improvement in the long run.

The complex relationship of an asset-based, community-university partnership presents both strengths and limitations. Hutchinson and Loukaitou-Sideris (2001) describe some of those as participation, the nature of inter-group collaboration, the extent of mobilization of community assets and the nature of partnerships with external actors as they relate to the balance of power. The remainder of this paper presents an example of a university Human Services department's involvement in a long term, capacity-based relationship with a community partner. This example demonstrates many of the issues and topics that have been identified as important aspects of the complexity of this approach.

The Campus-Community Partnership

Human Services faculty members at a mid-sized, private university located in the South were invited to visit a neighborhood recreational center run by the city Parks and Recreation Department where the university was located. The center suffered from lack of attention by the city government as well as public misinformation about the safety of the area. The center and the surrounding park were located in a predominantly African-American, working class neighborhood. A sizable number of Latino families were also moving into the community. The neighborhood was the home to numerous churches, small businesses, and three public housing complexes.

The center's director, concerned about the conditions of the area and the lives of its children, wanted help to create opportunities for the resident children to have cultural and educational experiences that were usually not available to them. The director was clear that he did not want a one-time program or students who simply stopped by from time to time. He wanted a long term commitment to the residents of the community. After the visit, the faculty members discussed what they, as an academic department, might be able to provide to assist the director. It was decided that the department would make a five-year commitment to the center, and that faculty would utilize both themselves and students as resources to assist the director in accomplishing his vision for the center.

The recreational center was a multi-purpose facility. It included a game room, which had ping-pong, pool, air hockey, and other games plus a large screen television and DVD player. A larger multi-purpose room included a kitchen. An arts and crafts room was dominated by the equipment to make plaster casts of molds, fire them, and then paint the finished pottery. The dominant space in the building was a gymnasium, which was used primarily for basketball games.

The gymnasium was not air-conditioned, which created challenges especially in the summer, but was used regularly for recreation leagues, church leagues, and AAU competition. The center director was an accomplished artist, and had personally painted large school emblems of all the schools in the district throughout the gymnasium. The city library also maintained a small branch office in the building, although it was not under the control of the center director.

The center held two large community-wide events each year that were attended by hundreds of people, but in general, programs were sparsely supported. The center director was

interested in what types of programs would best serve this community and how the center was currently perceived by those who lived in the area.

A recent county-wide needs assessment identified broad issues for the general area but was not designed to assist the center in determining the interests of the residents or why more of them didn't attend center-sponsored events or utilize the center's resources. One faculty member quickly involved Human Services students in a course on working with groups and communities to conduct a needs assessment. Conducting the needs assessment provided a new and eye-opening experience for students who had never participated in community based research. Through the process they were not only able to see how research could be both applied and used to benefit the community but also had meaningful interactions with the neighborhood residents.

Originally conceived as a participatory action research project aimed at building community capacity, students found they were unable to get the support they needed from leadership within the community within the available time. Due to the time limit imposed by the semester length course, students finally held neighborhood meetings with sparse attendance and went door-to-door with their interview questions. As an additional factor, the vast majority of students at the university was white, from affluent backgrounds, and had little experience in working in situations where they were the minority population.

While the needs assessment was being conducted, the Parks and Recreation Department was charged to oversee a grant the city had obtained to improve the health and fitness of another identified neighborhood within the city. When the first neighborhood choice did not work out, the city moved the grant location to this center and its neighborhood. One of the requirements for the grant included conducting a local needs assessment. The center director shared with his supervisor that faculty from the university's Department of Human Services had done such an assessment.

Suddenly, faculty members involved with the assessment were included in an advisory committee to develop the implementation of the grant. What became interesting, though, was that the grant committee, composed of various Parks and Recreation Department officials and others connected to established service providers, quickly discounted many of the needs assessment findings and moved to shape the grant to meet their own ideas of what the neighborhood needed.

Intra-agency politics also became more pronounced as the project developed, putting faculty in the position as advocates for neighborhood residents. After lengthy discussion, a number of local citizens were invited to join the grant team. Most attended one or two meetings and never returned. Discussions with the original grant leaders indicated they were reluctant to incorporate citizen input on key issues, relegating their input to rather superficial issues.

The process reflected the on-going marginalization of citizens when a needs-based approach is utilized. While faculty members advocated for additional community capacity building, the officials charged with implementing the grant viewed such activities as outside of their scope or as confusing the original goals of the grant, none of which had been established by the community itself.

Significant Turning Points

After one grant meeting, the members left the center only to be confronted by a large police presence, including canine units, approximately twelve young boys and girls (ages 12 – 15) seated on the ground in handcuffs, and an angry group of parents demanding to know what was going on. An incident had occurred where three neighborhood youths had taunted and then

pushed a lifeguard at the park pool. The lifeguard, a 16 year old, white, summer employee, spoke to his supervisor, who then called his supervisor, who was located at the Parks and Recreation headquarters miles away, who spoke with another city official, who called the police.

The police responded and, as it occurred at shift change, both those going off shift and those coming on duty responded and arrived at the center. Allegedly, one of the youths made a comment about getting a gun to settle the problem. As a result of this “fifth-hand” message, police came to the situation thinking guns were already involved, which was not the case. The police initially tried to clear the park, then changed their mind and detained people who they deemed as ‘uncooperative’, and restrained them until their parents arrived to take them home. One 15 year old boy was tackled by police and injured as he tried to exit the park, as he thought he was instructed to do.

This event occurred after one year of the faculty members working with the center director and being involved with the community. Going to the center and discussing the event with the director became a turning point for the faculty who began to understand the depth of the political tension for this agency. The director shared his frustrations about the police, who seldom came or arrived hours later when he called them, with the Parks and Recreation officials who didn’t want to invest in his programs, and how the city generally ignored his community and seemed imposed upon to provide basic services.

The Chief of Police later called a meeting with various community leaders, most of whom represented the various churches in the community. The center director asked one of the faculty members to go to the meeting with him. The only white people in the meeting were the police chief, the city attorney, and the faculty member. The racial make-up of this group was significant because historically, it has appeared that the neglect in this community was related to race. Even the fact that this white faculty member was singled out in the meeting to provide his opinion, seemed to imply that his opinion carried more weight. This was a turning point because faculty commitment to the center gained new levels of credibility with the community through this meeting, particularly when the faculty member supported the community member’s in their perceptions of police over-reaction to the incident.

A second turning point was the formation of the community leadership board. As various aspects of the fitness grant continued to be implemented, faculty members again asked for a community team to develop local leadership for on-going efforts to sustain the initial grant activities. While the grant team leaders supported this, they wanted to both pick the community leaders and dictate their agendas. Faculty members had numerous conversations behind the scenes with key grant leaders to help them understand why that was not a good idea if the community was to ever own the process and its future. Despite giving vocal assurances that they understood, the concept of community asset-building, in public meetings they continued to attempt to dictate both membership and activities of the emerging community leadership council.

The attitude of the city officials and grant leaders was that of “yes, but” – having community leaders involved, allowing them a voice to develop programs, listening to their concerns all seems to end in a “yes, but they don’t understand” attitude. One faculty member suggested that leadership board meetings take place without inviting Parks and Recreation staff. Only the center director was invited to attend. Although this was somewhat dangerous for the center director’s job security, the board took an “apologize later” approach. Meetings became both more productive and more authentic. Participation in the new programs was improved and word spread that there were interesting things going on at the center.

Probably the most significant turning point to date was the addition of an elected city council member to the leadership board. This city council member had been invited to a community leadership training workshop sponsored by the board. During this workshop, one of the faculties publicly confronted this elected official about the city's years of neglect in this neighborhood. The elected official was somewhat defensive at first but later acknowledged that he had grown up in that neighborhood and had good childhood memories of playing at that park and recreation center. He, in fact, wanted to contribute to the revitalization of this neighborhood but was frustrated by his failure to rally the community on his own.

Since he joined the board he has been able to convince city administrators to complete basic maintenance at the center as well as adding equipment that other recreation centers already had. He has many more ideas and plans to bring resources to the community but more importantly, he grew up in this neighborhood and is a community asset that brings historic memory and commitment along with his resources. Although the original attitude was that city officials were the "enemy" the group has learned the importance of keeping an open mind, avoiding stereotypes, and embracing all strengths and assets available to the community.

Reflections

Numerous lessons and important points have come from this experience. First, one key lesson is the importance of personal ownership and long term commitment to projects for effective partnerships. While the university these faculty members work for has been recognized and lauded for its service-learning work, most of that work is done within the needs-based, charity model. The number of long term partnerships built by faculty at the university has been steadily growing, but it is still a relatively new development. Faculty members are now in the third year of the five-year partnership.

Interestingly, the center director recently publicly stated how thrilled he was to have the university as a partner for seven years. Perhaps he is right; now that the first two years of trust-building and listening have been accomplished, faculty members have five years to truly partner. Sustainable successes require a longer commitment and clearly the center director is hoping that the success of the partnership continues. By making a commitment and demonstrating that it is a commitment, the faculty members, the center director, and other board members have been working towards trust and openness. In three years, the understanding among members of the leadership board and the community has grown and developed in such a way that the partnership is more effective and successful.

A second key lesson learned is how difficult it can be to help diverse groups of officials, authorities, faculty members, and citizens come to common understandings and commitments to what appear to be great ideas. Ownership of projects is essential for partnerships to be effective and to be truly partnerships; having either party do the majority of the work or make the majority of decisions is not conducive to developing the trust and openness needed to have an effective collaboration. Community capacity building requires the recognition that groups bring different strengths and abilities, and that no group has a monopoly of what is best.

Utilizing talents and competencies already found within the community including the center director, the elected official, and other board members who either live in the area, grew up there, or attend one of the neighborhood churches, ensures ownership, builds trust and credibility, and creates a stronger and more sustainable partnership. More than once, board members have said that although they want attention and resources equal to the other city parks and recreation centers, they do not necessarily want identical resources. They want their park to

reflect their uniqueness and the strength of their history. Using the strengths-based approach, they have the ability to keep the work focused on the real needs of the community rather than the outsiders view.

A third lesson is that, for educators, helping students understand the complexities of communities is no easy task. Community participation has been a challenge throughout the process. In spite of efforts on the part of students, faculty, and grant committee members to invite residents, meetings brought out only a handful of people. The community around the center had experienced years of disappointment and unresponsiveness from government officials. It was unrealistic to expect the community to view new commitments from outsiders as any different from those they have experienced in the past; historic perceptions and their accompanying attitudes must be recognized as valid and rational.

Students usually have a short-term focus to their community involvement. They go into the project with excitement and the expectation that their presence will somehow fix the situation. They must be helped to grasp the important and fundamental concept of historical memory; they must not judge the community based on the logical reservation the students may feel from various community stakeholders. There is a long haul, and students are typically not a part of the whole process. Involving them in these long term projects must be done carefully and intentionally.

A final lesson to be gained from this partnership thus far is how complex community partnerships really are. While one may have a partnership with an organization, in reality one has a partnership with all the organizations that also work with them. In the case of governmental entities, like this center, the partnerships include the Park and Recreation Department, city government, social service agencies, local churches, and community members. Managing these relationships well is time consuming and challenging work. There are back-stories to relationships among and between stakeholders that newcomers to the field, in this case academic faculty members, need to learn but may never totally be privy to. Embracing an assets-based model allows faculty members to keep focused on building community capacity rather than getting caught in the historical squabbles that help maintain existing power and authority structures.

As the center and the faculty are deep into the third year of partnership, there are signs among board members of renewed interest and motivation to continue the work. The community is beginning to see real changes and responses from city officials. New programming at the center is well attended and growing. One of the faculty members recently led the board through its first strategic planning session where members were able to move beyond the initial dynamics of group formation, trust-building and struggles to get started and think about opportunities for continued and sustainable growth. City parks and recreation staff are beginning to look at the center differently and are more willing to plan for the use of resources at the site.

The center director has ideas for programs and events and for the first time in years he also has real hope that these things can happen. Still, many in the community are cautious about endorsing any new initiatives. There is still public misinformation about the safety of the area keeping some people away from the center. There are many problems that won't be solved in the near future. Whatever develops will most likely reflect the on-going tension inherent between serving communities from a needs-based versus an assets-based perspective. But for now, the partnership is strong and the relationships built in the process will sustain the work. The number of years associated with the commitment is irrelevant.

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Students Building Communities on the Navajo Reservation

Susan Eidson Claxton, ND

Abstract

Georgia Highlands College is a two-year unit of the University System of Georgia. The Human Services Program is one of three career programs offered and designed for students seeking a career in the areas of mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, child welfare, corrections, youth and aging, hospice and/or other social or human services. In order to receive Associate Degrees, students must satisfactorily complete two internships/fieldwork experiences in addition to their coursework. The purpose of the internships/fieldwork experiences is to provide students with an experiential pedagogy in order to learn about human service needs and to engage in providing services to meet these needs. For the most part, fieldwork experiences take place within the student's own community. An opportunity to explore other cultures and needs would be relevant to students seeking a degree in Human Services but for many of the students in Rome, Georgia, the opportunity to learn about other cultures is almost non-existent. However, in the fall 2009 this changed for Georgia Highlands Human Services students. During an Introduction to Human Services class, an invited guest speaker discussed a possible trip to the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico summer of 2010. The class immediately began to make plans to participate in an opportunity of a lifetime. An in-depth explanation of the course details is provided.

Course Rationale

Students are rarely given the opportunity to explore fieldwork outside of their community, much less outside the dominant American culture. Native Americans are the first people of this land we call America, yet they are probably the least understood. Native Americans are not only a sub-culture in the United States and have assimilated into the mainstream, there are still a significant number who live on reservations and try to maintain their cultural beliefs, values, and practices. To give students an opportunity to get outside their comfort zone is important to their continued understanding of human services that are needed beyond their own community.

An important consideration in choosing the Navajo Reservation for our trip was the connection that had already been made by the Hands and Feet team, who was our guide and contact for this trip. The students were orientated to some very important cultural differences and to the fact that the people on the reservation did not want "some white people coming in and telling them what to do." It was important for the students to understand that their job was not to "fix, change, judge, or to feel sorry for" the people, rather to provide support and acceptance of the cultural differences while at the same time recognizing the humanness and sameness of the people.

Pre-planning

The instructor sought permission to take students to New Mexico in July 2010. Georgia Highlands College had other programs that involved Study Abroad and a domestic travel trip to Wyoming for Geology, so it was not a new idea.

Second, the program had to ensure that course integrity was maintained in order for students to get credit for one of their fieldwork requirements. The course objectives were consistent with the traditional fieldwork course with minor adjustments to accommodate for working with the Native American population. This included a syllabus and course policies. Third, a financial agreement had to be established between the Hands and Feet team, Georgia Highlands College (GHC), and the students.

The final component of the pre-planning involved a selection process. Since this was the first year, the application process consisted of students who were taking their first fieldwork class. In the future, additional information will be required as the program grows.

Logistics

The logistics of the project were already in place for the Wyoming trip; therefore, the same procedure was followed. Dates were selected, travel arrangements were made, lodgings off the reservation were selected, meals planned, activities and a general itinerary was generated. Since Hands and Feet had already established a connection with the Gallup area of the Navajo Reservation, travel arrangements, meals, and lodging were already established, leaving the itinerary and activities for both parties to establish prior to the trip and to coordinate while on the trip.

In addition, it was critical that everyone involved on the trip have an understanding that the itinerary, lodgings, and other trip considerations were subject to change. It was also important to explain while in New Mexico that everyone would be on “Indian Time.” This can be a very difficult concept for many students as well as the trip advisor to understand. What it basically means is “Yes, we have a schedule, we have projects planned, and we have an idea of all aspects of the trip; HOWEVER, “Indian Time” means when the spirit moves. One may have a schedule of events planned, yet the people we are servicing are not on our schedule. It had to be accepted that the schedule may change. This can be frustrating when planning activities and projects, but it is their culture, not ours.

Finances

The financial aspect of the trip was worked out between Hands and Feet and Georgia Highlands College. Hands and Feet put together a proposal that included a cost per student, what the costs included, and the payment schedule. Georgia Highlands worked on the refund policy and provided an accounting for each student. This trip was for fourteen days at a cost of \$1,380 per student for quad occupancy. This included lodging, travel to the Reservation in New Mexico, meals, airfare, and materials for the various projects that would take place while on the reservation.

Selection Process

The selection process for the first year was kept very simple. The course was only offered to students in the Human Services Program who needed to fulfill a fieldwork requirement. In the future, if students from other disciplines are included, additional selection procedures will be

implemented, for example, a formal application process and references from instructors. Depending on the numbers, it was advised to have at least two representatives from the college on the trip. One must be the instructor, and the second one can act as a chaperone.

Required paperwork was essential to provide the students with trip policies and expectations. The paperwork included: liability statement, drug and alcohol policies, health insurance information, emergency contact and medical information, and a contract of agreement to adhere to said policies during the trip.

Course Objectives

As stated earlier, it was important that the integrity of the course be maintained. Students were given 16 hours a day of “actual time.” While on this trip, it was expected that even when students were not actively working on a project, they were to be learning about the Native American culture in general and the Navajo culture specifically. Refer to the course objectives below for additional information.

- Students will become familiar with the tribal values and beliefs.
- Students will increase self-awareness of attitudes and values.
- Students will develop an understanding of the nature and needs of the tribe and its individuals.
- Students will work within the context of the tribe to provide assistances, social services, health services, and/or other needs of the tribe.

Activities

Students participated in various cultural, social, building, and community activities. The group had two major building projects where they were able to participate. The first was to paint the home of a Navajo woman. From the best estimate we could get, she was in her early seventies. In addition, her front steps were falling in and she needed a wheelchair ramp. We were able to complete these projects for her. At the end of our time, she cried and expressed her appreciation. The impact this woman had on our group was profound. Many of the members had never experienced poverty to this extent, and yet the joy and giving spirit of this woman did not illicit pity, rather a great admiration of her strong spirit and giving heart.

The second project was to re-roof the home. This was more challenging than first thought...storms came in and just when it seemed that the roof leaks were repaired, more were found. The project coordinator would have to complete it after our group had left. This was very frustrating for the students; they had really wanted to see it through. The family was still very appreciative. Since the family matriarch could not “pay” for the work, she instead cooked several meals for us while we were there.

The students also participated in several community activities. The first was to distribute food to local reservation communities. It was amazing to see small children being so excited over getting fruits and vegetables. You would have thought they were being given chocolate and candy. When arriving in the community, children swarmed the truck. The students interacted with them and found that the children were not just starved for fruit and vegetables but for hugs and interaction. This is not because their parents don't care or don't love and take care of them, but because many are working to provide the necessities for their families, there was not much energy left to satisfy the emotional needs.

In addition to providing food to the communities, the students also had the opportunity to work with the homeless. Once a week, the local ministry group would set up food in a nearby town where homeless in the area could come by and pick up food from the group. The group was amazed at the stories that these men and women shared. Some were alcoholics, some were war veterans, and some were only in their forties but looked to be sixty or seventy. The students treated everyone with dignity and it was obvious that the men and women appreciated this.

Students were also given the opportunity to participate in social and cultural activities. The town hosted a cultural dance each night in town. The students were able to observe how various local tribes continued dancing as their ancestors had done. The beauty of the dances was at times overwhelming. The only regret was that some from the group would have loved to participate in the activities and not be just an observer.

Conclusion

The experience for the students and the instructor left footprints on their hearts. “I want to go back; this experience will forever be with me. My heart has become burdened for our Native Americans” (Communication of trip participant, August, 2010). The trip will continue to be an option for the Georgia Highlands College’s Human Services Students. “We can’t wait for the group to come back; the impact they had on the people they served while on the trip is overwhelming” (Group leader, August, 2010). The trip is an excellent way to provide an avenue for students to learn about another culture, see a project through, and make a difference.

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We Did it Together: Bringing Everyone to the Table for Successful Collaboration

Leslie Forstadt & Jessica Esch

Abstract

Parenting education was the focus of a project to unite multiple human service agencies in Maine. The process included face-to-face meetings, email communication, and the education of each individual to further the collective goal. Under the leadership of United Way, this group authentically created a goal and worked through some unstructured territory before focusing the effort. Their work was informed by Peter Block's book, *Community*, and was structured around creating a welcoming and inclusive series of conversations. The endeavor served as a springboard to introduce others in effective methods of hosting, facilitating, and nurturing groups toward a unified direction and product. Readers can apply these concepts to existing problems or upcoming projects and explore creating community in many ways.

Background

In 2009, the United Way of Greater Portland convened a group of agency professionals as well as a faculty member from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to discuss parenting education materials. Most of the members of the group had not previously met nor were they familiar with one another's work. In some cases, there was sharing of information and materials, and in other cases there was no knowledge of the resources that were available.

A series of meetings followed in which the idea of a coordinated approach to parenting education in one Maine County was taken. The meetings were facilitated by the United Way, and there were lessons learned that informed the meetings as they were held and the prospects of future meetings of this nature.

The presentation at the 2010 NOHS conference explained our project and discussed effective ways to host meetings that foster community. In his 2008 book, *Community*, Peter Block addresses the difficulties that many people have in meetings, the greatest of which is often a feeling of disconnection and lack of clarity as to the reason for being there. He proposes a core question, "what is the means through which those of us who care about the whole community can create a future for ourselves that is not just an improvement, but one of a different nature from what we now have?" (p. 5).

Creating Community

This core question was not at the heart of the meetings around parenting education, at least in the agenda. It was on the mind of the organizer, who saw that there was utility in discussing a shift in the current mode of operation, with agencies offering a variety of different information to parents and no coordination among entities.

The purpose of the meetings was not clearly defined, and was somewhat exploratory. This purpose is not in and of itself problematic, but the experience of the participants in this open-structure did require guidance from the facilitator. This guidance came in the form of structured discussion, clearly illustrated notes, and ideas to focus on for subsequent meetings.

According to Block, of initial importance is answering the “why” a person has been asked to attend a meeting, regardless of how free form a meeting might be. Getting to know the attendees is important, and the facilitator can assist this process by creating a clear visual chart of the room with people’s names that is posted in front of all attendees. This is time consuming, but worthwhile, as attendees can later refer to this document, perhaps copying it for themselves, and can have a tool to avoid an awkward not remembering of others’ names.

Best Settings

The most effective size for communication in a meeting is 3-12 attendees. In this size of meeting, the facilitator can often participate in the discussion, and as Block discusses, the leader is not the cause of the meeting and not the focus of the meeting. If the leader is also the facilitator, it is important to engage participants so that there is a clear understanding for each group member of “what’s in it for me?” It’s not the leader’s agenda that should drive the meeting, but the group’s.

Best Methods

The role of the United Way in this project was to keep the group focused, asking questions that were engaging, and would generate ideas in moving forward with a new vision. The facilitator was prepared for each group meeting. At the same time, she was also ready to adapt, and most importantly, willing to let go. Remember, it is the agenda of the group to which the facilitator must respond. There are multiple ways to redirect the focus of a meeting, including short burst activities like “divide into groups of four and discuss how this meeting is going and what you hope to leave with.”

There are also ways to create group engagement and commitment. Without engagement, it will be difficult for the facilitator to do little more than keep convening a group of people with little action happening between meetings. If members leave the meeting saying “I’ll try,” “I’ll do the best I can,” or “I’ll see what I can do,” beware. These equate to “no.” Instead, engaged group members leave the meeting with next steps, who are thrilled to answer “where can we go from here” and “what do we envision as to where we want to be” are members who are motivated to carry the purpose of the meeting forward.

Lasting Impacts

Two years after the initial meetings for parenting education, the sense of familiarity with one another is strong among the participants. One lesson learned by the facilitator is the reality that there need not always be a concrete output or product from a meeting. In contrast, depending upon the configuration of attendees, the purpose of the meeting may be simply to *meet and information share*. Even in a meeting that does not have a clearly defined purpose, the meeting should not be (or feel like) a free for all nor should it be completely unstructured.

Such was the case with the parenting education efforts in Maine. The purpose evolved by meeting together. For other groups with clearly defined end points, this process will look different. However, many of the takeaways from Block remain the same with respect to forming communities, bringing groups together, and to create new ways to function together.

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The following is a link to a “sketchnote,” or graphic representation of many of the major ideas in *Community* by Peter Block. This handy one-pager is useful for displaying next to one’s desk and references before planning meetings as a way to remember the major points and things to keep in mind when bringing a group together.

<https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B58BNrt9OyuUMTQ2NWQ3MjEtZmIzZC00NDY1LWE2NjgtNTczZmMyNWM0OWRm&hl=en&authkey=CKKptfoO>

Student-Community Partnerships: Succeeding in Grant Writing

Kelly Felice, MSM

Abstract

Grant writing is a skill that students want to learn and a service that community agencies need. Students partnered with local nonprofits to write proposal templates or specific grants as part of this one-semester class. This paper discusses the elements of success in student-agency partnerships, the curriculum, and the interaction that provides key skills and an in-depth look at an agency's operations. An overview of challenges to the instructor in managing external relationships is discussed along with direct and indirect benefits to the community agency, students, and the college.

Background

The college is located in a mid-sized Western city with a current enrollment of 24,450 students. The median student age is 27 and most balance working at least part time with obligations to family. The Human Services program has 450+ students each year who choose an area of concentration from addiction studies, high-risk youth studies, counseling and mental health, and nonprofit studies. The nonprofit studies program, created at the college in 1974 to promote student voluntarism in the War on Poverty, became a formal part of the Human Services Department in 1990. The areas of concentration are selected once the core curriculum is completed.

The state has approximately 18,600 nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS. Of these, at least 6,000 are located in the same city as the college. Agencies range in size from the largest of nonprofit hospitals to small, grassroots organizations serving a wide range of constituent groups. The college has a long history of working directly with the community through contributions by faculty and students, and nonprofits welcome interns and practicum students to help with multiple tasks.

Course Overview

The grant-writing course is an upper-division requirement taken by juniors and seniors who have completed introductory nonprofit courses. Students should have knowledge of nonprofit legal structure, roles of the Board, staff and volunteer responsibilities, understanding of budgets and basic fundraising strategies. They should also have completed the required courses in English composition in general studies and have a solid grounding in grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Students must collaborate with a nonprofit organization to write a proposal specific to its needs. The choice of the agency will be critical to success in the course. Students will work directly with a staff member to develop a proposal concept, build a budget to support it, write in detail about the agency and the need, and assemble numerous attachments required by the funder. The text is *Winning Grants Step by Step* (Carlson & McElrath, 2008) and is assigned for background reading throughout the course. The Common Grant Application (CGA) format, a model preferred by foundations and corporations in this state, is used for the proposal template.

While not a difficult plan to follow, this format requires a high level of attention to detail. This proposal template was selected to teach students a skill set that could be utilized for different grant writing formats in the future, in both the private or public arenas. Required written elements of the CGA include

- history and accomplishments of the organization;
- short and long term goals;
- description of the project seeking funding;
- participation by staff and volunteers;
- board support to the plan;
- one time and on-going costs; and
- evaluation plan and process.

Students working with the agency will also have an opportunity to select the funding source for the project through their own research. Two days of the course are spent in consultations with research librarians at the college and the main city libraries learning about the Foundation Center Grants Guide and a statewide, online publication of funding sources. Although agencies may have suggestions for funders, staff is pleased to have new sources discovered by a student.

Agency Selection

The ideal agency will need a proposal for at least \$5,000, requiring the student to think critically about the elements involved with planning, personnel needs, and budgeting. Agency staff must understand that the students are learning the process of grant writing as part of their class, and are not experienced grant writers from the start. The student may only write one proposal in the course of their work with the organization and should not be seen as free help for the next special event or direct mail campaign. It is best if a student identifies an agency based on their interests, or from a prior work or volunteer involvement. The instructor can provide suggestions for an agency contact, and many agencies call in advance to be considered each semester.

Critical to the success of these partnerships is a clear understanding of roles detailing what the agency will provide and what the student will produce as a final product. Students will need help and staff time in understanding the agency's work, in assessing its needs and assistance in project development. They will need access to documents for attachments that may need to be created or modified. Students need agency staff that can make decisions to meet assignment deadlines. At the end of the semester, students deliver a complete proposal and return all confidential materials.

Instructor Challenges

In managing an agency partnership with a student, the instructor faces additional challenges that need attention beyond teaching time. These may include

- insuring the agency understands the scope of student work and the delivery constraints;
- assuring the confidential nature of the process and respect for the sensitive nature of internal documents;
- assisting students in getting necessary information according to deadlines;

- providing additional time to support student writing based on project complexity;
- understanding (and teaching about) the politics of agency behavior around sensitive topics; and
- crisis situations, e.g., unwillingness of agency to provide financial documents to the student, or deciding a donor list is proprietary.

Small, understaffed nonprofits are easily stressed by lack of time and personnel to meet all their needs. While the benefit of having a student grant-writer may have huge appeal, an overburdened development director may not have the time to spend in helping with the process, leaving the student fearful and anxious. The instructor becomes the mediator for all troubles that arise and the central figure insuring that the student will achieve a good grade while the agency receives a solid product. Thus, the greatest challenges are in the balance of student and agency needs, and to insure both parties feel valued by their work together.

Conclusion

The benefits to student and community agency are numerous and go beyond a service-learning project. Students take on a real work project that can help an agency find new or sustainable funding. They are exposed to a new kind of writing, free of APA constraints or footnotes, in unfamiliar formats. They are challenged by a need to negotiate the demands of the class with the agency's ability to deliver on a schedule. They will learn to be proactive, yet tactful, in expressing what is needed. By the end of the course, students will have a bigger picture of a nonprofit thorough interaction with staff, access to confidential documents, and opportunities to understand an agency budget or strategic plan. Beyond the completed assignment of the grant proposal, they may list this accomplishment on a resume, and gain professional contacts for in the future.

From the agency perspective, another pair of hands is always welcome, especially when there is no direct cost for this work. The student will deliver a useable proposal which may be directly submitted by the agency, submitted with some modifications, or used as a template for future proposals. Nonprofits learn that the older college student brings a background that is helpful in other ways; some organizations benefit from student learning in other areas of nonprofit management. Overall, the student who performs well in this collaboration contributes to the reputation of the college and the nonprofit studies program.

This course has been taught at least annually since 1990 and approximately 300 agencies have benefited from student help in grant writing. The instructor asks nonprofits to notify students if their proposals are successful, and generally 30-50 percent will comply. While it is impossible to estimate the total amount of funds raised by students, the big successes are well publicized. In 2007, two students wrote separate proposals for projects in Africa, one in Kenya, one in Sudan. Both were funded for a total of \$125,000 for these agencies and provided an immeasurable boost to student confidence in their skills as grant writers.

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Transition-age youth: Planting Seeds of Change in Alaska

Michael R. Sobocinski

Abstract

Significant challenges face transition-age youth and young adults aging out of the children's system of care. High rates of homelessness, unemployment, reliance upon public assistance, coupled with low educational achievement all represent serious obstacles in the quest to become productive members of the community. Changing eligibility requirements, inconsistent funding, and uncoordinated care that is neither developmentally appropriate nor appealing to young people characterizes available services. Studies show that former foster care youth wish that they had received more services while in care (Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, & Raap, 2009), and that services were similar to the kinds of tasks they will face in the adult world (Courtney et al., 2001). This article discusses the application of an evidence-supported, strength-based, and future-focused approach to service provision, the Transition to Independence Process Model (TIP) (Clark & Hart, 2009). The model will be implemented in a community-based social enterprise setting. The program will also integrate the 8 features of positive youth development programs identified by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). Human Services, with a strong focus on collaboration, client empowerment, facilitating connections in the community, and the acquisition of problem-solving and communication skills, complements this service delivery approach.

Challenge and Opportunity among Transition-age Youth and Young Adults

As of September 30, 2008, there were approximately 463,000 children living in foster care in the US. Of this total, over 98,000 or roughly 21%, were ages 16-20 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009) and thus considered to be transition-age. The same report stated that each year there were roughly 29,500 foster youth who exited the children's system of care. Unlike many transition-age youth and young adults, who can continue to receive material and time support from their families well past the age of majority (Schoeni & Ross, 2005), many of these young adults are expected to function independently once they reach the age of majority, often before they possess necessary knowledge and skills.

Findings from a longitudinal study painted a fairly discouraging picture of how former foster care youth were faring as young adults (Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, & Raap, 2010). First interviewed when they were 17 or 18 years old and still in foster care, the most recent wave of interviews assessed the functioning of these former foster care youth as 23- or 24-year-old young adults. Although, as the study authors pointed out, "despite whatever obstacles and setbacks they may have faced, some have managed to make significant progress toward self-sufficiency" (pg. 96), in important life functioning areas such as educational achievement, economic well-being, utilization of public assistance, and increased rates of incarceration, many of these young adults are struggling when compared with peers who have not experienced foster care. Former foster youth were more likely to have experienced psychological or emotional unseeing and have attended substance abuse treatment programs than their peers in the general population.

On a local level, the challenges facing many transition-age youth and young adults in Alaska are serious. A recent study of former foster youth (Williams, Pope, Sirles, & Lally, 2005) found that almost 38% had reported being homeless after leaving care while roughly 77% reported utilization of public assistance in the household. The unemployment rate in the group was 29.6% (compared with the state average of 7.1%), while average income was approximately \$12,300, or roughly half of the Census Bureau's 2003 average per capita income in Alaska of \$24,361. Also, almost 30% had been incarcerated since leaving care.

More recently, Covenant House Alaska and the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage (Martin & Villalobos Meléndez, 2010) documented trends in the use of the Crisis Center at Covenant House Alaska over the years 1999-2008. The Crisis Center served an average of 615 youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 30 each year. Almost 40% of the youth using the Crisis Center had been in a residential treatment program for mental health difficulties. Approximately 73% of those 18 to 20 years olds who used the Crisis Center were unemployed. Between 25-32% of those from 18 and 20 reported having completed 12th grade or higher, while “up to 40%” aging out of foster care each year end up at the Crisis Center.

Available services and supports for transition-age young adults are often not sufficient to meet their needs and prepare them for the challenges of young adult life. Over one-third of the former foster care youth “wished that they had received more training or assistance while they were in foster care or that the training and assistance they did receive had begun at a younger age” (Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, & Raap, 2009, pg. 96). Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor and Nesmith (2001) reported that involvement in real life activities similar to what “will be required of them when they are on their own” (p. 703) may be lacking for youth in care, and that “one-third reported feeling not at all or not very well prepared to obtain a job (32%) or manage money (32%)” (p. 703). Hands-on experience, where youth have the opportunity to acquire and practice the skills needed for successful functioning in the community, appears to be an important aspect of preparation in the transition to adult living.

Services for transition-age youth and young adults

The Needs for a Strength-based and Integrated Approach

There are serious obstacles inherent within the formal service-delivery system that make it difficult for young people with emotional and/or behavioral problems to receive the services and supports needed to make a successful transition into adulthood. In addition to changing eligibility and age requirements between the child and adult service systems, inconsistent funding sources make it difficult for service providers to offer needed supports. Some services that are available to children and adolescents, such as special education, may end relatively abruptly during the transition period (roughly 18-22 years of age), while other services, such as juvenile justice and the adult correctional system, may have a very different cultures when dealing with young people. In other cases, as with vocational rehabilitation, while older adolescents may be eligible for services, the system may not be as “comfortable” working with this population as it is with adults. Finally, many services that are routinely offered to young people may not be developmentally appropriate or appealing to this age group (Davis, Green, & Hoffman, 2009), which may affect young peoples’ willingness to take advantage of available services.

Fragmentation and a lack of coordination also characterize existing services, especially in adult services, where the culture may be less oriented to communication across programs and agencies. A lack of integrated care among specialized services and supports as diverse as, for example, housing, public assistance, vocational training, job placement, substance abuse and mental health care, and physical health can significantly complicate the transition into adult life in the community. Navigating the “service system obstacle course” (Davis, Green, & Hoffman, 2009) can be difficult enough for the experienced human service professional, let alone an 18-year-old young people who, until recently, may have experienced significant restrictions on their ability to make even relatively simple decisions, such as attending a school dance.

A study of organizations serving young people between the ages of 16-25 in Clark County, Washington (Davis, et al., 2005), found support for “a youth system that was very well interconnected, and an adult system what was not well connected. Direct communication and referrals between the youth and adult systems was very limited” (p. ii). These authors recommended, among other things, increased planning and coordination between youth and adult organizations, increased awareness of and interactions between organizations, and the use of “care coordinators who are transition specialists that bridge the adult and youth systems” (p. 21). This bridging, coordination, or facilitation function is one that is important in helping young people access appropriate services and supports.

It is not sufficient to offer traditional adult-oriented services to transition-age youth and young adults. Many services in the adult system are rehabilitative in nature, assuming that “a consumer of its services has a preexisting level of adult functioning” (Vander Stoep, Davis, & Collins, 2000, p. 22). The focus of services in this setting is often on helping a client return to a previous level of functioning. With transition-age youth and young adults, this is often not what is needed; rather, for this group the task is often one of discovery, where a future-oriented pursuit of goals and tasks consistent with the young person’s competencies, personal and social resources, preferences, values and interests (Clark & Hart, 2009) is crucially important. Services that are “flexible, individualized, offered in normalizing environments, and focused on functioning” (Davis et al., 2005, p. 23) also contributes to positive outcomes. Thus, in addition to helping young adults cope with the negative impact of emotional and behavioral difficulties on daily functioning, effective services need to recognize and tap into their unrealized potential for growth and development. Such an approach can be said to be strength-based and oriented toward the identification and development of personal, familial and community assets.

In a study of community integration in a sample of young adults with mental, emotional, or behavioral problems (Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2008), several common themes were identified. For example, study participants valued connections with others where they could contribute to the community, viewed educational achievement and training as important to their futures, and sought out “practical and emotional support...[offered by] caring, skilled, professionals” (p. 411) in accessible settings that were developmentally appropriate. They valued meaningful adult roles in work and wanted to gain fulfillment through use of their own personal strengths. The young people in the study, while acknowledging that they had mental health difficulties requiring services, also “wanted assistance provided flexibly to meet their needs and to prepare them for valued adult roles in the community” (p. 415). Consistent with an emphasis on the development of strengths, the concept of community integration is relevant to successful work with transition-age young people. Such integration builds upon the discovery of and nurturing of personal strengths, values and interests, and “broadens the goals of services to optimizing the quality of life in all life domains” (p. 402).

The lack of coordinated, integrated, and individualized care, inflexible service delivery, and a view of young adults with emotional and behavioral problems that fails to consistently provide opportunities to build upon individual strengths, goals, and aspirations are all factors that negatively impact outcomes. Providing real life opportunities in the community for the acquisition and practice of the independent living skills necessary for successful functioning as young adults is another key component in the provision of effective services. Feedback and mentoring from caring adults can contribute to the acquisition of independent living skills.

In examining these service system challenges, it seems clear that human service professionals, with their systems-level perspective, generalist orientation, interdisciplinary focus, and cross-training in areas such as counseling, psychology, and social work (Neukrug, 2008; Woodside & McClam 2011), are well-suited to work with young adults making the transition out of children's service settings such as residential, foster, and juvenile justice treatment programs. The proactive, flexible, problem-solving approach that characterizes human services complements the needs of young people for a future-oriented approach that acknowledges personal voice and choice and recognizes that dealing with one's problems is not synonymous with being prepared for a productive life in the community.

The Community Context and Evidence-supported Practice

In order to address the challenge as well as the opportunity inherent in work with transition-age youth and young adults, the Human Services Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage partnered with the Anchorage Urban League and a local children's behavioral health provider, Denali Family Services, to implement a community-based behavioral health program that uses a social enterprise model. This group has formed a collaborative that is developing services for transition-age youth and young adults in the Anchorage area, working with the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health in the implementation of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model (Clark, Deschênes, & Jones, 2000; Clark & Hart, 2009), which will be described below.

The approach chosen recognizes that financial constraints to service provision with this population are significant, but also that a social enterprise model may empower individuals through both skill development and active participation in local social and economic development (Mawson, 2001; Midgley, 1996; Raheim, 1996). Our hope is to explore the effectiveness of a social enterprise approach to helping this group of youth and young adults with emotional and behavioral difficulties move into the formal economy through the acquisition and practice of vocational skills, while also serving to link them with necessary mental health and other services and supports. To this end, we are also interested in recent interventions with homeless street youth that have involved these youth in a program designed to provide them with the skills and resources needed to transition from life on the streets to participation in competitive employment (Ferguson, 2007; Ferguson & Islam, 2008). Preliminary findings from a feasibility study (Ferguson & Xie, 2008) show that the interventions were associated with significant improvements in life satisfaction, family contact, perceived peer support, and depressive symptoms. Consistent with the study author, we subscribe to the belief that "one's economic well-being (i.e., employment) affects all dimensions of one's personal well-being" (Ferguson & Xie, 2008, p. 8).

The social enterprise approach taken by this program will generate earned income through the development of business activities that also provide services that meet the mission of the host nonprofit organization, the Anchorage Urban League. As a local chapter of the national

organization, the mission of the Urban League is the economic empowerment of all Americans (National Urban League, 2007). This program, Alaska Seeds of Change, is designed to integrate aspects of a positive youth development approach (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002) with an evidence-supported community-based practice, the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model (Clark, Deschênes, & Jones, 2000; Clark & Hart, 2009).

The guiding principles of the TIP Model and features of positive youth development program as identified by the National Council are consistent with human service's emphasis upon client empowerment, facilitation of services, community and service networking, and focus on community living skills and supports as identified by the Community Support Skill Standards Project (Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996). Our goals are to provide services to young people in the community, while also serving as a practicum placement for university students in human services and other applied fields, and also developing an applied program of outcome research in order to advance our understanding of effective practice with this population.

Specifically, Alaska Seeds of Change will provide challenging and meaningful employment skills and opportunities in a real-world setting where 20 youth between the ages of 18-22 work alongside adult mentors/coaches in the operation of an urban greenhouse. The program will grow and sell vegetables and culinary herbs in Anchorage. Young people will be responsible for working with program staff and volunteers in all aspects of the business, thereby acquiring the kinds of practical job skills and experiences necessary to move into competitive employment. The program will help develop the fledgling local food system, and provide food to help fight hunger in Anchorage through donations to local hunger relief organizations.

We are modeling our efforts to a large degree on the work of The Food Project of Boston, which has been serving a highly diverse group of youth since 1991 in a variety of year-round urban agriculture programs. Through meaningful and demanding work, the provision of safe and nurturing youth-adult relationships, and "the opportunity to contribute purposefully to society" (The Food Project of Boston, n.d., para. 5). The Food Project has helped youth become part of a community and discover their potential to act as social change agents.

From the start, Alaska Seeds of Change has been committed to incorporating the TIP Model, because it is a community-based practice that is evidence-supported, and designed to be implemented by transition facilitators who typically have a bachelor's degree and are focused upon functions such as coaching, teaching, problem-solving, future-oriented planning, the identification of strengths, facilitating linkages in the community, mentoring, providing feedback and practice opportunities, etc. The TIP Model provides a set of 7 system guidelines and core practices or competencies that are applied on an individualized basis with young people. The guidelines are not a set of rigid rules to be applied, nor do they prescribe steps that must be taken in working with young people. Instead, they represent a framework that can help direct our efforts. Core practices within the model include strengths discovery, futures planning, in-vivo teaching, and social problem solving (Clark & Hart, 2009). The TIP Model is designed as a "practice model, meaning that it can be delivered by personnel within different service delivery platforms such as case management or in a team format" (Clark & Hart, 2009, pp. 50-51).

Within the TIP Model the goal of the transition-facilitators or coaches is to serve as guides to help young people identify goals that are consistent with their values and preferences, in a person-centered process. The focus of efforts in working alongside young people is on functional outcomes in life domains that are important to successful life as an adult in the community. Three major setting-based domains include employment/career, educational opportunities, and living situation. In addition, the areas of personal effectiveness and

community-life functioning are foundational to successful functioning in each of the setting-based domains (Clark & Hart, 2009).

TIP System Guidelines (Clark & Hart, 2009)

1. Engage young people through relationship development, person-centered planning, and a focus on their futures.
2. Tailor services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, appealing, non-stigmatizing, and developmentally-appropriate -- and building on strengths to enable the young people to pursue their goals across relevant transition domains.
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and social responsibility with young people.
4. Ensure a safety net of support by involving a young person's parents, family members, and other informal and formal key players.
5. Enhance young persons' competencies to assist them in achieving greater self-sufficiency and confidence.
6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system at the young person, program, and community levels.
7. Involve young people, parents, and other community partners in the TIP system at the practice, program, and community levels. (p. 49)

A critical component of this approach is the incorporation of the 8 features described by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002) as important interactional features of positive youth development settings. Drawing upon theories of positive youth development and a review of available the literature, they propose that successful community settings for youth include:

- physical and psychological safety;
- clear, consistent structure, including consistent limits and rules, adult supervision;
- supportive relationships that demonstrate responsiveness, warmth and caring;
- opportunities to belong a sense of belonging;
- positive social norms, expectations, or rules for behavior;
- support for efficacy and mattering, making a difference in the community;
- opportunities for skill building, including learning for adult employment; and
- integration of family, school and community through awareness, communication, and coordination of different aspects of youths' lives.

Human Services: Uniquely Suited to Meet the Needs of Transition-age Young People

The group that is planning the implementation of the Alaska Seeds of Change project is excited over the prospect of integrating human service students in our efforts at providing developmentally appropriate and appealing services and supports to this age group. The choice of the TIP Model, together with the integration of characteristics that have emerged as features of effective youth development/intervention programs are highly compatible with the values of human services as a profession. Collaboration with young persons in the identification of individualized transition goals in the areas of employment, education, living situation, and community involvement is crucial for success, and the interdisciplinary nature of human service education seems uniquely suited to facilitating this sort of linkage. Also, the identification of personal strengths and formal and informal social supports, along with a clear focus on the acquisition and mastery of social problem-solving in real-life settings through practice, mentoring and feedback are aspects of the TIP Model that are consistent with and complement the problem-solving, strength-focused, and collaborative approach and strategies employed by

human service workers in a variety of settings (Mandell & Schram, 2009; Woodside & McClam, 2009).

In addition to responding to the presence of emotional and behavioral problems that may at times interfere effective daily functioning, young people must also be viewed as “at-promise,” as possessing inherent goals and aspirations that call out for recognition, nurturance, as well as challenge. It is not sufficient to provide remediation for deficits if we are to help our youth and young adults move into productive roles in the community. We envision that university students completing practicum placements at Alaska Seeds of Change will have the opportunity to work closely with youth in the Seeds of Change program under the supervision of program staff. They will thus gain valuable experience and competence in the basic tasks involved in implementing the TIP Model. In this way we believe that the Department of Human Services at the University of Alaska Anchorage, together with our partner organizations in the community, will help meet the needs of this population of transition-age youth and young adults, while preparing new professionals to enter the field.

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Resilience in Diverse Youth: Collaborative Strategies

Tiana Povenmire-Kirk, PhD

Abstract

The components and characteristics that lead to the formation of resilience within individuals are discussed in relation to the social contexts that influence resilience. An overview of supporting research is provided with findings that elaborate on the topic of resilience. The differences in resilience found among diverse youth are briefly explained, along with implications for the practice of human services. The importance of adult mentors is emphasized along with knowledge and awareness of cultural qualities and characteristics.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to adapt and function successfully despite experiencing chronic stress and adversity. Qualities of resilient individuals are strength and flexibility. A child's social environment, family, and individual characteristics all contribute to the formation of resilience. Social environments include schools, communities, and kinship networks. Positive family support and involvement contributes to resiliency. The individual includes an internal locus of control and positive self regard.

Supporting Research

A study performed by Werner & Smith (1992) examined 698 participants who came from low income families with immigrant parents from Japan or the Philippines. A majority of the parents were unskilled laborers who had not graduated from high school. Assessments were conducted at infancy, toddler, elementary school, high school graduation, and at the age of 32. Findings indicated, in the area of skills and activities competence in reading by grade four, interests and hobbies, and friendships, all contributed to forming resilience.

When participants had support networks in the form of teachers or adult mentors who served as substitute parents, they were more likely to be resilient. Males who were provided structure and rules and independent, risk taking females tended to be more resilient. For males and females, a belief in the future, positive expectations, and clear goals all led to the formation of resilience; goals being the most important area of difference between resilient individuals and their peers.

Another study, performed by Todis, Bullis, Waintrup, Schultz, & Abrosio (2001), examined 15 youth offenders who had recently been released from correctional facilities. Researchers performed individual interviews once weekly for the first year and once monthly for the remaining four years. Findings indicated participants were likely to become successful adults when they were employed or going to school, had not reoffended, and reported life satisfaction.

Participants were categorized in one of three groups based on their responses in the interviews: (a) succeeders, (b) drifters, and (c) strugglers. Succeeders never reoffended, adjusted well, were employed, attended school, better prepared to cope with negative events, better problem solvers, determined, had a positive outlook and strong future orientation, and possessed family or adult support. Drifters were not as successful or stable, less likely to have stable work, more likely to use illegal substances consistently, less confident, fewer goals, and less likely to

have adult mentors. Strugglers reoffended, consistently grappled with a variety of issues, continually used illegal substances, and had been incarcerated after their release from the correctional facility.

Contributions to Resilience

Adult mentors have the most influence in the formation of resilience. Providing guidance by giving advice, encouragement, and suggestions helps to empower the adolescent. Monitoring by tracking compliance with rules assists adolescents with avoiding trouble. Consistency with setting clear goals and expectations aids adolescents in being successful with following through. Instrumental support such as transportation allows the adolescent to participate in extracurricular activities and contribute to society.

Most of all, adult mentors are personal connections to caring adults. Internal qualities play a large role as well. The adolescent must have a positive outlook on life, acquire effective problem solving skills, be reflective, and determined. “Fostering resilience isn’t just putting stuff into an empty box by the teacher or elder...It is based on countless interactions between the individual child or adolescent or the adult and the opportunities in their world and the challenges they face” (Werner, 1992).

Resilience and Diverse Youth

Many questions arise when addressing resilience in diverse youth. What are differences between diverse groups as related to resiliency? Are there similarities in contributive factors across different racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic groups? If so, what are these similarities and how can they be manipulated? Are there group-specific contributive factors (of risk *or* protection) identified in the literature? If so, how do they differ across groups? Many groups have been studied: Asian-American immigrants, Latino youth, Africa-American youth, and youth from urban areas. Tremendous variations have been found within each population.

Similarities

Across these groups, similarities were found in areas of family involvement, community involvement, and cultural identification and identity; all of which are protective factors. Cultural identity was found to be most important because a strong identification with their home culture inoculated against the negative impact of the host culture. A notable risk factor was discrimination, which can project from the dominant culture as a result of their identification with a marginalized group, and which also can arise from their own families and cultures as adolescents begin to acculturate and become more “American”.

Across all Groups

Regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, urban or rural environment, sexual orientation, or other descriptors, the single biggest predictive factor of resilience is having a significant, positive relationship with a non-family adult...in other words, a mentor.

Group Specific Factors

Racial identity replaced cultural identity for African American youth. The formation of this protective factor was extremely important to combat discrimination from the dominant culture. Socioeconomic status is a risk factor for urban youth of all races and cultures. Poverty is

found to include its own matrix of risk factors. Collectivist or community focused culture is applied to Latino and Asian American immigrants. This factor is culturally tied and extremely important in the planning and perception of individual goals and outcomes. Citizenship for Latino and Asian immigrant families is often an issue due to documentation. This causes families to hesitate to work with community and human service agencies.

Gender Issues

An emergent theme is that Latino and Asian females report high parental expectations, many family responsibilities, and restriction of social movement.

Implications for Practice

The interventions used must take into account the cultural values of participants. In cultures that are more collectivistic, interventions should target a larger group, rather than an individual because the community is put before the self. The interventions should also draw on the strengths inherent in more collectivistic cultures. Examples of these strengths are group-dependency, respect, and tradition. Keeping these in mind when forming interventions will be more successful because of building with these strengths, not against them.

Practitioners should consider not only the cultures of their clients, but also their own. When aware of one's own culture, the culturally-biased assumptions that can be unconsciously made about success and appropriate goals may be clarified. Ultimately, it is so important to be aware and respectful of differences for it is in them that true strength and resilience is found.

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Improving Professional Development through Supervision

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Abstract

Supervisors in human service organizations have multiple responsibilities and are required to utilize complex skill sets. One of the primary areas of responsibility is the professional development of the human service professionals they supervise. This responsibility can be challenging given the multiple demands on a supervisor's time and energy. To provide an integrated approach to all of the responsibilities of the human services agency supervisor, the Tripartite Model of Supervision is presented. The integration of professional development into the supervision process, the barriers to professional development within a human services agency, and strategies for supervisors to address the barriers are discussed.

Introduction

Front line supervisors in human services organizations have a challenging and complex position. With a direct responsibility for the quality of services being provided by the professionals they supervise (Herbert, 1997; Schultz, 2007), human service supervisors must attend to a wide variety of responsibilities, including administrative, consultation, teaching, and professional development activities (Herbert & Trusty, 2006; Lewis, Packard, & Lewis, 2007). As a service organization's greatest asset is the quality of its professionals providing services, the supervisor is in the position of greatest influence for facilitating the growth of professionals, and subsequently the quality of services provided by the organization (Schultz, Ososkie, Fried, Nelson, & Bardos, 2002).

Front line supervisors have a direct influence on the quality of services (Herbert, 1997), the professional competence of professionals, the quality of the organizational culture (Lewis, 1998; Schultz, 2008), and the job satisfaction of the professionals with whom they work (Herbert & Trusty, 2006; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Packard & Kauppi, 1999; Olk & Friedlander, 1992). An essential process that contributes to the effectiveness of supervisors in these areas is their ability to engage professionals in the professional development process.

The professional development process is often overlooked in daily practice, and is left to whatever training events the organization may provide, or chance opportunities that may arise (Neault, 2002). This raises a concern as the training events provided by the human service agency, or training opportunities that arise, may not be related to the professional development needs and goals of the individual professional. The agency supervisor is in the strongest position to facilitate the individualized professional development of the professionals they supervise (Schultz, et al., 2002). However, this can be difficult for supervisors to do as the terms and concepts of professional development are not clearly defined, there is not a strong history of supervisors engaging in this type of activity, and when they engage in professional development activities it needs to be within the context of the other supervisory processes occurring in the work environment (Schultz, 2010).

As the day to day workload of human service professionals is often marked by high caseloads, busy schedules, and challenging consumers, it requires an expressed priority by both the supervisor and professional to engage in professional development to realize the desired outcomes. The purpose of this article is to present human services professionals with a model of supervision that incorporates professional development, define the terms of professional development, and delineate issues which impact the supervisor's ability to engage in the professional development process with the professionals they supervise.

The Tripartite Model of Supervision

Supervisors in the human services face three distinct challenges in providing supervision. First, is the complexity of the responsibilities they have. As mentioned, they have responsibility for the consumers of the agency's services, for the professionals they supervise, and in most cases, the administrative functioning of the agency at the local level. This challenge is compounded by the second, the lack of supervisory training (Herbert & Bieschke, 2000). In many fields included under the human services umbrella, organized training in the supervisory process not available at the bachelor's or master's level. Frequently, training for new supervisors is provided "in house", or through an on-the-job training model which provides instruction on an as needed basis.

While these approaches provide a measure of stability in the operations of the agency, it limits the possibility for growth and positive change. For example, in vocational rehabilitation agencies the supervision that occurs is primarily administrative oversight (Schultz, et al., 2002). As new supervisors are hired and trained using a combination of in-service and on-the-job training, there is not an existing skill set or expectation for the other modes of supervision.

The third challenge, which is clearly related to the previous two, is the lack of a comprehensive model of supervision for human services professionals working in the field. A large portion of the research and work being conducted in the area of supervision is limited to educational settings (Schultz, et al., 2002), and may have limited applicability to human service settings. The Tripartite Model of Supervision is a comprehensive model of supervision, developed for use in human services agencies.

Primary Components of the Tripartite Model of Supervision

Supervisors in human service agencies engage in three primary functions, which include administrative oversight, clinical supervision, and facilitating the professional development of supervisees (Schultz, 2008). The administrative oversight duties of the supervisor are essential to ensuring that the objectives and purposes of the agency are being met at the local level (Lewis, Packard, & Lewis, 2007). In this capacity, the supervisor ensures that communication between administrative leadership and the front line professionals is happening, and they ensure that policies and procedures are carried out (Falvey, 1987; Schultz, 2008).

The clinical supervision component of supervision focuses on the development, and continuous improvement of the requisite skills for the human service professional to accomplish her or his duties (Schultz, 2008). This supervisory interaction is evaluative in nature, extends over time, and exists to enhance the professional functioning of the supervisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2008). The focus of clinical supervision may include the development of specific skills, the conceptualization of work with consumers, enhancing the supervisee's professional role, and addressing the self-awareness of the supervisee (Holloway, 1995).

The function of professional development supervision is to enhance the professional growth of the supervisee beyond the skill specific focus of clinical supervision. This aspect of supervision addresses the longer-term goals the human services professional may have, as well as managing the development of human capital to meet new demands in the provision of services. This process is often largely ignored in the workplace, and professional development becomes the result of haphazard opportunities that may arise in the workplace (Neault, 2002). The more supportive and proactive approach to assisting human service professionals in their development results in a healthier work environment, increased satisfaction, and an increased ability to meet the goals and objectives of the agency (Lewis, 1998; Schultz, 2008). The topic of professional development in the supervisory process will be addressed in more detail later.

The quality of the Supervisory Working Alliance (SWA) is essential for success in the administrative oversight, clinical supervision, and professional development processes (Bernard & Goodyear, 2008; Schultz, 2008). As originally conceptualized by Bordin (1983), the SWA consists of agreement on supervisory goals and tasks, engaging in work, and a quality emotional bond. The manner in which the supervisor wields power has shown to have a direct influence on the quality of the SWA (Schultz et al., 2002).

Using power and maintaining a positive supervisory working alliance may pose a challenge for the supervisor, as there is an inherent power differential within the supervisory relationship (Bass, 1981). In some cases, the supervisor must make decisions while considering the interests of the counselor, the consumer, the organization, and the profession as a whole (Tarvydas, 1995). This creates the possibility of competing interests influencing the decision of the supervisor, and therefore the possibility that the counselor may view the final outcome as being unfair. Ensuring a high quality SWA is essential for effective supervision as it is the one component of supervision that is present in all supervisory interactions.

The final primary component of the Tripartite Model of Supervision is the organizational culture of the agency (Schultz, 2008). The organizational culture of an agency is the unwritten rules of how “things are done” (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), and include the values, rituals, protocol, and other artifacts of the organization (Millington & Schultz, 2009). It is a critical aspect of the supervisory process as it is not under the direct control of management, but is the sum total of negotiations that happen throughout the organization.

An organization’s leader establishing a policy does not necessarily ensure that processes will change. In fact, 40-68% of businesses’ efforts at quality improvement are unsuccessful because leaders fail to infuse changes in the organizational culture into the process (Cameron, 2008). Thus, a supervisor’s successful efforts to work with supervisees on professional development will be dependent upon the consideration, and possibly alteration, of the organizational culture at the local level.

Secondary Components of the Tripartite Model of Supervision

The secondary components of the Tripartite Model of Supervision are the areas of overlap that exist between the primary components. They warrant mention in discussing the model to highlight the interactive nature of the primary components. The administrative oversight, clinical supervision, and professional development components of supervision do not exist in isolation. Rather, the supervisor attends to all three, as well as to the influence of the supervisory working alliance and organizational culture. The overlap of administrative oversight and clinical supervision is the area of quality assurance (Schultz, 2008). The supervisor ensures

that the individual skills of the supervisee are honed and working to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization.

The overlap of clinical supervision and professional development results in transformational learning (Schultz, 2008). Transformational learning is an adult learning theory, which recognizes the unique way that adults learn through critical evaluation of new material in comparison to life experience (Mezirow, 2000). As adult learners are able to examine the impact of their experience on the interpretation of new information, the chances of learning occurring that has a substantial impact is increased.

Finally, the overlap of administrative oversight and professional development is strategic leadership (Schultz, 2008). This process results in the supervisor working closely with a supervisee in the professional development process to fill an identified need within the organization. It requires the supervisor to have a sound understanding of the direction of the organization as a whole, and the capabilities and interests of the professionals he or she supervises.

Professional Development Revisited

Given the complexity of the supervision process, it is important for supervisors to possess an understanding of the professional development process within the context of the other activities of supervision. The research that has been conducted in the area professional development indicates that these types of activities are occurring for professionals in a haphazard way, and usually outside of the work environment (Neault, 2002; Schultz, 2007). Still, the agency supervisor is in the position that potentially has the most impact on a professional's professional development.

Additionally, supervisors who may want to start doing more work with supervisees on professional development objectives may find that established patterns of supervision, organizational culture, and supervisees' understanding of expectations may be difficult to change. To illustrate, one supervisor reported, "I can't get my supervisees to read an article or book, or anything" (Schultz, 2010). To address the challenge of changing the expectations and organizational culture around professional development, the following section will provide definitions of terms, a discussion of barriers to success, and a discussion of recommendations for supervisors.

Definitions of Terms

When speaking of professional development as a process, it is important to remember that each professional may have a different concept of what the term means. The goals and objectives, even the concept of professional development, can and should change over the course of a professional's career. The professional development goals and objectives of a new professional are very different from those of an experienced professional. The supervisor is then faced with the challenge of assisting in developmentally appropriate ways, according to the supervisee's needs.

The mismatch of professional development activities, and the developmental stage of the professional, will result in frustration in the work environment (Schultz, Copple, & Ososkie, 1999). Basic skills training, professional development, and career development are often discussed as part of the professional development process. For the purposes of this discussion, it will be beneficial to treat each of these processes individually.

Basic skills training is focused on the minimum standard of knowledge and skill to function at the entry level (Schultz, 2010). This process includes assessing and instructing in the use of agency policies and procedures, as well as the basic human services skills required to successfully carry out the job. Early in the professional's career, this will be the primary area of professional development. The supervisor's responsibility in this area is to provide direct evaluation and instruction related to the job performance of the professional.

Professional development is the more holistic development of the skills, competencies, and knowledge base related to the profession as a whole, not to a specific job description (Schultz, 2010). This is an individualized process, and is based on the assumption that the professional is in a state of development throughout the course of her or his career. This is also where the concept of professional identity development becomes an individualized psychological construct for the professional. In other words, the supervisee begins to develop a personal identity as a human service professional. At this level, the responsibility of the supervisor is to assist in developing the supervisee's broader understanding of the profession, scope of practice, and a connection with the larger profession.

Career development is the process of preparing for formal advancement or promotion (Schultz, 2010). This may be focused on positions within the agency, or perhaps at other organizations. It entails gaining an understanding of the possibilities for advancement within the field, and the purposeful engagement in learning opportunities to gain the requisite skills and knowledge. The responsibility of the supervisor at this point is to provide, to the extent possible, opportunities to learn and exercise the skills and knowledge necessary for advancement. Increased responsibility within the organization, while receiving feedback, is beneficial to a professional focused on the career development process.

Supervisors beginning to consider their involvement in the professional development of their supervisees may experience a dilemma. As the professional gains experience and competence, there is an increased chance that she or he will require an increase in compensation and advancement in order to remain with the organization. In a sense, if a supervisor is successful in facilitating the professional development of a professional, another agency may be the beneficiary of that work. The reality is that ongoing staff development is an essential part of any human services agency, due to the rapidly changing professional landscape (Lewis, Packard, & Lewis, 2007), and the development of staff is an ethical and strategic necessity for the supervisor.

Barriers to Professional Development Activities

Supervisors interested in increasing their involvement in the professional development process of their supervisees may experience some resistance from those professionals with whom they work. Resistance to the process will vary, depending on the existing quality of the supervisory working alliance, precedent for engaging in such activities, and the organizational culture. Conversations with human service supervisors (Schultz, 2010) have revealed a number of possible barriers supervisors may face in engaging supervisees in professional development activities.

- **Hourly Job vs. Professional.** In many cases, human services workers are employed by public agencies, and as such may perceive their positions as “only a job”, rather than a job description within the larger profession.
- **Salary.** Human services workers are engaged in work that usually does not compensate professionals at a high level. Supervisors identified salary as an issue, suggesting that the

“additional work of professional development” may not be valued by the professional, especially in light of the salary being received.

- **Limited Options for Advancement.** Human service agencies tend to be limited in hierarchy, and therefore limited in advancement opportunities. Professionals may hesitate to engage in professional development activities if they perceive the work will not result in a promotion.
- **Geography.** In situations where the supervisor may be located in a different office, and possibly a different geographic location, it is more difficult to engage supervisees in professional development activities. The process is easier to manage when supervisees are accessible due to location.
- **Caseloads and Workload.** The most cited barrier for engaging in professional development activities with supervisees is the amount of work that both supervisors and staff have to complete. Human service agencies are frequently underfunded, and have high demands for services. Supervisees recognize that engaging in professional development activities requires a reduction in another area of professional productivity. Unless professional development is valued and reinforced by the supervisor, it will always be a secondary priority, and will always be put aside for other professional activities of higher priority.

Though these barriers may seem substantial at first glance, it is possible to overcome them. To do so, supervisors must be consistent and strategic in engaging their supervisees.

Recommendations for Supervisors

Supervisors are in an influential position to enhance the professional development process with agency staff, in the work environment. Making the necessary changes will require a reasoned, purposeful process, based on supervisee input and negotiation. The following suggestions are provided for supervisors interested in implementing professional development processes in the agencies in which they work.

Develop Supervisory Contracts

Supervisory contracts are documents that clarify the negotiated process of supervision. The benefit of the supervisory contract goes beyond the clarification the specifics of carrying out the supervisory process (e.g. time, location, expectations, etc.). The process of developing the supervisory contract helps to elucidate the unique characteristics of the supervisory relationship for those two individuals (Emener, 1978; Schultz, 2006).

The supervisory contract is especially critical for supervisors who have existing supervisory relationships with the individuals they supervise. This renegotiation process is needed as a first step in overcoming the existing homeostasis in the supervisory process. During the process of developing a supervisory contract the supervisor and supervisee will benefit from discussing the assumptive world of both regarding supervision, theories and models of supervision to be utilized, the supervisory style of the supervisor, the roles of the supervisor and supervisee, the format supervision will take, techniques that will be utilized, and the foci of supervisory sessions (Schultz, 2006).

Professional Centered Planning

Similar to the Person Centered Planning process frequently utilized by human service professionals (Kincaid & Fox, 2002), Professional Centered Planning is geared to discover the

professional development goals of the professional, and plan for the intermediate steps requisite to accomplish those goals. While the basic premise of professional centered planning is the involvement of the professional in identifying the goals and objectives of professional development, it does not mean that the realities of resources and agency needs are ignored. The supervisor needs to facilitate the development of realistic and obtainable professional development goals within the limits of organizational resources. Joining with the professional to find solutions to barriers will result in improved development outcomes, an improvement in the supervisory working alliance, and a shift in the organizational culture regarding professional development activities.

Be Prepared for Resistance

As the supervisor tries to implement changes to the status quo, some form of resistance from some of the supervisees will generally occur. The real issue for supervisors is how to conceptualize the resistance. Miller and Rollnick's (2002) text on Motivational Interviewing provides some interesting insights to the concept of resistance. They indicate that resistance in a client is not indicative of a personal pathology, but can be conceptualized as (a) the person not being adequately prepared to respond to certain situations, (b) indicative of a problem within the working alliance, and (c) an expected part of the counseling process. These ideas can be directly applied to the supervisory process. If the supervisor experiences resistance, the first step to addressing the professional development process is to address the apparent resistance in a productive way. Attempting to overcome resistance through the exertion of power, particularly coercive power, will result in a power struggle and more resistance.

Keep it Manageable

When identifying activities of professional development to meet the goals established with the supervisee, it is helpful to organize the plan with manageable milestones. This will help those professionals who feel they simply do not have the time, as well as those who are enthused and will try to take on too much. This process will become easier as both the supervisor and supervisee come to understand that professional development within the supervisory relationship is a process, not a single event. Therefore, taking a bit more time, or smaller more manageable steps is acceptable.

Take an Interest in Progress

The supervisee's investment in the process of professional development will increase as the supervisor demonstrates a genuine interest in the process. Supervisors demonstrate interest by listening, asking questions, and providing opportunities for staff to share new learning and insights with each other. Supervisory interest that is restricted to ensuring milestones are met will limit the impact the professional development process has on the agency as a whole. This may lead to the supervisee and others perceiving the strict focus on milestone accomplishment as disinterest by the supervisor.

Support Efforts

Supervisors support the efforts at professional development by having a positive attitude, following up with supervisees on progress, and recognizing the time constraints that the supervisee is trying to balance. Supervisors should remember that the allocation of time to complete the professional development activities is the strongest communication of priority they

can provide. If time is not considered when assigning responsibilities, then the professional development process will become a secondary priority, and progress will be limited.

Supervisors have a significant level of influence in the extent to which professional development activities are included in the supervisory process. They need not resort to wielding power, or strong-arm tactics, to engage the professionals they supervise. By developing supervisory contracts, engaging in professional centered planning, being prepared for resistance, developing manageable plans, taking an interest in the process, and supporting the professional's efforts at professional development, the supervisor will find herself or himself in a much more supportive and productive supervisory relationship.

Summary

Supervisors are in a unique position to have a significant impact on the human service professionals they supervise, and subsequently the quality of services being provided. The quality of services, and the competence of agency staff, has a direct impact on the longevity of the program, as well as the ability to enter into mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with other agencies. The professional development process can be maximized if supervisors and professionals are cognizant of the benefits of such activities, and integrate them into practice, while considering the complex context of agency supervision. Such a supportive and integrative approach to supervision results in an improvement in the quality of services, increase in staff job satisfaction, and an increase in the ability of the human service organization to fulfill its mission in the community.

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Global Citizenry

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Abstract

The NOHS conference theme, “The Whole is Greater Than the Sum of its Parts” directly pointed to the concept of global citizens and that human services not only operate with every individual helping interaction, with organizations coordinating services, and local citizens contributing labor and money but also within the community of all nations and cultures. The diverse elements of local communities must be defined within the perspective of global issues and concerns. Collaboration begins on the interpersonal level, expands to the community level, and connects to the national level. The national sphere is identified by its position and relationship to the rest of the world and is conceptualized fully by its membership in the international community. The discussion of global issues coalesces in linkages to how people and cultures have solved their community problems and how these solutions can apply to an envisioning a more adaptive, caring world. Essentially, the smallest community is the planet.

Dia Dhuit

“It’s trying times...it’s the tryingest of times.” Conversations with my neighbor, Gracie, a woman, 70+ years of age, living alone in a remote mountain cabin on her land that’s been in the family since ownership became a necessary process, often begin with this tautology. “Things are tough all over but we sure are lucky to be living on this mountain in God’s country” she’ll usually add. I would have to agree with the fortunate circumstances of living in the high country – the beauty, climate, and wildlife as well as resilient, caring mountain folks.

In the Southern Appalachians, an area ordinarily considered to be redolent with poverty and social challenge, a case can be easily made that “things” are better than they have been, at least according to modern standards. Not considering the centuries of native adaptation or the recent economic travail, there is far less poverty and lack of opportunity in this region than once was. Contrary to common opinion, life is generally much better now in “them thar hills”. Wealth, income, and general economic development have progressed significantly. People are living longer, staying at hospitals less, and keeping children healthier (ARC, 2010). More are attending college; ability to pay is no longer an issue. One has to ride deep into the hollers to find serious conditions. These days you’ll pass a lot of gated communities on the way.

The same can be said for other places around the world. According to the United Nations, poverty rates have fallen from 46% to 27% since 1990. The global poverty rate is still expected to decline and reach 15% by 2015 even though the recent economic crisis has affected financial conditions around the world. Some regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, may see increases in poverty while others, namely East Asia, will have marked decreases. While China’s increase in gross domestic product has recently declined, the growth is still phenomenal. Japan has been outpaced by China and faces a huge budget deficit, far larger proportionally than the United States. They face an even greater challenge from environmental disruption. The US gets a 2.8% growth rate in GDP (US BEA, 2010) for the last quarter in 2010, a very comfortable percentage even though the economy has dramatically mixed performance.

Yes, times are trying but we are making progress. Global child mortality since 1990 has thankfully dropped by 35%, yet all too many children, 22 thousand, die every day and most from easily preventable diseases and related causes. Though rates are improving, over 500,000 women die each year from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, largely preventable. Fortunately, breastfeeding has increased along with vitamin A supplementation has by 50% in developing regions. Measles deaths have lowered by 75% since 2000. All this is despite that 80% live on less than \$10 dollars per day. Forty percent of the planet lives on 5% of global income while 20% thrive on 75%. Incomes are increasing but so is income inequality. One billion people cannot read or write, an improvement from past decades but still too many. Less than 1% of the money spent on weapons around the world could pay for every child on Earth to attend school. We have the resources; allocation and prioritization are the keys.

What about the United States as a whole? While the economic conditions may dispose some to crime, the rate has been lessening considerably and 2009 was less than any year since the late 1960s. According to the FBI, crime rates have been declining since the mid 90s. The US Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention states their overall rate is the smallest in decades. On the other hand, we lead the world in percentage of people incarcerated and this rate is increasing. Prisons have been a growth industry yet overbuilt in some states, burdening municipalities with unaffordable debt. A drug war runs right along our border. Ten percent of African-Americans are in prison and more likely to be arrested. Fortunately, executions are at historically low rates and more states are outlawing it.

Poverty is increasing due to economic circumstances and the middle class stagnating. Still, the United States is growing economically even though unemployment rates are dropping slowly. Sending jobs overseas results from buying stuff made there; exploiting cheap labor has hidden costs. Business and industry continue to make money globally, outsourcing instead of creating jobs activity in this country. We're making money but only for certain sectors that know how best to work the system. A more progressive and sustainable growth oriented tax policy would be beneficial rather than tax breaks for the rich and powerful. The money has not disappeared; it is being held rather than redistributed and spent elsewhere rather than being earned here.

Politicians are balancing governmental budgets on the backs of public employees yet the government is what saved us from economic collapse. The public sector rescued the economic system and then was blamed for the problem. The national treasury has been pilfered and the socioeconomic gains made as a society are at risk. A monetary system should be designed for healthy consumption and balanced public/private expenditure, not a get rich quick and winner take all struggle. That was the lesson of the Great Depression. We have to cut back on spending but you must spend money to make some. Unemployment has hit the hardest those with the fewest skills and less education, people likely to need human services due to job loss. Human Services, as a field, should advocate lifestyles that balance public and private interests, promoting both the individual and the commons – here and all over the world.

Immigration is a contentious issue, calling for legislative action and court rulings. Recent decades have seen higher rates and numbers in immigration than ever before, in an economy dependent on it. While Spanish is spoken in many homes, most children and youth speak English and there is no reason to suppose that America is more threatened by immigration today than at any time in its history. According to Bill Bryson (1998), less than 10% of Americans were born in another country, a percentage less than most other developed countries. The cities where immigration is greatest are the ones with more vital economies. Immigrants are overly

represented in organizations essential to business interests in the US. While overpopulation and international issues must affect decisions regarding immigration, this country is enhanced by people from around the world.

El Ejemplar

Since 2000, ETSU has operated a summer camp for the children of migrant and guest workers, who come to the farms of rural areas near the university to pick strawberries and tomatoes. Students receive course credit for working in the camps, providing activities and education to children otherwise spending most of their time unsupervised. The youngsters learn a lot and also teach the college students how to speak Spanish as well as the details of another culture. Their parents are glad to earn whatever they can in the long, hot days of summer, doing what most Americans apparently will not, even when the unemployment rate is constantly paraded across the television news. We should appreciate the willingness of farm workers to pick our crops because if they didn't we would either do so or starve.

It is the best of times and the worst of times. All over, we have so much more than ever, yet we face the potential travail of climate change, nuclear meltdown, and ecological disasters. Democracy is breaking out in places where we thought it could not while tyranny still lives and is surreptitiously growing within our own borders. The history and contributions of labor unions, which are largely responsible for advances in working conditions in this country, are ignored. One of the finest congressional representatives in this country, Gabriel Giffords, struggles to heal. President Obama has saved us from economic collapse but we don't seem to appreciate it. We've won a war this year, i.e., withdrawn from combat, but don't seem to notice it. We have accomplished so much, but don't seem to recognize it.

The US now has a national health care plan, joining most developed countries in making sure everyone has access to medical services, though still the single largest reason for personal bankruptcy. Deaths to cancer are down significantly, due to prevention, earlier diagnosis, and treatment. Nevertheless, carcinogens continue to proliferate along with species extinction and habitat destruction. Oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico, fires and drought in the Southwest, thousand-year flooding in Nashville and the Midwest, monster tornadoes in the South, along with tsunamis off India and Japan, earthquakes in Haiti and China...record snowfalls, glacial melting, vanishing fish, dying coal reefs, removing mountaintops...climate change is here and escalating, no matter who or what is causing it.

To balance this, people are eating more organic food, changing lightbulbs, buying at farmer's markets, growing gardens, canning veggies, and freezing local tomatoes, purchasing from coops and responsible, local companies. Community supported agriculture is expanding as more and more healthy grocery stores and green retail proliferate. Community health workers and health clinics in communities are expanding while patient advocates and child life specialists are hired, adding to the contributions of human services. Alternative power sources like wind and solar are accelerating. Germany has decided to build no more nuclear power plants and China is leading the way with green products. Habitats for humanity of the future will be highlighted as energy efficient.

Challenges and accomplishments are filled with steps forward and steps backward. Essential questions challenge the field. How do human services fit within the change and democratization of the Mediterranean countries? How do human services manifest within the dramatic economic growth in Asia? How do human services contribute during ecological and

climate crises in varying locations locally and around the globe? How do human services meet growing needs in an aging population? How do human services respond to crime, delinquency, and terrorism? How do human services deal with issues of immigration? Life is a process of growth. There are cycles within a range of adaptation. Human services are intimately connected to the environments where we live and the planet on which we must depend.

Li Zheng

Jiaju, a graduate student in counseling, came to college in America after his high school degree, accompanying his girlfriend, who is also a graduate student in counseling. Asked to talk about human services in China, his home country, the comments were illuminating. First of all, he stated, most formal counseling occurs within university settings, provided or coordinated by university faculty. Human services in China are primarily a family responsibility, not governmental. As a collectivistic value, candid honesty in counseling is a foreign concept. Confidentiality resides within the family. To share with a counselor is a breach of privacy. It is traditional in China to deny that mental health issues within one's family exist. Though changes are awakening, social security for elders is the responsibility of their children. Until fairly recently, the majority of Chinese had no phones, refrigerators, or toilet paper. Now we have to get most our stuff from them.

Intercultural competence is the process of constantly learning useful information about other cultures. The process is continual because cultures, especially today, go through changes steadily as well as discontinuously. Once key concepts about a cultural group become known, additional information quickly emerges as time evolves, people grow, and ecological and political circumstances transition. Even within most societies, the varieties of cultural experiences are practically innumerable and their differences circumstantially profound. Throughout the world, the sheer number of cultures and the degree of change make the goal of intercultural competence a perennial task, one where there is always more to learn.

Participants in the conference arrived from many parts of this country and some from beyond, a microcosm of global citizenry and an example of how we should convey responsible, caring action in our relationships with other peoples around the world. The challenge is to construct a perspective that keeps individual, family, and cultural practices while preparing a way for diverse cultures to live together, learn from one another, and celebrate our mutuality. The concept of community is encapsulated within the macrosystem; understanding each level is important in comprehending the whole. The NOHS Community Action Project was a prime example of how to interject conferees into human services actively within the setting of the conference.

This country, as the greatest economic, military, and social force on the planet, has integrated itself historically into almost every nation on earth. Americans truly are global citizens; the problem is recognizing this and living up to the responsibility of that influence. We are models for the rest of the world, and we gain our knowledge and expertise within the communities of our residence and impact. This country is the world's largest provider of human services on the planet. We have given and continue to give the most. But, we are challenged to understand the depth and capacity of our offerings, and others give a larger percentage of their resources. Learning about the needs and development of people worldwide helps us to participate more capably in the conversation of humankind and help bring about a planet that will survive and thrive into the future. The mission of human services is to help make a better world.

Kifano

Victor, a student at East Tennessee State University, emigrated from the Sudan and started the Lost Boys and Girls Student Organization at the university. He has often told his story, so sadly similar to the others heard about the tragedy in his country of origin. A survivor of genocide, he barely escaped with his life, running with a group of young people through the wildlands of southern Sudan. Lions attacked at night and soldiers ravaged by day. Food and water were scarce; death and disease followed closely as they ran for their lives. He was repelled when trying to enter refugee camps. His village was destroyed but he hopes to return one day. A student in the Human Services program at ETSU came from Liberia, where he survived civil war. The story of his life is punctuated by the absolute certainty he was going to be killed.

We have it all and have so far to go. Human services coincide with how we decide to live and survive on this planet. Surviving means to set up systems and conditions that are sustainable. We must develop food, energy, and shelter systems that will sustain us and not destroy or poison us. And, that can be done in a way that enhances and sustains our economy. To live means to thrive, to engage in personal, social, cultural, familial, societal, and international activities that enhance our existence. That is the enjoyment of life. We have to eat, stay warm (or cool) and dry, but beyond that is what makes it all worthwhile. Recognizing this and continuing with the work of making life better for all, each, and any one of us is now a global challenge. Human services must proceed from a global perspective. Think globally, serve locally. That is the essential mission of human services.

We grow based on our strengths, learning from our weaknesses. We lament the changes so desperately needed, yet we build upon the successes of the past. We can congratulate ourselves on the accomplishments that enable the average American to live better than centuries of royalty while knowing vast multitudes have less than our pets. To end metaphorically, one can only eat an elephant one bite at a time. Oceans are only drops of water that have joined together. As Gracie once needlepointed, "Fear not the future, for God is already there." We combat global problems by helping our self, our families, our friends, our colleagues, and our communities in the context of all of us living together here on Earth. The power of one equals the power within everyone. Tat Tvam Asi.

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