REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

General Submissions
and
Narratives from the Teaching and Learning Section
and the Historical Reflections Section

Volume 20, Number 1 Winter 2014

REFLECTIONS
NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

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Letter From the Editors

Michael A. Dover and Maureen O'Connor

Abstract: This letter serves to introduce Volume 20, Number 1. This issue includes a number of general submissions, our inaugural Historical Reflections article, and two articles continuing our Teaching and Learning Reflections article.

Keywords: special issues, special themed sections, disabilities, microaggressions, impact factors

This is the first issue in the third volume of *Reflections* to be published at Cleveland State University School of Social Work. Our website fully documents the publication date of each issue, despite the fact that each issue will be backdated, as is standard journal practice, until our publication schedule is up to date in 2016.

We have not wanted to rush issues into print until we felt they were quality issues. It has been a great deal of work for us to learn how to take care of the publishing side as well as the editorial side of publishing a quality, double-blind peer reviewed journal. But from a publishing standpoint, we are now up and running. We anticipate publishing Volume 20, Number 2 in November 2015 as well. It will contain additional general submissions and additional articles from the permanent special sections (field education; learning and teaching; historical reflections; research reflections).

As the inside cover shows, we now have editors for each of these special sections, except Historical Reflections. The section editors assign the reviewers and make the editorial decisions. The editors reserve the right to assign an article to the section most closely resembling the content.

Volume 20#2 will clear up our backlog of general submissions that were accepted for publication and were in copy editing status. We very much appreciate the patience of our authors with delays in publishing these articles. We also anticipate publishing the several Special Issues whose submission deadlines have expired, including Family of Origin: Reflections on Practice; Relative Caregiving; Honoring Our Indigenous Elders; Dismantling Social and Racial Injustice, and Social Work with Children and Youth. The articles for these issues are in the process of peer review and/or copy editing. Given our new capacity for issue assembly, we look forward very much to collaborating with the special issue editors to expedite publication of these issues when the content is ready. We also anticipate publishing a general issue that includes Special Themed Section on Southern African Reflections on Social Work and Social Justice. Together, these issues would complete Volume 21, 2015. We are confident all will be published as soon as possible during the present academic year.

Our current Special Issue Call, on Librarians as Helping Professionals, will serve as Volume 22#1, 2016. We are hoping very much that social work librarians and other university librarians will appreciate *Reflections* will complete Volume 22 by the end of the calendar year. However, as always, the journal depends on the submission of quality narratives.

A Call for Special Themed Sections

The Special Issue Call, Librarians as Helping Professionals, will be the final special issue published by the journal. As announced in May 2012, the journal plans to replace special issues with special themed sections. This helps ensure we can publish general submissions in every issue, while still providing an opportunity for special editors to edit special themed sections. Such sections can be as long as the special issues of the past. They would also have editorial introductions by the guest editors, and could have themed art work on the cover. Recently, we posted on our website an updated version of the Call for Proposals for Special Themed Sections. We would like to encourage proposals for such special sections.

For instance, this issue suggestions a number of such possible topics. The narrative of Jonghyun Lee suggests the value of a special themed section on working with immigrants, as well as one on the experience of microaggressions. The narrative of Carol Gilson suggests a special themed section on working with people with disabilities. The narrative of Marilyn Paul and Roni Berger suggests the value of a special themed section that gives voice to the cries

for peace and justice of those on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Our journal's search engine permits searching the titles and abstracts of all of our back issues; this is a great way to see if there is a topic that is dear to you, and to identify authors who have an interest in that topic. Please contact us with any initial ideas by writing the editors at reflections@csuohio.edu.

A Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Journal

In this Letter from the Editors, it is important to comment on one important issue for the journal. The journal has had to respond to several requests from authors and from deans and directors for statements certifying that the journal is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal or seeking confirmation that this was the case for a particular author/article. It is mission-critical that the journal be able to respond affirmatively. This is one aspect of journal editorial policy that is not the prerogative of the editor. It is required by our publisher, the Cleveland State University School of Social Work. It has been the policy of our Directors and Interim Directors since we began publishing the journal, including our current Director Cathleen Lewandowski. As the Guest Editor of the Special Issue on Therapeutic Relationships with Service Members, Veterans and their Families, Cathleen re-affirmed her support for this policy when she arrived at CSU in July 2014. This policy applies not only to our general submissions but also to our special themed issue and special themed section editors, and to the section editors of our permanent sections. Carrying out this policy has only been possible due to the dedicated work of the 109 colleagues who have completed peer reviewed since May 2012. The work of these reviewers is very much appreciated. The most active and highest quality reviewers are included each year in the present volume's Narrative Review Board, whose names are found on the inside cover of each issue.

Because of the hard work of our reviewers, and the discernment of the growing number of editors on our Editorial Team (see the website, About, Editorial Team or the inside cover of each issue), it is rare for an article to be accepted without revisions. We cannot easily provide statistics about this, however. At *Reflections*, we focus not on producing statistics such as acceptance rates, impact factors, and so forth, but on producing compelling narratives that contribute empirically by producing a record of practice. Our narratives also reflect thoughtfully on that practice, and can often produce valuable theoretical insights.

Our Narrative Review Board is updated annually to reflect our most active and highest quality reviewers. During Volume 20 the editors will be assisted in this process by Associate Editor for Review Quality Johanna Slivinske, a clinical practitioner who also on the faculty at Youngstown State University. Johanna had already played a major role as an author, a reviewer, and as Associate Editor for Issue Quality. In that capacity she read every word of every issue, including those penned here in the Letter from the Editors. She helped copy edit and proof read each of our issues beginning with Volume 18#4. She has also been an invaluable second opinion on many difficult editorial decisions.

Art and Articles

The article, "Cold: A Meditation on Loss," by Sarah Morton, of University College Dublin, inspired the cover art for this issue, by Robin Richesson, the *Reflections* Art Director. Robin is Professor of Art at California State University Long Beach. Her illustrations have long graced the journals cover. Robin produced two illustrations inspired by Sarah's narrative. The present one is inspired by a photograph from Newcastle, Ireland, a place mentioned in Sarah's narrative. The other one of which will be used for the Volume 21 Winter issue.

Imagine Ireland in Winter. It is cold in Ireland in Winter. We who are helping professionals are often ensconced in our warm offices or living in homes where heat is taken for granted, even if those heating bills keep rising faster than our salaries. Rosie's house was cold, Sarah tells us, and it brought back her own memories of coldness. Her narrative suggests that often there is coldness we are not seeing or hearing or feeling. Coldness that is being felt by those we work with. Often it is only the tip of the iceberg we take in. A good narrative gives the reader a feel for what was being experienced. In reading Sarah Morton's narrative, we too are shivering, and perhaps remembering.

In "Disability Finds a Voice," Carol Gilson highlights the need for social work programs to address issues of disability, both in the curriculum and in student accommodations. She shares her own struggle with rheumatoid arthritis and her decision to pursue a MSW degree in order to help others with a disability as well. During her undergraduate program, she was surprised to learn of the lack of awareness of disability at her university. She became more involved with disability issues at her university, and on a greater political level as well. Ms. Gilson turns her personal struggle with disability into an effort to raise awareness of disability in schools and in the greater community. This is an inspiring story of one person's efforts to transform a personal struggle into a greater effort to reduce stigmatization and improve accessibility for services for students with disabilities.

In "Self-Reflections of a Gay Immigrant Social Worker," Jonghyun Lee discusses how it is important for social workers to understand their own background and how it affords them privilege, or lack of it. Lee shares his experience of racism and homophobia as an Asian, gay male in the U.S. He discusses personal stories of microaggressions. He also helps us to see what it is like to live with the constant fear of deportation.

The narrative, "Understanding Student Evaluations: A Black Faculty Perspective," by Armon R. Perry, Sherri L. Wallace, Sharon E. Moore, and Gwendolyn D. Perry-Burney, explores more than the literature showing that racial bias influences student evaluations. It raises our consciousness about what it is like to live with the reality that racism and other forms of group-based oppression operate in ways that are not always fully appreciated. Those of us with the power to grade also are vulnerable to student evaluations. This narrative is valuable to keep in mind when we use course evaluations as part of evaluating faculty teaching effectiveness.

Had it been submitted a bit later, the narrative by Augustina Naami, "25 years Post ADA: A Social Worker's Experience and Reflections about Environmental Barriers," might have been a additional first entry in the new Historical Reflections section of this journal, which is inaugurated in this issue by the narrative of James Gerald McCullagh. Augustina recounts her own journey from her childhood in Ghana, where her disabilities found very little accommodation, to the United States in 2002. She found that a dozen years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the United States still had and has much work to do in order to ensure basic accommodations for persons with mobility-related and other disabilities.

In "Reclamation: How I am Surviving Depression and Using the Illness to Elevate Others," Andrew Calderaro shares his own story of depression and his personal struggle to overcome it. His narrative describes the difficult path he took in managing his own depression and in learning how to help others with it. His self disclosure articulates the barriers that mental illness and substance abuse can pose in achieving professional and personal goals. He finds ways to cope with his pain through therapy and by joining grassroots groups which raise awareness of depression, alleviate shame and help others move past it.

Some of the best narratives in this journal involve recollecting our relationships with clients and co-workers from long ago. This is the case with James Petrovich's narrative, "Getting Back to Basics: Developing a Therapeutic Relationship with a Formerly Homeless Veteran Client." For one thing, it is easier to disguise the nature of practice that took place long ago, thus enabling the writer of the narrative to exercise the well-established right of doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and other helping professions to write case notes and accounts of our service with clients and our work with communities. In doing so we often draw on our personal process recordings and journals of our practice, written not as part of the official records of our agencies but as part of our own efforts at professional development, cultural competence, and self-reflections. As long as care is taken to keep these notes entirely devoid of identifying information including the specific setting, and are well disguised in their rendition, the fact that a former client or co-workers might conceivably recognize themselves in our account does not outweigh our right and even our obligation to write compelling narratives about our practice. Without such narratives, which are well established in the field of narrative medicine and in other helping professions, important opportunities for empirical examination of practice are lost, as well as the ability to draw theoretical and policy-relevant

conclusions from our accounts of our practice. Of course professional discretion must be used in what is shared. We are fully obligated to write in a way that is consistent with the ethical standards and legal regulation of our respective professions, and the policies of our disciplines and professions and employing organizations, such as human subject protections. Please read James's narrative, and ask yourself if you can recollect work with a client that still influences you many years later. Think back to one key moment from that work and then reconstruct a vignette around that moment. Start writing a story that places one or more of such vignettes in fuller context. Soon, you may have a narrative which can be submitted to this journal.

The narrative, "A Road Not Taken: Discovering a World I Never Knew," is the third contribution to this journal by James Gerald McCullagh. After writing a narrative of his practice in the field of juvenile justice, James was co-author of a piece with Howard Walkingstick (2000). In that earlier piece, based upon interview with Howard Walkingstick, who died in 2002, an important story was told about early efforts of this Native American social worker - a former resident of Hull House - to break down the barriers faced by his people, both those living in the big cities and in the nine Western states where he worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These narratives give voice to the work of Howard Walkingstick. Also consistent with the purpose of this historical reflections section, the narrative also provides a venue in which James himself can reflect on his relationship with Howard in light of his efforts to help document the Native American experience.

In "The Art of Happiness," Natalie Grant tells a story of using art as a therapeutic tool for self reflection, self empowerment and healing. The author is a professor of social work who uses creativity in her teaching. She describes an assignment where she encourages her students to create a piece of artwork to express their idea of happiness. The narrative details a poem created by one of Grant's students, in which she expresses happiness in relationship to a past traumatic event. Grant describes the students transformation using poetry as a vehicle for greater expression and empowerment.

Like the article by Natalie Grant, the narrative by Marilyn S. Paul and Roni Berger, "Eleven Days in Israel," is published in the Special Section on Teaching and Learning, edited by Carol A. Langer and Arlene F. Reilly-Sandoval. The content of this article reminds me of another classic of social work education, a paper delivered by Charlotte Towle (1948, available upon request), "The Emotional Element in Learning in Professional Education for Social Work." Towle discussed something that today's Council on Social Work Education standards call the cognitive and affective dimension of learning and teaching in social work. Just as Towle discussed the professional self, Marilyn and Roni focus on what was most meaningful in the experiences they and their students had in visiting Israel.

The narrative "When Mentors Pass" by W. Patrick Sullivan is the fifth time mentoring has been the subject of a Reflections narrative. In this case, the narrative is published as another contribution to the Teaching and Learning Section of the journal. The author discusses the impact of the loss of a mentor, an experience many of have had, but few of us have had the opportunity to write about. That is one of the beauties of this journal. It is a place where sadness and loss can often take on new life.

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Cold: A Meditation on Loss

Sarah Morton

Abstract: This first person narrative explores themes of empathy, resonance and loss through a challenging narrative form that seeks to engage the reader viscerally and emotionally. In particular, the narrative focuses on practitioner engagement with complex client issues including violence, substance use and child welfare within an Intimate Partner Violence agency in Ireland. The narrative form seeks to communicate the lived experience of a particular client, whilst also implicitly considering the impact on the practitioner of working with these issues, especially in the aftermath of loss.

Keywords: Intimate partner violence, substance use, first person narrative, practitioner engagement, loss, empathy.

That is what Rosie made me think of. Cold.

That awful deep, damp coldness, that gets into your bones, and your lungs and every cell of your body.

I had only been working with Rosie for a few weeks on the group work programme. I think she is ready, Geraldine had said, as we drew up lists, did preparation interviews, finalised times and location details, the endless organising of sheets of paper and berry pink manila folders. Rosie has made a lot of changes, quickly, she wants this, said Geraldine.

Sometimes, I said, those quick changes don't hold, my manila folders stacked in a neat pink pile.

I wish, I suppose, that I had listened to myself. But then, Rosie had sat opposite us, her hair pulled tight back into a pony tail, tied with those elastic bobbins that you get in Penny's in town. Thirty of them for €1.50, a little handful of bright colours. She had a stark, desperate quality. All I want, she said, is my little fella back. I am not taking anything now she said, except the meds. The social worker told me doing this programme would help me get him back, show them I was serious about the changes in my life. And anyways, she said, I am going nuts out there on my own.

We got her a house Geraldine tells me, out in Newcastle. No landlord inside in town would take her because, you know, of her, Geraldine pauses, connections. Geraldine does not have to say anything else. Connections means the landlord giving a quick shake of his head, no one wants that sort of trouble.

My god, Rosie tells me, that house is so fucking cold. I thought, she said, it would be nice, that when you would look up and there would be the mountains right behind you. That first time we went out there, Rosie told me, that's what I liked about it, that it looked kind of safe. When you are out the road a bit you just see all the houses, and they look white, you know that far away. It is only when you get up close you can see they are not white at all, but grubby and older, much older than you would think, she tells me.

They said at least if I got myself set up and got a house there would be some chance I could get my little fella back. And that's all I want I said to them, is to have him back with me. But jesus, she tells me, when I opened the oven in that house I thought I would be sick. The grease, Rosie says, was so thick there were flies had drowned in it. Rosie tells me this in a rush, clutching a cup of milky instant coffee, her nails torn and soft from cleaning.

It is the quietness that would get to you, Rosie tells me. Well, and that I am so skint. I know I have to have my own place, the only way, they said, you will even get to see the little fella is if you can be well set up on your own, well away from his Da and all...she pauses....that stuff. When she says 'stuff', I know she means cars arriving in the middle of the night, people crossing the road to get away from you, the carefully folded wad of grubby banknotes in your pocket. Then, the every day dealing with

violence. The hand on your wrist, the unwanted fingers trailing over your tits, his mate calling you a frigid bitch, the fella you get gear off looking for more than a little favour. The taste of blood on your tongue, the knowing that there can never be enough locks on the door, the sharp pain of your breath as he shoves you quickly, and hard, against the wall. Rosie, getting away from it all.

I think of Rosie now, of the long, long slow days, slimy tea and the mould around the edge of the grout in the bathroom that won't come off and the way the girl in local shop would never look her in the eye. Rosie, with her harsh city accent, with her tight pony-tail and wearing the black cuffed boots that have one heel slowly coming away from the sole.

Sure what can I be telling anyone out there, Rosie says to me. He beat the fucking crap out of me left, right and centre and then they took my little fella away and that's how I am sitting out here with no money for anything but shitty teabags in their stupid little village shop, living in a house they didn't even try to clean before they gave me the keys. Here you are, your man said that owned it, and even the key was grimy with an old red plastic tag on it. At least you are safe, said one of the girls. Safe, jesus, she should try it, says Rosie. He may have been a bastard but at least he fucking loved me, she tells me. At least I had someone to fucking talk to. Sometimes I wake in the night, Rosie says, and I forget the little fella is not there. I am out of the bed looking for him, before I realise the place is empty. And then all I want to do is be able to hold him, Rosie tells me.

I can nearly feel the way her child's little ribs would bump under her hand. I can nearly feel how his little fluttery heart would beat up against her chest when he is pulled in close tight to her body.

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I was going to make this work, I really was, Rosie tells me. I cleaned that oven until there was not an ounce of fucking dirt on it. Look at the state of my nails, she straightens her ragged nail topped fingers out in front of her body. And, she says, I thought I would never get the smell of the grease off me and the floor all around the cooker even that had to be cleaned after. And I sat on that sofa, she tells me, even though there is big rips in it and made notes about what I needed to do. Stay away from him. Keep the house. Pay all the bills. No drinking or anything like that.

I know, Rosie says, I have messed this up again, but this is not as bad, surely. She looks at me, her face tense. She picks again it the dry strips of skin around her finger nails. I was so lonely and it seemed like I would never get my little fella back to live with me. It's not even that I used to be drinking that much when I had him and I never took much of anything else though there was plenty of it around, she says. My friend used to say, Rosie, you are so good compared to half the mothers I know. I mean the odd time I could be off my head but really I was just trying to cope with all that was going on, him screaming in my face that he was going to fucking kill me and his arm pushed up into my throat and the little fella howling in the bedroom, she tells me. Lord that child could howl. And later when he would be asleep in his cot, he would be breathing away steady, and I thought see, he is fine. Rosie starts to cry again. I hand her a tissue.

I know what you are saying, Rosie tells me. That you can help me with this. I can feel this baby moving inside in me, she says. Were you ever pregnant, she asks me. Did you ever get that when they start to flick around inside in you like a little fish?

I know that quickening, the salmon like flick of life in the very middle of you. My daughter sucked out, her head an odd cone shape for a week. A month or two later her inert little body lying still in my arms and I keep talking to her in case her father realises she is gone, because he is driving the car so very fast. Her screams behind the closed door as the ER staff get her back. My son, leveraging himself out, all elbows. He grows into a wild warrior of boy,

sinew legged, tumbled, carving spears and making arrows. A fella that was here before. His father over his still body, mud crusted, compressing his boy's chest with his strong hands, his face desperate. My boy, his bruised and still muddy body, all angles and length, curled against me in the hospital bed, breathing now again, in and out. His heart against mine, beating again.

And then a long, long time before that, this time before the quickening flicks even started, that deep knifing pain and blood that was an astonishing red. A scurry for tissue roll and trying not to make such a mess.

You know, Rosie says, I am going to keep this one whatever they say. I don't care what you call it, what the hell happened. See, she says, her arm wrapped over her belly, I can feel him quickening. Rosie holds her mug of tea in her other hand. The tea is cold now, little pools of dark scum on the top, clinging to the edges of the cup. But god, she says, that house is cold, so fucking cold, she tells me.

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I know that kind of coldness alright.

Back, once, a long time ago, I lived in a house that was so, so cold. Standing overlooking the mighty breadth of the Blackwater River, the walls seemed to draw the damp coldness up the cliff from the water. I would stare out over the green black flow of the river, watching its drag and pull out toward the sea and back again. A tidal river, my friend said, you never know what it might bring in, or take out.

It was not the sort of cold that you could contain with a fleecy jumper or your thick woolly tights, your winter jeans or a layer or two extra. This was a nasty, nasty insidious kind of coldness that didn't seep or chill, it just dug deep into your bones and stayed there. A deep down bone-coldness, one that wanted to stay, forever. A coldness that laughed at your woolly hat and your tights and your three jumpers. That ignored your two duvets and your hot water bottle and all those cheap fluffy fleece blankets you thought would keep the damp from seeping up through the mattress. Even my little dog, dead as she is now, nearly wasn't able for it. Her whole old tough fragile little body set in a permanent shivering.

It was a coldness held in by darkness and damp and lino-topped concrete. A coldness contained only by the snow on the mountain. A coldness that would go through you and then come back to stay. A coldness that would have you breathing, just to keep going.

I would lie at night, with the two hot water bottles, their thick rubber sucking red marks onto the soft skin of my belly, my body immobile under the heaviness of grey wool blankets. The coldness never left you though. The water in the bath could never be hot enough, cooling quickly as it hit the vastness of cast iron. The open fire barely heated the air a foot from the grate. That's the kind of fire, my friend said, that you could be sitting on top of and you still wouldn't be warm.

Mould grew on the jam and crept, blue green, through the bread. Rain slipped in underneath the damp swollen front door and sat in slick puddle across the hallway. I started to wear my woollen hat to bed. I contemplated mittens.

My sister came to stay and closed herself in by the fire, throwing on turf, sticks and all the coal I had for the winter. She left, the scuttle empty, long before the winter began to slow. Looking at the empty coal scuttle, my blanket heaped bed, the condensation pooling on the window sills, I thought to myself, I must get out of this place. This deeply cold place, where you could just slip away to nothing, where you could just stop showing up to get some milk, where you could just not drop over the rent, where you could just stop telling people that you are getting sorted out. Those every day moments of struggle. I must, I thought to myself back then, looking at the empty scuttle, its battered iron rim powdered with black damp dust, get out of this.

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Rosie has come back into the shelter, Geraldine tells me. That is good, I say. Three days later Rosie miscarries, a bloody, glutinous gush of loss. She cries as she meets me in the corridor, her hands wrapped tightly around her body, even though it is warm in this building, a roaring, oil burning, fierce warmth, pumping out of all the radiators. Rosie, I say, we will support you through this. She only looks at me. She has no words.

Then Rosie disappears. She left on Monday, Geraldine tells me, gone up to the shop and never came back. Back to Limerick, I say. It is a statement, assumption, kind of question. That would be it, says Geraldine. God knows where she is staying up there, I say. I know, says Geraldine.

Rosie had told me, in the week before she left the shelter about the pregnancy, in a rush of words, checking every moment that she was not shocking me. There were so many bloody people in that house she tells me, I could hardly tell you where it was, she said. The varnish was peeling off the front door, she said, it was all dry and flaky. And up the stairs there were handprints, grey and smudged, a trail, all the way along the wall. And the bathroom had a sour smell, like you know when the heat from the rads is just drying out the damp. Rosie puts her two hands up and tightens her pony tail as she tells me this, the skin on her hands hard and dry.

Whoever the fuck he was, she tells me, he wasn't taking no for an answer. He had me shoved up against the wall and the towel rail was dug into my back. Surely I was thinking, the rail is just going to snap in two, Rosie tells me. And I would have told him he was a bastard, but he had my head kind of shoved to one side with his arm and he calling me every name under the sun. And the weird thing is I thought you know that's it, it just can't get any worse, and I thought you know the little fella, you know he is best where he is, safe. Rosie starts to cry, thick rich tears. I just miss the smell of him, she says, with those thick eyelashes of his and the way he'd be thrown in the cot, all soft and breathing in and out.

You know what your man called me when he was done. A fucking whore. Then, she says, he shoved a bit of gear into my hand. To fucking shut you up, he said. And I thought you know what, as I sat down on the floor, I'd take the whole lot, now. But, I threw it out, Rosie tells me, the coke. And I said to myself, she tells me, right then, sitting on that bathroom floor, she pauses and looks up, her face suddenly softened, tears dripping slowly, I must get out of this shit.

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I thought of that cold house I had lived in years ago, when I heard. They did not find her for three days, said Geraldine. The landlord checked the flat, eventually. Rosie's body cold, hard and stiff, a slightly rancid smell just starting to fill the air. She had taken one of those apartments in the city centre up the back of the old bank building, said Geraldine. Sure you wouldn't leave your dog stay there, I said. I had only walked past them once, a few years ago, a cracked-window, grimed-up façade of crumbling brick, all elegance lost. Was she back using, I asked Geraldine. Using something, Geraldine said.

Why wouldn't you, I thought. How could you not. With the thin wad of cash from your social welfare, your fingers rough against the fine grim dirt of used notes, with your little fella in care, his body strong and solid now. Sure that foster woman was telling me he is taking a nine-months baby grow now, Rosie had told me, the last time we met. Why wouldn't you, I thought. With your child strong and thriving, away from you now, no longer your forefinger he grabs with his chubby hand, no longer your hair he curls his sticky fingers into as he is held up on a hip, not your hip. When there is no longer the smell of lemon shampoo and sleep from the top of his head, in your nostrils. Why wouldn't you when you felt the sticky gush of that next hope spill out of you in a mess, your tears, the pain.

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The house still looks out over the expanse of the Blackwater River. The tide flows back and forth at its base. They spent a lot of money on it in the end, my friend tells me. Made it all into fancy apartments. I imagine brocade curtains in neutral colors, smoothed plaster walls, pale glossy floor tiles and stainless steel double mixer taps. Deep retro-style cast iron baths and polished wood sleigh-ended beds with small mountains of extra pillows. Duck down perhaps. Always a cold place, mind, he adds. Still. I nod. Well there was no amount of insulation was ever going to warm it, he adds, only sucking damp up off the river that place. True, I say. Sometimes you can never put a place like that right, can you, I add.

And I think again of Rosie, of her dark long hair pulled tight into a ponytail, of that cold dense silence in the house out underneath the mountain, of the quiet desperate loneliness that pulled her back in to the city.

The roaring oil burning warmth of the shelter, the hot tea, the soft touch of fresh linen and brushed cotton sheets. The cosy chairs, each one that you could curl up in and not move for an hour. The compassion, the care, we can help you with this Rosie. It was too much, I think, and of course, not enough. In the end.

You know, I say to Geraldine, a little while afterwards, we probably only knew the tip of the iceberg, with Rosie. Of course, she says, of course. We only ever do. She turns and walks away down the corridor, with its soft cream coloured walls, past the radiators wafting out little waves of heat.

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Disability Finds a Voice

Carol Gilson

Abstract: The U.S. Developmental Disabilities Act states, "Disability is a natural part of the human experience...One American in five is a person with a disability, making people with disabilities the largest minority group in our nation, and it's the only group that anyone can join at any time: at birth or through an accident, illness, or the aging process." When I discovered that my fellow social work students were not required to take courses on the topic of disability, despite the fact that within The University of Texas Austin School of Social Work (UT-SSW) there is a Center for Disability Studies, I knew I had to do something. This narrative reflects my personal experience with disability, my return to school, and the help I received while I attempted to create change within the curriculum.

Keywords: disability, Developmental Disabilities Act, University of Texas, social work, advocacy.

The Journey Begins: *"Hope at last"*

At the age of 25, life as I knew it stopped. I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, a crippling auto-immune disease that resulted in more than a decade of pain primarily caused by isolation and a greatly diminished capacity to accomplish even the simplest tasks. Within that first year, I was completely homebound and unable to work or support myself. My mind and spirit were slow to adjust to these new realities. I still saw my body as strong and capable, but anyone who took one look at me knew this was no longer true. I had trouble bridging the sense of freedom, strength and vigor that I had always known with the realities of my diseased body; a body that suddenly struggled to stand up, walk, or perform basic activities of life and self-care. I slept my way through the next several years. During that time most of my peers graduated from college, began new lives; many married, started families, or moved away. I felt as though the world was passing me by.

Within two years of diagnosis, I had lost mobility. I spent the next four years attempting to reclaim the ability to walk through physical therapy and other modalities. While in a physical therapy session at a local rehabilitation hospital, I met someone who helped prepare me for the next phase of recovery - a social worker. She created a safe time and place each week where I could talk about my fears for the future, fear of what was happening to my once healthy body. During those sessions I could hear myself voicing issues I had not yet confronted which helped to reduce the anxiety I was experiencing and enabled me to make tough choices about my medical care.

The choice I faced was to become a person who navigates the world in a motorized wheelchair or endure several invasive surgeries that would require countless months of intensive rehabilitation. I chose surgery. Within six months I was hospitalized twice, and had a total of four surgeries to replace both hips and both knees. I had to relearn how to walk two times that year, once with new hips and again with new knees.

While in the hospital recovering from the first surgery, I began thinking about my future. For the first time in almost six years I had hope, and I began to understand how to live a rich and fulfilling life despite chronic pain and a disability. It was in that hospital bed that I reconnected with my childhood dream of becoming a therapist. It struck me that my personal journey had given me the experiences with illness, disability, and rehabilitation that could enable me to work empathically with people whose bodies are in crisis. I wanted to help other newly-disabled adults on their path to wholeness as they struggle with their own fear. My illness gave me a second chance at life. I have gained a deeper insight and understanding of the human experience and have a strong desire to share what I have learned. I decided that a Master's degree in social work could be the vehicle for developing the skills I need to be effective in helping other adults who have become disabled through illness or injury.

In Pursuit

My pursuit of a Master's in Social Work began as an undergrad at Austin Community College where I gained enough credits to transfer in as a junior at The University of Texas Austin School of Social Work (UT-SSW). I looked forward to taking classes relating to disability. However, I quickly learned that issues of disability were only briefly included in the social work (SW) core curriculum. In a university-wide search for disability related courses I found web-based classes offered by the Center for Disability Studies. To my surprise, although these classes are sponsored by the UT-SSW, the academic advisor did not know about them. I took the opportunity to register for my first disability studies class, which satisfied an upper division elective requirement and steered me in the direction of viewing human experience through the lens of disability. Although I personally got a lot out of the disability course, I still found myself frustrated. I knew it wasn't enough. The curriculum needed to reflect that disability does not discriminate based on gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. The fact is everyone's life will inevitably be impacted by disability, whether it affects us or someone we love.

Before long, I was speaking up in a social welfare class about poverty. The textbook only spoke about the risk of poverty to people with mental illness. I felt it was important for my fellow students to understand that medical expenses are the primary reason people file for bankruptcy in the U.S., as a way to highlight the fact that people with any type of disability are at a higher risk for living in poverty than other members of our society. In policy class when students shared personal accounts concerning social justice issues, I listened from the perspective of a person who doesn't live in a typical body, and made connections between my experience and theirs. Seeing these differences in experience, and some of the resonances with issues of race, class, and gender, I began to question. I created an online survey where I asked my fellow students how they viewed disability, and what, if anything, they wanted to learn about working with people with disabilities (PWD's). I was surprised by the fact that most of them had never considered disability to be a social justice issue until completing the survey and, 76% of those who responded felt the curriculum did not prepare them for working with PWD's. From the data, I chose to focus on the top three topics that students were most concerned with learning. They wanted specific techniques and resources that could help them work with PWD's, as well as tips on how to advocate for their clients with disabilities. This information helped confirm my desire to better integrate disability into the academic curriculum, but it was still unclear to me how I could accomplish that.

Finding My Voice

"We've GOT to make noises in greater amounts!
So, open your mouth, lad! For every voice counts!"
– *Horton Hears a Who*, Dr. Seuss.

Though I was not the only student in my cohort with a visible disability, my fellow classmates and even professors looked to me as the voice of disability in class. Being asked to take on this responsibility left me feeling angry and frustrated and I was keenly aware of the burden of representation. When these situations arise I speak from my experience and needs related to my experience of disability, pointing out that each person has different needs and unique perspectives of what it is to live with disability. As I listened, in class or in the hallways, to questions posed by fellow classmates and I did the best I could to amplify the voices of all people with disabilities. However, I became a student to find out the answers to many of the same questions that were being asked of me. By seeking my own answers I found there was growing interest among my peers to learn more about disabilities so that they could better serve their future clients.

I knew that I wanted more from my educational experience and I felt that change was needed within the curriculum itself. I requested an appointment to speak with the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, hoping to generate a conversation about my experience. She received me warmly, and although I felt nervous pointing out what I saw to be a flaw in the way disability issues were addressed, thanks to her generous spirit I quickly felt at home in the discussion. She encouraged me to share my concerns, and even asked for ideas about how to improve the curriculum as it related to disability issues.

During that meeting, I made the argument that disability can be considered a culture of its own, and warrants inclusion in the SW curriculum, alongside critical race theory and issues of gender and sexuality. Disability needed its own lecture courses that could be taken as electives and also meet multicultural course requirements. The Associate Dean became very excited by my ideas, and she was in complete agreement. By the end of the day, disability courses were reclassified as both electives and multicultural components, thereby making them more available to students. Little did I know that meeting would have a profound effect on more than just the curriculum.

As a result of our meeting, the Associate Dean suggested that I create a disability initiative. It was decided that we should form a committee comprised of students, faculty, and community advisors to help us create more disability awareness at the UT-SSW. In May of 2011, she helped to assemble a dynamic team to form a Disability Visibility Initiative Committee (DVIC) at the UT-SSW that could formulate concrete goals for implementing the desired change.

In the fall of 2011, the DVIC presented the first ever symposium at the school of Social Work focused on disability, entitled "Making Systems Work for People with Disabilities." The symposium, held on October 21, 2011, was made possible through the help and support of the School of Social Work administration, faculty, and leaders from the Center for Disability Studies. The symposium featured two panel discussions. The first was comprised of five people who live with their own disabilities every day, who in my opinion are the true experts in the field. The second panel highlighted the contributions of professionals who work with people who have disabilities, all of whom were disabled themselves. The speakers represented an eclectic mix of organizations, and I did my best to reflect the diversity within the disabled population by including people with a variety of disabilities. One speaker, a local journalist who lives with a psychiatric diagnosis, spoke about the challenges she faces juggling her symptoms and medications, while maintaining a fulfilling family and work life. Another panelist, a member of President Obama's Access Committee and Director of the Texas Independent Living Council, whose injury was the result of a gunshot wound at the age of twelve, spoke about the importance of supports that help PWD's live in the community. While another who was an Olympic hopeful until injured one day in practice at the age of seventeen, talked about coming to terms with an acquired disability that changed the trajectory of his life and led him to become a lobbyist for disability rights.

Each of them brought a unique perspective to the discussion, and gave examples of individualized supports they have needed as a result of their disability, although commonalities could be seen among the panelists. They all wanted more from their lives than society expected or even thought they could accomplish based on their diagnosis. For me, this highlighted what I had been saying in my classes all along, and it was empowering for me to hear my words echoed by my peers. The panelists conveyed the desire to be seen as individuals, instead of being perceived primarily as disabled and in need of support. People with disabilities want the same things that everyone else does: opportunities to become active members of society and have fulfilling relationships with others, while finding meaning and purpose for their lives.

There were close to 200 people in attendance. CEUs were offered to alumni of The UT-SSW. A printed program for the symposium was given to all attendees, and it contained a resource list to help attendees in the future when working with PWD's. Many of the agencies listed were on hand as part of a resource fair created in conjunction with the event. I consider the symposium a huge success not only because it was so well attended but we also received much positive feedback from a post-conference survey completed by each attendee. They identified changes in perceptions of disability and most felt that their attendance would help them better serve PWD's.

A pivotal moment of the symposium occurred during the Q and A portion at the end, when a student asked the panel how to best serve people with disabilities. ADAPT founder Bob Kafka responded, by asking us as social workers to remember that PWD's are more than a file on our case load. They are unique individuals with hopes and dreams of living a fulfilling and meaningful life. For some that my mean marriage and a family, for others it may mean a career or hobby that brings purpose to their lives. He also pointed out that it is important to remember that PWD's often rely on social services to meet their basic needs, including funds to help pay for living expenses and programs that provide medical care. Therefore, it's important for social workers to take the time to understand their clients' needs. It was that interaction with Bob Khafka that really drove home for the audience the importance of looking at disability and the supports available to PWD's as a social justice issue. Here are a few selected quotes from attendees, revealing the insights they gained through attending the symposium.

Figure 1. Disability Visibility Symposium Making Systems Work for People with Disabilities attendees' comments:

I *think a course on disability in our society should be a required core class in the social work program*

A very interesting symposium; it definitely increased my knowledge, awareness and interest

We need to confront stigmas, stereotypes and myths but shifting the focus to what works – not just what doesn't

Social workers need to work with not for people with disabilities by listening to them as unique individuals– Thanks Bob Kafka!

Thanks to this symposium I now see disability as a social justice issue

The symposium continues to affect the campus climate concerning disability issues and was the catalyst that opened a dialogue for addressing disability issues campus-wide. The semester following the symposium, I, along with several other students, created a campus-wide disability advocacy committee that is sponsored by the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, where the dialog concerning advocacy work has continued throughout campus. Readers may view the entire symposium on the Center for Disability Studies website: http://tinyurl.com/q6ahgty

Onward

"Don't Mourn – Organize" – Bob Kafka, ADAPT

Through work with DVIC, I have been given the opportunity to work closely with other organizations throughout the university to help ensure that the voice of students with disabilities is heard throughout campus. I served with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to develop a university wide disabled student's organization, and I serve as the SSD representative on the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement Student Advisory Committee, which works to increase diversity awareness and tolerance at the university.

I have been working with SSD to help improve accessibility throughout campus, focusing

primarily on the SW building. To date, improvements to the SW building have included the instillation of automatic door openers and even removal of some doors altogether. Additionally, there are plans underway to increase the number of wheelchair accessible parking spots available to SW students with disabilities.

I hope that the changes made to our building will encourage other schools throughout campus to review and improve their buildings accessibility. Although I have accomplished much in a short period of time, the work is far from over, and I plan to continue being a campus disability advocate throughout my time at UT-SSW.

Finally

The University of Texas at Austin's motto is, "What starts here changes the world", and I hope that in some small way I have begun to change the world by simply speaking up. It is my greatest hope that through sharing this story of advocacy that other students and helping professionals will be inspired to find their voice, and create the change that they would like to see in the world.

About the Author: Carol Gilson, LMSW wrote this as an undergraduate student. She is currently working towards clinical licensure, as a therapist in an intensive outpatient program, using dialectical behavioral therapy (carolgilson@gmail.com).

Self-Reflections of a Gay Immigrant Social Worker

Jonghyun Lee and Kate Willow Robinson

Abstract: Social workers strive to end various forms of social injustice that cause the marginalization of people and their suffering. One way to dismantle social injustice is to engage in a self-reflective process. As a form of self-discovery, self-reflection guides us to recognize our own experiences of privilege and power as well as inequality and oppression. In this article, I utilize intersectionality as a method of self-reflection to examine the ways race/ethnicity, sexuality, and immigration status intersect and create a particular form of vulnerability. Making private experiences public takes courage. Nevertheless, through self-reflection, I reinforce my moral and ethical commitment to fairness, respect for diversity, and human rights for all!

Keywords: social justice, intersectionality, Council on Social Work Education, gay, immigrant, Asian, heterosexism.

Social Work and Social Justice

The locus of the social work profession is social justice (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2012). Following its humanitarian concern, I am committed to helping people meet their basic needs and strive to end various forms of social injustice that cause marginalization of people and their suffering. To empower especially those who are oppressed in our society, I promote social justice through my engagement in advocacy, social action, policy development, and community organizing. In addition, social workers pursue social justice through direct engagement with individuals and families from diverse backgrounds (CSWE, 2012).

It is important to recognize that social justice can only be actualized through a collective endeavor made by our society as whole. As noted by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, social justice should be "based on the values of fairness, equality, respect for diversity, access to social protection, and the application of human rights in all spheres of life" (United Nations [UN] Economic and Social Commissions for West Asia, 2010, p.1). To promote social justice, I have to espouse a moral and ethical attitude toward equality. Believing in the dignity of all people, whether they are members of the dominant group or an oppressed group, is fundamental to dismantling social injustice. Without this belief, there is a little hope that we can create a just society (Spencer, 2008).

Unfortunately, social injustice is exercised in its varieties and contributes to human suffering. Due to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, nationality, immigration status, religion, and other socially constructed divisions, some people are targeted for exploitation, marginalization, cultural imperialism, homophobia, and violence (Young, 2002). Social injustice inhibits the ability of people to achieve potentials and to express their needs, thoughts, and feelings. Moreover, social injustice causes psychological, physical, and spiritual deprivation of people (Swenson, 1998).

Challenging social injustice is easier said than done. One way to dismantle social injustice is to engage in self-reflective practice. It is a form of self-discovery that enables us to recognize our own experiences of privilege and power as well as inequality and oppression (Spencer, 2008). Such a practice enables social workers to engage in the self-corrective process that assures our continual professional development. Intersectionality, in this regard, can be a useful methodology for self-reflection. It guides us to understand the ways in which race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other socially constructed divisions intersect and create power and privilege as well as oppression and marginalization.

Using intersectionality as a prime source of self-reflection in this essay, I examine the ways race/ethnicity, sexual-orientation, and immigration status intersects and create a particular form of vulnerability and privilege in

my own life. Making private experiences public takes courage. To present my reflection with confidence, I incorporate a number of theoretical insights and empirical evidence into my reflective analysis. This form of self-reflection has contributed to my intellectual and professional growth as a social worker. Most of all, self-reflective analysis has reinforced my moral and ethical commitment to fairness, equality, respect for diversity, and human rights for all!

Intersectionality Theory

In "The Sociological Imagination," Mills (1959) describes a human being as "a social and an historical actor who must be understood, if at all, in close and intricate interplay with social and historical structures" (p. 158). Indeed, a person cannot be adequately understood as merely an isolated biological creature without taking into account the social reality and the institutions that are enacted upon the life of that person. Individual identity, then, is constructed through a person's interactions with the social world.

Self-reflection can be a practice of 'intellectual craftsmanship' that must be grounded in social workers' professional endeavors (Mills, 1959). It enables us to engage in a continual process of self-correction through examining our own lived experiences in our professional work. Such an intellectual endeavor enhances our ability as social workers to recognize the diversity among people and the ways they experience oppression, marginalization, power, and privilege.

I believe that intersectionality is a wonderful theoretical framework for social justice oriented self-reflection. First introduced by Crenshaw (1991), this particular theory maps out the ways socially and culturally created divisions are intertwined and operate as sources of disenfranchisement or power. In other words, intersectionality is a theory that analyzes how oppression, inequality, power, and privilege are created and exercised through the simultaneous effects of multiple social and cultural divisions (Weber, 2006).

For instance, while discussing violence against women of color, Crenshaw (1991) explained the way women of color are oppressed due not only to their race, but also their gender. The complexity of women of color's lives cannot be delineated appropriately by looking at either the racial or gendered dimension of their lived experiences separately. By focusing solely on their experiences of marginalization through racism, we are at risk of ignoring their suffering of patriarchy. Through such a monolithic and singular frame of analysis, such as racism, we cannot acquire full picture of the lived experiences of women of color and their suffering.

In addition to race and gender, Lorde (1998) further emphasizes the importance of considering other dimensions such as class and sexuality that are critical in shaping the life experiences of women of color. An upper middle class, white, heterosexual woman's experience of life must be drastically different from that of a working class woman of color who identifies as lesbian. In the former case, white women of higher socio-economic status who have relationships with men may experience disadvantages based on their gender yet enjoy the privileges of their class and race. In the latter instance, the women of color may face multiple disadvantages due to their race, sexual orientation, and economic status.

Another aspect to be considered is that social workers should avoid ranking oppressions or claiming one is any worse or better than another (Young, 2002). We must not simply divide the oppressor and the oppressed based on a given set of circumstances. Instead, we have to recognize the cumulative impacts of race, gender sexual orientation, ability, and immigration status, and other socially constructed divisions on the life experiences of each individual. This way, we will develop better insights about the ways in which each of these socially constructed divisions intersect and create power and oppression as well as privilege and marginalization.

Making Private Experiences Public: Intersection of Race, Immigration Status, and Sexuality

As I consider how my personal experience contributes to intersectionality as a method of self-reflection for social work practice and teaching about social justice issues, I often ask myself questions. "What if I did not move to the United States and study social work? Would I ever be able to learn the impacts of race, immigration status, and sexuality on human development and behavior?"

Through my first-hand experiences of living as a person of color, a non-native English speaking immigrant with temporary visas, and a gay man, I learned the devastating effects of racism, ethnocentrism, and homophobia on human growth. While maneuvering through various challenges that I have encountered, I acquired critical insights on the issues of social justice and human diversity quite essential for all social workers. Indeed, my teaching and scholarship is deeply influenced by my personal experience of being categorized as a person of color, an immigrant, and a gay man in the United States.

According to Bisman (2004), social workers are moral agents who should seek to "change social structures which perpetuate inequalities and injustices" (p. 120). As a social work educator, I believe that the social work profession's mission and its moral imperative to social justice and human diversity, among many, should inspire, guide, and motivate students' engagement in social work learning. My students' careful inquiry about social justice and human diversity lead them to grow as confident social workers who are committed to the profession's mission to enhance the well-being of people and their social environment.

I am very fortunate to be in an academic setting where social justice and diversity are respected and encouraged. My undergraduate and graduate classes are comprised of students from varying backgrounds. At the beginning of each semester, as a part of course introductions, I tell my students the stories that have led me to become a social worker, and ask them to share why they want to become a social worker. Through telling stories and listening to those of others, we become aware, as a consequence of differences among us, that some may experience oppression or marginalization, while others enjoy power or privilege. My pedagogical intention is to assist my students to acquire insights about the ways diversity shapes not only the life experiences of people but also their professional development.

My Name is Jonghyun Lee

"My name is Jonghyun Lee. Have you met anyone whose name is Jonghyun before?"

Every new semester, I begin classes by asking this question. Of course, most of the time, none of my students have heard of a name similar to mine, nor can they pronounce it correctly. However, I find that this is a significant and useful starting point to help my students engage with the issues of social justice and diversity among people.

As soon as students see my appearance, hear my accent, and mannerisms, they immediately recognize the differences of our encounter from those of other professors that they find in their other classrooms. A former student of mine remembered that some of her classmates expressed mixed emotions and anxiety about their learning and how my appearance and accent may affect their grades.

Because of this reason, instead of letting my students leave the first day of class with much anxiety, I utilize my difference as a way to connect with them. I attempt to get across, sometimes very directly, the idea that "Hey, there is nothing to lose! My students already saw me and heard my accents." Sharing my story is not a self-disclosure. Rather, it is a form of "use of self" for teaching. While explaining my name, my professional and educational backgrounds, and how I came to be a social worker, I introduce, both implicitly and

explicitly, the concepts of "intersectionality." While listening to my story, students are able to familiarize themselves with the dimensions of diversity that create my identity as a Korean, immigrant, and gay man as well as the impacts such categorizations have on my own personal journey as a social worker.

"Allen was my name for a couple of years." I say to my students, "You know, people cannot pronounce Jonghyun easily. Because of that, they reluctantly say my name and eventually forget it." I go on and explain what it is like to be being forgotten among people. "Often times, I felt invisible in class and other social settings. I thought that by having an English name I would not be forgotten."

My students asked me why I chose "Allen." "Well, there are many English names and people suggested different ones including Winston." I hear a big laugh. "Do I look like Winston?" I ask. Students laugh out loud. "I know why you laugh. I don't look like Winston, do I?" Then I say, "The reason I chose Allen is because I love Woody Allen's movies." There is another big laugh. It may be because my Korean look does not match 'Woody Allen' either. My students would not think that a Korean man with such a strong accent would understand Woody Allen's humor, and the American culture melded into his films. I wonder if they find it even exotic.

I continue my story. "Although Allen worked pretty well, I had to let it go. People remembered me as Allen, but I felt something was missing. You know, as you see me, I didn't find Allen within me." I hear a sigh of relief, and some students even say, "That's good. You got your name back. You have to have your real name!" Now comes the moment where I explain the meaning of my name and its cultural significance.

"Well, I have to say I am destined to be a social worker from birth." I say. "In Korean, my name Jonghyun means a black bell which signifies a bell with resonating sound. My mother chose it for me, and she is an amazing woman." I explain that in Korea, under its strong patriarchal culture, newborn children's names are usually made by male figures in the family, including a father or a grandfather. I tell my students, "But my mother was courageous. She confronted patriarchal culture by deciding the name of her own child." I tell my students that this is an act of resistance against injustice or a form of rebellion. "You know, she might have been a feminist!" I say. "She wanted me to be a social worker who could resonate in the lives of people who are oppressed and marginalized." I hear another laugh from students; this time, their laugh has a serious tone in it.

Being Asian: A Stranger From a Different Shore

"Slanted eyes. You have slanted eyes," she said.
"Slanted eyes?" I asked.
"You know, Asian people have weird eyes like this," she said as she pulled at the outside corners of her eyes to stretch them out.

That was the first time I knew that I was viewed as an Asian in the Unites States. My individuality goes missing due to my physical appearance. I am now categorized as Asian through a dividing practice. Foucault, as cited in Rabinow (1984), explains the dividing practice as the various modes of manipulation that objectify people by categorizing them through exclusionary practices, which gives people both a "personal and a social identity" based on "pseudo-science" created by dominant culture (p.8). This type of classification confirms existing hierarchies of races and measures their moral and inborn capacities. As a form of systemic violence, such a practice manifests through acts of exclusion, harassment, degradation, humiliation, or intimidation (Young, 2002). As in the case of many immigrants, I have to deal with both subtle and explicit forms of racism due to my appearance and accent.

"Go home you Chink!"

I encounter these offensive slurs on the street. No matter how frequently I experience them, facing both subtle and blatant forms of violence is hardscrabble. It is an affront to me. These racial comments are a constant reminder to me of my lack of place in the United States. They alienate me as the other who does not belong here, and also threaten my sense of security, confidence, and overall well-being.

However, I cannot respond or ask for justice. Otherwise, I would be seen as an angry, unappreciative, noncompliant, and difficult to work with, defensive Asian man. Or, I might be viewed as a flat liar who seeks sympathy from others. I feel this way because when I've brought these statements up to others, I've been told the following: "Are you sure that's what they said? You might have misunderstood." "It's a joke, don't you understand?" "Get over it! That's what grownups do." Ironically, these responses implicitly force me to remain silent. The blame is on me. "Why are you here? Go home!"

In order to survive, I must be aware of my skin color and other aspects of my physical appearance. I must be careful in showing my talents, skills, or intellectual capability. Otherwise, I risk being stereotyped as a nerd, passive, or an overly competitive, dominant Asian man.

Shah (2000) depicts how Asians are stereotyped under the "model minority myth." It is a racist view that overtly categorizes minority groups into either bad ones or good ones. According to the U.S. Census Bureau report prepared by Ryan and Siebens (2012), among those whose ages are 25 and over, Asian-Pacific Islanders show 52.4% of college and higher level of educational achievement in comparison to 29.9% of the general population. This may due to, at least partly, immigration policy that prefers highly-skilled workers and the larger influx of professionals from Asian nations (Kaushal & Fix, 2006). For example, Asians are more often admitted to the United States with employment visas that require higher professional skills and knowledge. 27% of immigrants from Asian nations received permanent resident status through the sponsorship of their employer in comparison 8% of those who came from other parts of world (Pew Research Center, 2012).

However, this report does not capture levels of extreme variability in educational achievement existing within Asians in the United States. A closer look at data from Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011) reveals that college and higher levels of educational attainments are indeed concentrated in particular ethnic groups including Asian Indian (81.3%), Korean (56.3%), and Chinese (53.4%). In contrast, according to the report made by Asian Pacific American Legal Center and Asian American Justice Center (2011), Vietnamese (27%), Hmong (14%), Cambodian (14%), and Laotian (12%) show the lowest levels of the college and higher educational attainments among Asian ethnic groups. The existing large disparity in educational attainments between different Asian ethnic groups suggests that many Asians do not have credentials that can secure their access to living wage jobs, health care coverage, and opportunities to build assets.

When Asians in the United States are considered as a homogenous group, the median household income is $66,000, as of 2010, which is about $16,200 more than the overall population in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2012). It is important to recognize that Asian households are more likely to be multi-generational, with older persons or children being unemployed living in the same household. This means that actual income should be divided by a larger number of people. This may be why, despite their substantially higher rates of educational achievements and median household income, Asians in the United States show lower median household wealth ($68,529) than their non-Hispanic white ($112,000) counterparts. The term household wealth refers to the sum of assets including cars, homes, savings and retirement accounts minus debts such as mortgages, auto loans and credit card debt (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Similar to household wealth, Asians in the United State are more likely to live under poverty in comparison to their non-Hispanic white counterparts. For instance, the U.S. Census Bureau (2012) set the poverty threshold for 2012 at $11,945 per year for an individual under 65 years old and $23,681 for a family of four. As of 2011, the poverty rate among non-Hispanic whites was 9.8% in comparison to a 12.3% poverty rate for Asians (Gabe, 2012). When Asian ethnicities are considered individually, we can see even greater income inequality. According to the White House Report (2013) Hmong showed the highest poverty rate (37.8%) followed by Cambodian (29.3%), Laotian (18.5%), and Vietnamese (16.6%). The notable socioeconomic variability within these Asian ethnic groups warns us not to make a precipitate generalization. There is no such a thing as a model minority! The model minority label effectively silences many Asians, keeps them from addressing their needs, and conceals existing disparities between sub-groups of Asians.

Since it was first created by Western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s, race has been used to rank human populations (Sanjek, 1994). None of "the underlying scales of racial quanta of intelligence, attractiveness, cultural potential, and worth" have been proved to be real. However, "racial categorization" and "racist social ordering" continue to be inherited "as fixed in nature" and are "served to expedite and justify" racism (Sanjek, 1994, pp. 1-2).

By asserting that "racism is more than a matter of individual prejudice and scattered episodes of discrimination," Feagin and Vera (1995) define it as "the socially organized set of attitudes, ideas, and practices that deny African Americans and other people of color the dignity, opportunities, freedoms, and rewards that this nation offers white Americans" (p. ix). No one chooses her/his identity before birth, yet one is born predisposed to the unequal roles that make her/him disenfranchised, exploited, and marginalized due to his/her skin color (Harro, 2000).

Consequently, racial oppression confines people of color by prohibiting them from developing, exercising, or expressing their abilities, capacities, or even their needs, feelings, and thoughts (Young, 2002). Various attempts have been made to eradicate racism. Unfortunately, racial prejudice is still at work at all levels of our society. Consequently, the prevailing racial prejudice perpetuates "otherness" and imposes negative and distorted images on certain groups of people, which dismantle their dignity and rights.

Being an Immigrant and Gay Man

"To attend the graduate program in Boston, Massachusetts." When entering the United States, I told the immigration officer that my purpose in coming to the United States was to attend a social work program. In order to avoid possible rejection of my visa petition or deportation, I had to give an acceptable reason for my entry. Although the statement that I gave to both the U.S. Embassy and the immigration officers was true, it was not my sole reason for leaving my home in South Korea. I came to Boston to live with my partner. I did not disclose this equally important reason because of the fear of deportation due to my relationship with a man; a relationship that is not recognized as "normal." Not only am I a gay man, but I am also an "alien" whose immigration status and sexuality were under the surveillance of the United States government.

In the summer of 1999, I left behind my family, friends, and profession and moved to the United States to build a life with the man whom I love. The United States is the home country of my spouse, and we chose Massachusetts as a place where we could pursue our academic and professional goals. Our initial wish was to live without prejudice, at both institutional and individual levels, being placed upon our sexual orientation. However, this was an illusion. Quite contrary to our faulty fantasy, we saw and continually suffer homophobia, heterosexism,

and violence against gay, lesbian, and transgender people in the United States.

Because of the heterosexist federal immigration policy, I had to live under a student visa to maintain my legal status in the United States. The financial cost and psychological toll involved in keeping my immigration status were very costly. I explain to my students how many times I had to fly back to Korea in order to renew my student visa.

I share the pressures I was under to achieve higher academic standing to make sure my visa application would go through smoothly. Another way in which I was under pressure to perform was also with attendance. "I don't have a right to be sick!" I constantly reminded myself. If I missed classes due to illness, I knew that I could be in trouble, and that it might negatively impact my immigration status.

My students express shock and incredulity when they hear that my thirty-plus-year relationship with my partner was not valid under federal immigration policy, which only recognized marriage between a man and a woman. Since I moved to the United States, I have been a resident of Massachusetts, which recognizes marriage between same sex couples. However, my partner and I could not marry because immigration policy is administered on a federal level. In fact, if immigration officials knew of my relationship, it might have threatened my legal status.

I tell my students the fear that my partner and I shared each time when we entered the country from our trips abroad. Immigration agents could have denied my entrance to the country if they knew of my relationship with another man because our relationship would imply that I intended to live in the United States permanently. Through my story of immigration experience, I wanted my students to learn the impact of social policy on the lives of individuals and their well-being.

Charades Required by Immigration Law

In 1975, Richard Adams received a letter from the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) that stated, "Your visa petition…for classification of Anthony Corbett Sullivan as the spouse of a United States citizen [is] denied for the following reason; you have failed to establish that a bona fide marital relationship can exist between two faggots" (Hazeldean & Betz, 2003, p. 17). Regardless of their committed and loving relationship, Adams' immigration application to sponsor his partner was rejected with a homophobic insult. Under the immigration policy of the time, they were only "two faggots," and Adams had no right to secure legal immigration status for his partner.

Although family unification is the primary goal of United States immigration policy, this goal, until recently, fell short for my partner and me. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) defined "marriage" as a union between one man and one woman. Under this Act, heterosexual citizens or permanent residents in the United Sates could sponsor their foreign national partners as a fiancé(e) or spouse for immigration, even if their partners were undocumented.

However, gay and lesbian citizens or permanent residents of United States had no way to sponsor their foreign national same sex partners (Nieves, 2004). The federal government administers immigration policy and DOMA prohibited gay and lesbian citizens from sponsoring their partners for immigration. Neither Vermont civil unions nor the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial ruling that grants same-sex couples the right to marry could confer any privileges (Sheridan, 2003, December 28). What Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders [GLAD] (n.d.) recommended was, "foreign nationals should not marry…marrying your same sex partner or applying for a change in immigration status based on marriage to a same sex partner may lead to deportation or future denial of your visa application."

The term 'bi-national same-sex couples' refers to same-sex couples in which one partner is a citizen of the United States and the other is not. Using the data from American Community Survey (ACS), Konnoth and Gates (2011) present interesting data. As of 2010, there were nearly 650,000 same-sex couples living in the United States. Among those, 28,574 were bi-national same sex couples. This figure did not include 11,442 non-citizen couples in which one partner is a permanent resident. It has to be recognized that estimating the exact numbers of bi-national same-sex couples is extremely difficult. Due to the uncertainty of their immigration status and fear of deportation, many of these couples might have kept a low profile.

According to Konnoth and Gates (2011), bi-national same-sex couples reside in all parts of the United States. Approximately a third of bi-national same-sex couples are interracial and ethnically diverse. Nearly a third of bi-national same-sex couples raise about 17,000 children. An annual median household income of bi-national same-sex couples was over $81,000 exceeding $51,144 among general population. Approximately two-thirds of bi-national same-sex couples own homes and over forty percent of bi-national same-sex couples have college or higher degrees. Among non-citizen partners, more than eighty-one percent reported a very good command of English. Also, non-citizens in bi-national same-sex couples show extremely lower rates of unemployment at just two percent. Bi-national couples represent a diverse group of individuals from around the globe, and many of them raise children and contribute to the economic vitality of the United Sates (Konnoth & Gates, 2011).

However, the flip side of the fantastic data shows the vitality of the bi-national couple is rather sad. They reflect desperate realities that these couples had to endure. Acquiring professional knowledge and skills was the only way that non-citizen partners could seek to secure their documented immigration status. Through their educational attainments, English proficiency, and professional skills, non-citizen partners find employment opportunities that could sponsor their visas that enable them to remain documented while living with their partners in the United States.

It has to be recognized that economic self-sufficiency among the bi-national same-sex couples is not evenly distributed. For instance, among the male bi-national same-sex couples, the median individual income of citizen partners exceeds that of their non-citizen partners by more than $10,000 ($45,816 vs. $35,158) (Konnoth & Gates, 2011). In comparison, among female bi-national same-sex couples, the median income of the citizen partner was $37,088 and that of their non-citizen partner was $31,020. Moreover, the median income of those same-sex couples in which one partner is a permanent resident was less than $20,000. Depending on citizenship status and gender, there is a significant discrepancy between individual incomes among bi-national same-sex couples (Konnoth & Gates, 2011).

Fortunately, on June 26, 2013, the United States Supreme Court declared that Section 3 of DOMA, which blocked federal recognition of same-sex marriage, was unconstitutional. Through this decision, all married same-sex couples, just like different-sex couples, can now enjoy 1,138 benefits, rights, and protections on the basis of marital status established in federal law. Gay and lesbian citizens may now sponsor their partners for immigration. However, the current ruling does not apply to every same-sex couple. It only dealt with federal recognition of marriage between the same-sex couples, but not each individual state. According to Section 2 of DOMA, individual states and territories do not need to legalize or recognize the marriage between same-sex couples. Despite sweeping changes that took place in regard to the same-sex marriage across the United States, fourteen states still do not allow same-sex couple to marry. This means that same-sex couples residing in those states will face continual challenges in receiving benefits, rights, and privileges that are otherwise available to opposite-sex couples.

Institutional Heterosexism and Its Negative Effects on Human Well-Being

It is disconcerting to see the negative health effect created by institutional heterosexism. Using the data drawn from the 1997-2009 National Health Interview Surveys, Liu, Reczek, and Brown (2013) analyzed the health status of nearly 700,000 men and women. Among those surveyed, 3,330 people are identified as same-sex cohabiters. The findings of the study reveal that same-sex cohabiters show poorer health status in comparison to different-sex married couples with similar socioeconomic status. Liu and colleagues surmise that a lack of social, psychological, economic, and institutional resources associated with marriage contribute to poorer health status of same-sex cohabiters in comparison to their different-sex married counterparts. In addition, stress caused by homophobia and discrimination against same-sex cohabiters is another contributing factor to their poorer health status. By banning same-sex marriage, the remaining fourteen states not only take away benefits, rights, and protections given to their different-sex couple citizens, but also jeopardize the health of their gay and lesbian citizens.

Liu, Reczek, and Brown's (2013) study also revealed multiple risk factors that undermine health and well-being of lesbian women of color. In their study, same-sex cohabiting white women show advantageous health status over same-sex cohabiting Black and Latina women. This may be due to their race and employment status. In addition to social discrimination and public malice against gay and lesbian people, same-sex cohabiting Black and Latina women face even more overt challenges. Due to their disadvantageous racial and ethnic backgrounds, these women endure more stigma, discrimination, and economic disenfranchisement than their white counterparts. Additionally, same-sex cohabiting Black and Latina women lack social support outlets that they could utilize in coping with adversities in life. Such life conditions generate negative effects on these women's psychological well-being and physical health (Liu, Recsek & Brown, 2013).

Economic disparity experienced by members of the LGBT community are indicators that reveal inequities in access to and distribution of resources, privileges, and rights. Existing literature consistently raises concerns about the economic hardship experienced by gay and lesbian people. Using the data collected from four national and community surveys, Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum (2013) report that gay and lesbian people in the United States are more likely to be poor than their heterosexual counterparts. Their findings indicate that gender, race, educational attainments, and geographical location have particular impacts on poverty experienced by gay and lesbian people. This means that a lesbian woman of color with less than a high school education who resides in either a rural or a small metropolitan area may experience a significantly higher level of poverty.

Contemporary social policy in the United States certainly adheres to heterosexual-normative, patriarchal, cultural values. They are used as an instrument of social control through encouragements and prohibitions. Legitimating only an opposite-sex marriage as 'the good, the true, and the beautiful,' stigmatizes and marginalizes same-sex couple in our society (Hartman, 1995). Denial of same-sex marriage and its associated rights, benefits, and protections contributes to the higher rates of poverty and negative health conditions found among gay and lesbian populations. Particular vulnerabilities faced by undocumented lesbian and gay people and those who face ableism must also be also taken into our consideration.

Because of institutionalized heterosexism, prevailing racism, and heinous ethnocentrism, many people are categorized as "unnatural," "inferior," or simply "deviant others" (Lind, 2004). I should not be fearful of these vicious labels that deprive dignity, health and well-being of our fellow citizens and their equal rights. Rather, I must seek out ways to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

people to have their basic human needs met and their rights protected.

I thank my students for their commitment to social justice and their assistance in the fight for the rights of gay and lesbian people. I tell them that their efforts awarded me the right to live with whom I love without fear of forced separation; once DOMA was repealed, my partner and I married July 23, 2013. I was teaching a summer class at that time. While I was unsure about sharing my new status with students, a student asked me about the ring on my left hand. I opened up to the class about my marriage, and received a warm reception. The students in my class baked a cake and made two male mandarin ducks as wedding gifts, honoring my Korean heritage and ethnicity. Through my experience of being an immigrant and gay man, students in my class saw the intersection of state law and federal policy, and the personal impact these may have on people.

The Intersection of Marginalization and Oppression and Privilege and Power

As a way to familiarize the concept of intersectionality and engage in dialogue that can promote social justice, my students and I carry out a Privilege Walk exercise in class. Originally adopted from Peggy McIntosh's article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," this exercise creates opportunities to identify types of privilege and marginalization that we experience due to the differences in our race/ethnicity, gender, economic class, religion, family backgrounds, sexual orientation, abilities, and immigration status. While listening to the statements relevant to privilege or marginalization, students will either move forward or backward. Of course, the Privilege Walk exercise is done in silence and all participating students will be ensured that we keep the things, which are discussed, confidential.

I participate in this exercise alongside students. I want to them to see not only my academic credentials and professional status that have brought me much privilege and power, but also my experiences of marginalization and oppression as an Asian immigrant gay man. A student told me that, before this exercise, his focus was on my authority as a professor in class. However, the "Privilege Walk" exercise made him aware of the different dimensions of my life as a non-citizen, person of color, and my sexual orientation. Such awareness actually brought him hope to achieve his professional goals as a person of color from a working class family background. "Jonghyun, I saw you stood behind all the students in class at the end of the exercise. I saw your marginalized social position that could make you vulnerable. But you are a professor despite such vulnerability. I now think that I can be like you. I can achieve my professional goal and become a social worker."

Collins' (2000) conceptualization of a matrix of domination illuminates the complicated and ambiguous nature of oppression. According to the matrix of domination, "an individual may be an oppressor, a member [of an] oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor and oppressed" depending on the context in which the individual stands (as cited in Sica, 2005, p. 231). Lorde (1998) argues that people often identify "one way which we are different, and assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be participating in" (p. 534). Unacknowledged differences in class, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age, culture, and religion can distort our insight into the fundamental system of oppression. Oppression has multiple facets and they operate separately or in combination to create a system of advantages and disadvantages. It enhances privileges for some while limiting opportunities of others (Rothenberg, 2001). This recognition opens up multiple standpoints since almost every individual is affected by this multiplicity of life experiences that create oppression and power as well as marginalization and privilege.

Collins suggests that we engage in dialogue that can "transcend differences and transform the

relations of domination" (as cited in Sica, 2005, p. 231). In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire (1970) shows how dialogue can emancipate us from a dichotomized humanity that divides the world between the oppressor and the oppressed. For him, dialogue is "a process of learning and knowing" that involves an epistemological curiosity about the object of knowledge (p. 18). In this respect, the social worker's role is not to fill his/her clients with ideas that are detached from the client's reality, but rather to help clients "to enter the historical process as responsible subjects," by awakening a critical consciousness that will eventually lead the clients to a new way of viewing themselves and others (p. 36). For social work educators, dialogue may be used within the classroom to dismantle barriers that differences may create. It should be used to bring awareness to students of their own experiences, those of potential clients, of their professors, and fellow classmates. Social work educators are charged with bringing critical awareness to students to bear upon their own lives and transfer into their interactions with clients.

Social Work Implication: The Bell Resonates In the Classroom and Beyond

Learning is a process of constructing knowledge in ways that make sense to each individual learner (Mezirow, 2000). In this sense, teaching is not a mere act of passing down information to students. Rather, it should be a process that assists students to be in contact with learning materials through their own lived experiences (Mezirow, 2000). Intersectionality has been a powerful theoretical framework that has enabled me to engage in a process of teaching and learning social work. This particular theory leads me to engage in a self-reflective process that examines power and privilege as well as inequality and oppression. As my mother did when she made a name for me, I gather courage to show the reflection of my personal experience publicly.

My hope is that this endeavor provides a way for social workers to promote our moral commitment to change social structures which perpetuate inequalities and injustices.

I chose social work because of its primary concerns that emphasize humanitarian commitments and social justice. The profession functions in society to eliminate the various forms of oppression that amplify the deprivations of both people and their environments. To gain more in-depth understanding of my own lived experiences and their impact on my professional growth as a social worker, I engage in a self-reflective process using intersectionality as an analytic tool. Such a process has had a profound impact on me. It promotes my awareness about multiple realities created through simultaneous interactions between power, privilege, marginalization, and oppression. As a non-citizen gay man of color, I have experienced relative deprivation and marginalization. At the same, I recognize privileges created by my educational and professional backgrounds. This self-reflective process helps me to avoid a monolithic framework when assessing the problems in living. Instead, it encourages me to recognize the ways race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, immigration status, religion, and other socially constructed divisions intersect one other and affect the lives of people. It helps me to also bring this to my classrooms and teaching, and to inspire my students to use intersectionality within their own self-reflective practice and as they work with clients.

Intersectionality for self-reflection must begin in the classroom, and be an integral part of social work education that seeks to answer the call to social justice that is this profession. Using intersectionality in our teaching, social work educators can assist students to attain profound appreciation for the client's strengths, contexts, and resources, which is critical in social justice based intervention. Because clients' world views are shaped by their experiences of race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic class, education, religion, sexuality, immigration status, nationality, and ability, recognition of the interactions between these

socially constructed categories and their impacts on the lives of our clients should be central to social work intervention. In other words, using intersectionality, our students will gain theoretical insights that enable them to comprehend the client's social realities. Moving beyond simple binary analysis, intersectionality allows them to see the ways power, privilege, oppression, and marginalization are experienced by each individual client. At the same time, social work students will be able to recognize how their own experiences of oppression and privilege affect the social worker's interactions with clients.

Reinforcing humanity and social justice can be a slow process. I can take only a small step at a time. However, I know there are also thousands of steps that are being taken by others toward a just society (Ayvazian, 2001). Recently, we witnessed the fruitful outcome of our endeavors toward a just society: the Supreme Court ruling on DOMA is one such victory. I have conviction. I believe that if we not only earnestly dream, but also earnestly strive to enact change within ourselves, we can eliminate the divide between the oppressor and the oppressed and actualize human rights and social justice for all!

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Understanding Student Evaluations: A Black Faculty Perspective

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Abstract: Student evaluations of faculty teaching are critical components to the evaluation of faculty performance. These evaluations are used to determine teaching effectiveness and they influence tenure and promotion decisions. Although they are designed as objective assessments of teaching performance, extraneous factors, including the instructors' race, can affect the composition and educational atmosphere at colleges and universities. In this reflection, we briefly review some literature on the use and utility of student evaluations and present narratives from social work faculty in which students' evaluation contained perceived racial bias.

Keywords: student evaluations, black faculty, teaching performance, race, bias, educational atmosphere, college.

Teaching is a fundamental responsibility of educators in institutions of higher learning. The scholarship of teaching is broadly defined as "the ideology, pedagogy and evaluation of teaching" (Hobson & Talbott, 2001, p. 26). Although there are several methods used to evaluate the quality of one's teaching, student evaluations (SEs) are the primary instruments used by colleges and universities when attempting to quantify the quality of an instructor's teaching as well as solicit feedback pertaining to the students' educational experience in a course. In addition to providing valuable feedback to administrators and instructors, SEs also play an important role in the promotion, tenure, and job security of professors in colleges and universities (Littleford, Ong, Tseng, Milliken & Humy, 2010). Consequently, extraneous factors, such as the race of instructors, can affect the composition and educational atmosphere at colleges and universities. Therefore, this article presents narrative reflections from three Black social work faculty to examine the role that perceived racial bias plays in student evaluations of teaching.

Literature Review

In their study on SEs, Littleford et al. (2010) found that students' first impressions of their professors, even when they are based solely on their instructors' race, do influence their judgments of their professors' perceived bias and, consequently, their perceptions of professors' subjectivity and expertise; thus, a professor's race/ethnicity can directly influence student evaluations given the type of course taught. For example, students assume that African American professors have more content expertise to teach about "racial" issues or "race-focused" courses; however, students expect African American professors to be more biased (subjective/judgmental) than European professors when discussing "racial" issues and/or "race-focused" content. Littleford et al. (2010) found that students who felt more comfortable with cultural diversity rated their African American instructors positively. These students also anticipated learning a great deal about racial issues, particularly if they were female students regardless of race or ethnicity, who generally viewed African American professors more positively than did male students.

However, African American instructors who teach race-focused courses are likely to present topics (e.g. racism, White privilege, and prejudice) that challenge students' self-concept and worldviews and induce discomfort, anger, and guilt. Thus, students may express their resistance to courses that focus on race-related content in multiple ways, including displaying anger and resentment, remaining silent or exhibiting mistrust and hostility toward their instructors. However, the most common way to express resistance is to assign low ratings to instructors who teach race-focused courses (Littleford et al., 2010). Littleford et al.'s (2010) findings highlight the importance of measuring multiple domains rather than one global indicator to evaluate instructors who teach courses that focus on race-related content, otherwise, these instructors "can expect to

receive negative ratings in some of these areas" (p. 242).

Relatedly, the intersection between race and gender can significantly impact the ratings on SEs. Bavishi et al., (2010) found that students who hold stereotypical views, as explained by "occupational role/status characteristics theory," of faculty of color may avoid classes that those individuals teach and evaluate such individuals more negatively compared to Asian and Caucasian professors on SEs (p. 247-8). Utilizing "social role theory" as a framework, Bavishi et al. (2010) found that women of color often face a "double stigma" or "double jeopardy" because of students' perceptions of their level of competence, interpersonal skills, and legitimacy (p. 252). In other words, African American women instructors are denigrated for being both "women and minorities" (p. 252).

The results of these previous studies highlight the role that racial bias plays in impacting student evaluations. Moreover, these studies also point to the need for more studies focusing on the qualitative experiences of faculty of color related to SEs. Therefore, the purpose of this brief reflection is to begin to chronicle qualitative experiences through narratives from Black faculty members who have received students' evaluations with feedback containing negative and disparaging comments that were perceived by the faculty to be driven by racial/cultural bias. The reflection concludes with a discussion of racially/culturally biased SE feedback and its implications for faculty development, retention, and teaching.

Narrative Reflections

The narrative reflections presented below were drafted by three social work faculty teaching at two different universities in the Midwest and Southeastern United States. Combined, they have been teaching at the college level for 42 years. Their experiences include teaching core curriculum courses such as social work practice, social welfare policy, human diversity, human behavior and the social environment, and research methods at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The first two narratives describe and discuss specific incidents, while the last narrative takes a broader look and identifies themes that have emerged in the professor's evaluations over time.

Narrative 1: Female Professor Teaching in a School of Social Work

Laura (pseudo name) was a 22 year old White female with an undergraduate degree in psychology who was admitted full-time to a prominent Pennsylvania university graduate program in fall 2009. The first semester, she took four courses, generalist practice, human diversity, social welfare policy, and research methods. In two of these courses, I served as the instructor. Laura received grades of F and C respectively in these courses. According to Laura, she received a B- and B in the other classes. The following spring semester, the student scheduled a meeting with me to discuss her lack of progress in my courses and the accompanying grades. Prior to our scheduled meeting, I requested that the student bring a copy of the syllabus and her graded assignments to begin the discussion. In the course of our discussion, the student acknowledged her mistakes in the submission of her papers and graded tests.

Despite her substandard performance, she pressed me to submit a passing change of grade of B in both classes, indicating that I had the power to change the grade on my own without additional work from her. Laura further stated that she had failed another class that same semester and the professor, a White female, gave her a passing grade of B. A discussion ensued between us in my office regarding my unwillingness to change her grades. My opposition to a grade change was based on the fact that no mathematical error occurred in calculating her grades, nor did her papers reflect the concepts and responses necessary to receive a passing grade. Consequently, Laura changed the direction of the conversation to personal difficulties of financing her education. By repeating a course, she would no longer receive

assistance from her parents and would have to assume sole responsibility for financing her education.

At the beginning of the subsequent spring semester, I received notification from the Master of Social Work Director that Laura was officially grieving her grades through the department and graduate school. She wrote a letter insinuating that I was racist, unprofessional, and judgmental in my grading of her assignments. In my 17 years of teaching in academia, largely in predominately White institutions, this was the first incident where I actually felt a sense of "double jeopardy" which could negatively affect my professional career. At my university, a criterion for promotion requires the Deans' favorable ratings of excellence in teaching (SEs), research and service. Being labeled a racist surely would negatively affect my prospects for promotion, not to mention my credibility with the newly appointed Deans of the college and graduate program. Therefore, I was concerned that they would question my competence as a professor for lacking sensitivity to students' needs. I became more concerned once I learned that Laura's letter was not shared with me until two months after she filed the grievance. Since the student filed an official grade appeal with the graduate department, an official review was initiated between her student advisor, program director, herself, and me. During the meeting, a copy of her grades, submitted assignments, tests, course syllabi, and her appeal letter were shared with all parties. The program director started the formal meeting requesting clarification of her written statement that I was racist towards her in the classroom.

The student remarked, "She always seemed to be talking about me in class" and her second remark, regarding my being racist was, "I asked to meet with her after class, and she didn't want to meet with me." After asking and receiving clarification on my remarks, I explained to the group how the student may have misconstrued some portions of the class lectures and why I was unable to meet with her one day after class. On the day in question, I had several students hanging back in class wanting to meet with me to get clarification on a group assignment. Meeting with this group was much more efficient than attempting to meet with them all individually, so it was an easy accommodation. In an attempt to protect Laura's confidentiality, I chose not to meet with her in the presence of other students. Therefore, I requested that we meet in my office. Unfortunately, Laura never took my offer to meet with me at my office and as a result, she continued to have a poor performance in the classroom and with assignments. After providing this explanation, Laura's academic advisor changed the subject and we moved to discuss her final policy paper. Her academic advisor asked her to explain various sections of her paper and the associated policies. Laura was unable to respond adequately to this question and was, in fact, speechless.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, the program director suggested that another faculty member review a copy of Laura's work and recommend a grade on the papers. All parties agreed to this resolution. At the completion of the review, the independent faculty reviewer suggested a grade of "F" in the policy course and a grade of "C" in the social work practice course, the exact grades that I initially assigned.

Narrative 2: Male Professor Teaching in a School of Social Work

The incident in question occurred during the fall 2008 semester in an undergraduate social work course. At the time, I was in my late 20s and in the first year of a new, full time tenure track faculty appointment. My practice experience was primarily in the area of child protective services. Therefore, students would often inquire into my methods for engaging clients, especially involuntary clients. While discussing the process of establishing a rapport with clients, I mentioned "meeting the clients where they were." Specifically, I discussed my strategies for connecting with the children on my caseload who had been removed from their homes, which included talking with them about their interests, and highlighting those that the

clients and I shared. Largely due to the fact that the agency was located in an urban area and its client population was disproportionately African American, many of the kids I served listened to hip hop/rap music. Being a self-proclaimed hip hop aficionado, this common interest often opened the door for ice breaking conversations, facilitated the engagement process, and ultimately helped me collect much needed data for assessment purposes.

While most of my students were able to see the value in probing into clients' personal interests to aid in developing trusting, professional relationships with them, one student was staunchly opposed. This particular student was a Caucasian female who appeared to be in her late 30s to early 40s. In expressing her opposition, the student defiantly stated that she was not from the "ghetto" and had no interest in or plans to practice with "ghetto clients," so she didn't see the relevance of the anecdote that I shared. The student further exclaimed that she had paid "good money" for her tuition and did not expect, nor appreciate having valuable class time taken up with discussion of "childish ghetto music."

Despite being a little taken aback by the ferocity with which this student seemed to express her opinion, I saw this as a teachable moment from which the entire class could benefit. Therefore, I attempted to help this student in particular, and the class in general, understand that first and foremost, per the NASW Code of Ethics, we [social workers] are ethically obligated to take a non-judgmental stance with regard to the clients we serve. Beyond that, I also explained that the point of the anecdote was not about any specific genre of music. Rather, the point was about facilitating the engagement process through the use of asking probing questions and emphasizing commonalities instead of differences. Even after my attempt to clarify the point of the example, the student remained fixated on my reference to hip hop music. Nevertheless, in an attempt to move the class forward, I proposed that we agree to disagree and then I transitioned into the next topic.

I assumed that although the student and I did not come to a consensus on the merits of talking with clients about their interests, the disagreement was over and would not have any lasting impact. It was not until I received my teaching evaluation that I realized that my assumption was incorrect. While I was rated quite favorably overall (4.72 on a 5 point scale), there was one negative rating on several of the items for the quantitative measures of teaching effectiveness. In addition to the one negative rating in several different quantitative categories, there was also a negative and seemingly personal comment in the open response, qualitative section. To be specific, the comment read as follows, "I believe this instructor is very young. He does not really know himself very well and therefore, it is hard to please him with classwork. I hope to take this class later from a mature teacher."

Given the anonymous nature of the evaluations, I could not definitively connect the negative comment to the student who was vehemently opposed to my discussion of using hip hop music to engage my clients. However, my suspicion was that negative comments came from the student in question based on the similarities between the proceedings of the initial in-class confrontation related to "childish ghetto music" and the subsequent written SE questioning my self-awareness and emotional maturity. I readily acknowledge that I could have reached this conclusion erroneously. Nevertheless, upon reading the evaluation as a whole, I felt good about the fact that the overwhelming majority (and by overwhelming majority, I mean all of student ratings except one) appreciated my efforts to make their educational experience as rigorous and authentic as possible. However, I could not help but feel a little disheartened by my suspicion that one of the students would allow personal bias to cloud what was supposed to be an objective judgment of me as a professional. Even more troubling was that the student was in training to become a social worker, and in all likelihood, would soon be charged with

engaging and serving all types of client populations, even those from the "ghetto".

Narrative 3: Female Professor Teaching in a School of Social Work

I am a tenured professor of social work and I have taught both undergraduate and graduate social work students at predominantly White institutions. During this time, I have found that perhaps no other subjects can be more difficult to teach and engender more emotional student responses than those related to race. In my experience, students' responses to race- related material covered in class have often been reflected in my course evaluations.

These responses are set against a backdrop in which my current place of employment has embraced a plan created by the state's Council on Postsecondary Education to ensure that African Americans have the same opportunity as others to attend and succeed within the state's public system of higher education. The plan was established in 1997 and was based on the state's violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by failing to dismantle the racially segregated system of public higher education. Moreover, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has required that material related to diversity be included throughout the curriculum of each accredited social work program. A lack of understanding regarding these differences can have profound and adverse consequences for clients whom students are being educated and trained to serve. For these reasons, my course readings and assignments are planned to expose the students to a wide array of diverse groups, learning experiences and environments. Over the years, I have observed that many students have not had exposure to populations unlike themselves and unfortunately, as evident by comments on my student evaluations, not all students within my profession truly value human diversity. My sense that some of my students do not share my or my profession's appreciation for human diversity is grounded in comments such as "She is always talking about African Americans," "You can see her true colors," and "I have become more racist after dealing with her than I ever even thought possible" that I have received after exposing students to Afrocentric material.

As an African American female professor, I bring to the classroom a unique perspective that is informed by my heritage, cultural experiences and embrace of an African centered or Afrocentric worldview (Asante, 1998). I teach in a Eurocentric environment, which means that the majority of the administrators, faculty, staff and students are White and by-and-large have lifelong experiences which put White people at the center of significance. Additionally, although most of the curriculum is Eurocentric, my experiences, however, as an African American professor influence all of my academic activities which include teaching, research and service (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Molefi Asante developed a theory of social change which he termed Afrocentricity (Asante, 1980). Asante indicates that people of African heritage have operated under a system of White oppression and domination for centuries which has caused them to embrace western values and culture while simultaneously devaluing African culture and history.

He further asserts that people of African descent, regardless of their geographical location and social position have historically been denied a true and accurate account of their history and contribution to society because of a European model of social science, which, according to Akbar (1984) has been traditionally used as the model of normalcy. In response, I purposely expose students to the works (written, film and through other mediums) of African and African Americans. Class field trips are often taken to agencies and residential areas that have a large concentration of African American people. My specific commitment to and love of not only my heritage but the diversity of humankind, propels me to include content relative to human diversity in my course content. This content includes the African American experience, in an effort to help those who may be unfamiliar with such material be prepared to provide professional social work services in a culturally competent

way and in essence, in a manner that is not harmful to clients (Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington, 2012).

Discussion

The purpose of this reflection was to present three narratives from Black faculty teaching in schools of social work in which they detail the circumstances surrounding both specific incidents and general patterns in their student evaluations of teaching that they felt were negatively influenced by their race. The reflections revealed that these faculty members' race facilitated the receipt of evaluations featuring personal attacks, challenges to their authority and integrity, as well as privileged and entitled comments. The extent to which these and possibly large numbers of other faculty members of color's teaching evaluations are influenced by race has implications for both the faculty members themselves and the colleges and universities that employ them.

On an individual level, receiving student teaching evaluations that are negatively influenced by one's race can have significantly detrimental effects on a faculty member's development. Given that faculty in general receive pressure to secure high ratings on student teaching evaluations, the fact that one's race can negatively influence those ratings at best is an unfair inconvenience, and at worst, potentially disturbing, and anxiety provoking. It is likely that for many, the role that the instructor's race plays in student evaluations forces many African American faculty members to question and second guess themselves and their abilities. This is reminiscent of Dubois' (1897) notion of the double consciousness in which African Americans form their self-concept as a reflection of mainstream stereotypes and prejudice. In this case, the faculty person's effectiveness as a teacher would be severely truncated by the threats and punishments (e.g. unfavorable teaching evaluations, questions regarding competence and integrity, and possible dismissal) associated with being assertive and potentially provocative.

On an institutional level, biased student evaluations of teaching have implications for colleges, universities, and the academic pipeline (Nelson & Perry, 2010). Specifically, receiving unfavorable teaching evaluations impacted by the race of the instructor is likely to limit their tenure and promotion opportunities. Having fewer tenured or tenure track African American faculty on campus means that there may be fewer mentors for African American students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Having fewer African American faculty on campus could also mean that fewer students are exposed to diverse and inclusive content to balance the disproportionate amount of Eurocentric content that many are currently receiving.

Also, it should be noted that when an instructor's race negatively influences the student teaching evaluations of African American faculty, it may also positively influence the student teaching evaluations of other faculty. As explained by Ho, Thomsen, & Sidanius (2009), this occurs as assumptions about the inferiority or incompetence of faculty of color persist while the competence of White faculty is taken for granted. This combination means that the gap between the ratings of Black and White faculty is likely to widen, which serves to reinforce the stereotypes that African American faculty are inferior or to their colleagues.

Conclusion

Racism is a serious charge and to use it frivolously is both irresponsible and divisive. Beyond being irresponsible and divisive, erroneous or frivolous claims of racism or racial/cultural bias cast doubt and skepticism on authentic claims. To that point, we do not pretend to be in a position to label the students in the narratives as racists. However, we do maintain that the race of the faculty in question played significant roles in the incidents and subsequent evaluations described above. If nothing else, we argue that persistent stereotypes about African Americans' work ethic, competence, psychological maturity and integrity conspired to lead the students to

believe that they could/should challenge, question, and confront their instructor on a personal level and that the student evaluation was an appropriate venue to do so. It was for these reasons that we were compelled to draft this reflection so that we as academics and professionals can move beyond the increasingly popular rhetoric of living in a post-racial society and focus more on continuing the genuine discourse about sometimes uncomfortable topics so that real healing and progress can take place.

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25 years Post ADA: A Social Worker's Experience and Reflections about Environmental Barriers

Augustina Naami

Abstract: 25 years post ADA, environment barriers persist in the United States, impacting greatly on the effective socio-economic and political participation of Americans with disabilities in mainstream society. This narrative reflects a social worker's experience of environmental challenges in both rural and urban America and suggestions for social work practice and policy.

Keywords: Ghana, persons with disability, accessibility, environment barriers, ADA.

One of the happiest days in my life was the day I received news about a Ford Foundation scholarship to pursue my master's degree in one of American's best Universities. I never dreamt of studying in the United States given that my family was poor and couldn't afford to pay for my education abroad. Even completing my undergraduate education in Ghana was financially problematic. But, more challenging was the social and environmental barriers including attitudinal, architectural, and transportation. For example, while I was in high school, I usually woke up early in the morning before everyone else to use the bathroom, which is an open building without showers and had 2 huge steps in the front. I did this because when the floor was wet it became slippery and increasingly difficult to manage on my crutches. And at college, I never studied in the library due to the flight of stairs I must maneuver to get in. I would rather check out books and study in my dormitory room; a practice I became used to and still do. The library wasn't the only inaccessible building on campus. The dormitories, classrooms, cafeterias, faculty offices, administration buildings and several others buildings weren't usable for persons with disabilities.

Access barriers are a huge issue in Ghana but there is a lack of literature about how persons with disabilities experience these barriers. The few that exist give general information about the situation. Naami (2010; 2012; 2014) and Tijm et al (2011) depict the daily struggles persons with disabilities in Ghana encounter due to inaccessible buildings, lack of sidewalks, ramps, elevators, and curb cuts. These studies indicate how participants lamented the difficulty in accessing public buildings like schools, churches, government offices, theaters, libraries, and even toilets. Some of them disclosed that they occasionally parked their wheelchairs and tricycles outside these buildings and crawled inside. Some organizations are attempting to fix ramps to make their buildings more accessible, which is laudable. But from personal experience these ramps are either too narrow or too steep. I usually used the stairs on my crutches instead of the ramps because they are practically inaccessible. Naami (2010; 2012; 2014) also noted that there is no single accessible public transportation system in Ghana despite the importance of transportation. In her studies, the participants described their tussles to board buses, "trotros,"(mini-vans) trains and ferries, amidst other intolerant passengers. Participants also described how they had to cope with man-made barriers created by placing passengers' baggage in the aisles of vehicles. It is sometimes almost impossible to use bathrooms/toilets, due to the difficulty in negotiating the crowded aisles.

Coming to the United States for further education was therefore a huge relief for me because I knew I would get good education in a more accessible environment. In this reflection, I will highlight and discuss the physical and transportation barriers I experience in the United States. I conclude with implications for social work practice and policy.

Life in Chicago and Salt Lake City

I was exhilarated about my new adventure to the United States, but I also felt a bit nervous as I had never traveled outside of Ghana and didn't

have any family in the United States. I have a very large and closely knit family and I knew I was going to miss them, but no turning back, my mind was set. I was convinced about my decision to study abroad.

The great day, the day of departure, which I was anxiously waiting for finally arrived (September 19th, 2002). It was a very long trip (about 13 hours of travel and 6 hours in transit in Britain), traveling from Ghana to the United States. I breathed a sigh of relief as the airplane landed at O'Hare International airport because I was very tired. All I wanted at that time was to get some rest. It was a Friday evening around 6:00 pm on the 20th September and autumn cold air greeted me outside of the airport, but I was warmly dressed because I was informed about the weather conditions. An American visiting professor I met while in Ghana, who is also an alumnus of the educational institution I was going to, was at the airport to meet me. Brenda had traveled several hours from Pinckney in Michigan. It was so good to see a known face at the airport and Brenda stayed a couple of days to show me around Chicago and to introduce me to her friends.

Brenda had informed the school administration about my arrival time so the director of admissions waited with the keys to my apartment which she had picked from the Office of Student Housing. We exchanged greetings then Brenda and I headed towards my apartment building which was just a block away from the school. At this time, we were both eager to get to my apartment because we were tired. But apparently, I had a little more work to do to access my apartment. As Brenda opened the two heavy doors to the apartment building, we thought that was it but no, there was one more barrier, six huge marble steps to get to the first floor (no elevator) where my studio apartment was located. We were both disappointed about the kind of apartment allocated to me because I remember I unequivocally explained to the Office of Student Housing the kind of accommodation I wanted. While in Ghana, I never envisioned access barriers in the United States. Thus, to have this experience on my first day of arrival, and as tired as I was, is inexplicable. Even then, I didn't foresee the impact these barriers could have on me as I had managed several barriers Ghana. I felt it wasn't going to be a big issue until later, when I had to bring grocery up the steps, carry my back pack and other things on my crutches.

Brenda talked to the dean of students of my school. She was also disappointed about the situation. She then spoke with the Office of Student Housing and they showed us a couple of accessible apartments. None of them was closer to the school and they were all shared apartments but I wanted a single-room apartment closer to the school. I really wanted to be alone so I can have a little privacy. The Office of Disability Services and the Office of Student Housing worked together with me to modify my apartment to make it more accessible. It was so heart-warming to see how quickly everyone involved responded to the situation. The office of student housing gave me an electronic device with which I could open the doors. The office also modified the inside of the apartment: lowered cabinets, switches and towel hangers. These changes were very helpful. Regardless of the efforts to make my apartment more accessible, the 6 steps could not be taken away. I had to manage them on a daily basis: going to and from classes, doing grocery and taking them into my apartment on my crutches as my scooter cannot get over the steps. Also, the laundry and the garbage bins were located in the basement (no elevator) of the building whose entrance was at the other end, about 30 meters away from my apartment. Doing laundry and disposing off garbage became a daunting task for me as I had to carry the garbage and laundry bag while walking on crutches. All in all, it was such a great joy when I received my master's degree and I am so grateful to that university and my school for all their support in diverse ways to make my education a success.

My experience with housing was different in the other university in Salt Lake City where I did my doctoral studies. I arrived a week before the start of school, and with the help of the head of

the doctoral program, I searched for housing and rented an apartment that met my needs. The building as well as my apartment was Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. I brought my scooter in and out as well as got around my apartment and did laundry without any difficulty, although the laundry was on the 14th floor. It was so heart-warming to be able to get around the apartment building with no difficulties.

It is important to stress that the campuses of both universities were accessible as well as the cities, at least, those places I am familiar with. There were thorough sidewalks and curb cuts, ramps and elevators everywhere I went. While in Chicago, I mostly used my scooter to get around: to attend classes, do my grocery and run other errands, attend public gathering on campus and in the neighborhood. To travel further from campus, I rode paratransit buses. I used the fixed route buses and trains as well, but not as much as I did in Salt Lake City. In Salt Lake City, I mostly used the fixed route buses and trains to run almost all errands. This is because it took me over two months to obtain eligibility for the paratranist service in Salt Lake City, by which time I had already learned to ride the fixed route buses and trains and I enjoyed using these means of transport. It was so easy to get around. In these two cities, apart from the 6 steps to get to my apartment in Chicago, I never had problems getting around. I went anywhere I wanted to go at any time. Nothing hindered my movement and social participation. I really felt like I was a part of the communities where I lived as I could easily get around at my own pace and time, as well as participated in activities I chose to.

Life in Cedar Falls

My experience with accessibility is much different in Cedar Falls, Iowa (which is more rural) where I currently live, compared to Salt Lake City and Chicago. I encounter several access barriers on a daily basis, making it much more difficult to get around. When I first moved here in 2011 to begin my career as a university professor, I inspected several apartment buildings. But they were not accessible. They all had a couple of steps in the front. And of course, the inside wasn't accessible either. For example, light switches were high up, there were bathtubs instead of walk-in showers, and the closets were not wheelchair accessible. But all the apartment managers were willing to work with me to make the apartment accessible for me after explaining my condition to them, which was good news. I chose the current apartment because it's more spacious. I can easily get around everywhere in my apartment with my wheelchair except for my closet. The manager fulfilled his promise by fixing a ramp to my apartment and the laundry room, which is next door to my apartment. At that time, I didn't realize that the laundry room had two doors one of which (outer door which is also the security door) was very heavy and opens to the outside and is always locked. To get in, I first should put my laundry bag somewhere on the ramp, unlock the door, then pull it out, hold unto it, find my laundry bag, put it on my lap and then wheel my chair in while still holding unto the door. This made it practically impossible to do laundry. Again, I explained to the apartment manager how difficult it is to do laundry due to the weight of the security door. He worked with his management team to reduce the door weight drastically. I no longer dread doing laundry. The manager and I also had a conversation about the light switches, bathroom hangers, and the blinds and handles and the need to lower them. How great it feels to have them all now within my reach.

Also, unlike Salt Lake City and Chicago where it was easy for me to get around, I cannot say the same about Cedar Falls. Sidewalks are virtually non-existent as well as curb cuts and ramps. There are several stores, restaurants, and other public places around where I live that I could go to with my scooter. But the unavailable sidewalks make it difficult for me to run errands and do other things with my scooter. Because doing so means using the main streets which is dangerous. Although, I know my safety is compromised using the main streets, sometimes I am compelled to do so because I have no choice. I will explain why this is the

case when I talk about my experience with the paratransit service. Things get even worse when it snows as these streets are usually not cleared. Thus, in Cedar Falls, I am limited in the things I can do using my scooter and saving time such as going to a nearby grocery store and picking a few food items like milk, bread, and fruits, which usually run out quickly. This sometimes makes me feel helpless.

In addition, the transportation system's environment (bus stops) is not accessible. Most of the bus stops are unpaved; neither do they have curb-cuts or ramps to enable wheelchair and scooter users to get on the stops and in-and-out of the buses. When I first arrived at Cedar Falls, a colleague gave me the bus schedules and application form for the paratransit and other resources. It takes about 30 days to complete the paratransit application process. In the meantime, one morning, a few days after my arrival, I decided to use the public transit bus to familiarize myself with the city, thinking that it was going to be as easy as in the other cities. I was very excited about my adventure when I set off to the bus stop, which is about half of a block away from my apartment building. To my surprise, this bus stop, as many other stops I saw later, was neither paved nor has a curb-cut. I returned to the apartment very disappointed. At that moment, it dawned on me that part of my freedom was taken away. I spent the rest of the day talking to friends about the issue and also thinking about how life was going to be like for me in Cedar Falls, given that I cannot easily ride my scooter around as well as use the public transit bus.

In fact, life has never been the same since the paratransit service is my only choice of getting around the city. The paratransit service in this area leaves much to be desired. Often, I spend so much time in transit, mostly doing nothing but waiting for the bus. Therefore, I must always make provisions for extra waiting time whenever I use the paratransit service. And, I ride it practically on a daily basis. Also, the service the Metropolitan Transit Authority of the Black Hawk County paratransit provides normally ends by 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday. No service is provided on Sundays. Thus, those of us who depend on the paratransit service must find alternative means of transport after hours and on Sundays. But, it is not as easy as it may sound. Iowans are very friendly and Cedar Falls is a very quiet and nice neighborhood. Most times, people offer me ride but what will I do with my scooter? I remember one day at work there was an interesting program I wished I could have attended, but it involved after hour services. My colleague offered to give me a ride home. But how would I carry my books and other things to work the next day if I leave behind my scooter? From this narration, you can see how the gap in paratransit service and architectural barriers dramatically impact the socio-economic participation of persons with disabilities in this area.

Collective Environmental Challenges of Americans with Disabilities

It can be deduced from my narrative account that environmental barriers (transportation and architectural) persist in both rural and urban areas of the United States but they seem to be more prevalent in rural areas. It is very sad that 25 years post-ADA and other complementary laws Americans with disabilities continue to encounter several environmental (physical and transportation) and many other barriers (including, information and technology, social, psychological and institutional). My discussion focuses on environmental barriers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990 and requires all states to make their programs and services, including public transportation and the entire transportation system's environment (e.g., stops and stations), accessible for persons with disabilities. Paratransit and other transportation services are required for those who are unable to use the fixed route transit buses and trains due to their disabilities. The law also mandates that building facilities be accessible and usable to persons with disabilities. Public places (e.g., including libraries, theaters, restaurants, laundry

facilities, lecture halls, and hospitals), whether operated by the government or private entities, should be accessible and usable as well.

Transportation plays a vital role in everyone's life as people need to get to their jobs, schools, and several other places. The same is the case for persons with disabilities. The majority of persons with disabilities travel mainly by public transit system, e.g., bus, train, and paratransit (Wu, Gan, Cevallos, & Shen, 2011). However, there seem to be inadequate accessible public transit services, which affect the lives of persons with disabilities in various ways. Studies show that the lack of accessible transportation is the greatest factor affecting the employment (Aldred & Woodcock, 2008; Belgrave & Walker, 1991; Lubin, 2012; Naami, 2010), education, health care, and overall social inclusion of persons with disabilities (Aldred & Woodcock, 2008; Naami, 2010). For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities in 2011 was 15.0%, almost the same as the previous year's rate (15.7%), compared to 8.7% for those without disabilities, which was an improvement over the previous year's rate of 9.6% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Not only did the Bureau find higher unemployment rates among persons with disabilities but, also, lower employment rates for all groups of persons with disabilities.

The availability of accessible transportation (e.g. buses and trains) does not necessarily mean accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Research shows that several factors affect access for persons with disabilities to transportation including: (1) the presence of functioning transportation equipment (e.g., ramps and safety facilities); (2) information (the ability to access transportation information and to read and understand schedules); (3) economic (e.g., cost of service); (4) reliability of services; and (5) the environment, how easy it is to navigate the pedestrian environment safely. Examples are the availability and condition of sidewalks (broken sidewalks or sidewalks overgrown with weeds), curb cuts, ramps/street edges, intersections, street crossing and lighting (Church & Marston, 2003; Lubin, 2012; Erin, 2011; Wu, Gan, Cevallos & Shen, 2011). Also, there is evidence of the existence of inaccessible dressing rooms, shelves and cash registers in stores, restrooms and elevators (Brook, 2007; Lubin, 2012). These barriers hinder Americans with disabilities from effective participation in mainstream society (Aldred & Woodcock, 2008; Crowe, Picchiarini & Poffenroth, 2004; McClain, 2000; Naami, 2010).

Conclusion and Implication for Social Work Practice and Policy

I have discussed my personal experience with accessibility issues in both rural and urban areas of the United States. I have also painted the picture of the collective experience of Americans with disabilities regarding accessibility. One of our profession's core values is to work with oppressed individuals and groups to challenge the social injustices they experience daily and I know that social workers have been working in diverse ways to improve the lives of vulnerable populations including persons with disabilities. However, I also believe we still need to do a lot more because Americans with disabilities continue to encounter a myriad of accessibility challenges (including environmental, information and technology, social, psychological and institutional) which negatively impact on their effective participation and social inclusion as well as their development. The human rights of persons with disabilities are practically denied as they cannot freely engage their communities as desired. It is unacceptable for Americans with disabilities to continue to experience accessibility barriers, discrimination, unemployment, and poverty 25 years post ADA. Social workers should work more with persons with disabilities towards their effective integration in mainstream society.

Let's work with persons with disabilities in their communities to identify the accessibility challenges impacting on their lives, and together develop both practice and policy strategies to

address them. I plan to do a study in this area in the near future because I believe that accessible environment will more likely increase the effective socio-economic and political participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities as well as benefit the entire population (e.g., parents with small children, the elderly, cyclists, pregnant women).

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Reclamation: How I Am Surviving Depression and Using the Illness to Elevate Others

Andrew Calderaro

Abstract: Roughly 25 million people suffer major depressive breakdowns annually. Depression is predicted to supplant cancer soon as the second leading cause of death in the United States. This narrative is a young social worker's reflection on his bout with clinical depression, how he used it to empower others by founding and directing a grassroots support organization (GSO), and how he reclaimed his health. An unabashedly candid piece, this story inherently combats depression's stigma, adds texture to the usual list of depressive symptoms, and illustrates that real-world grassroots tactics can empower others. This narrative also explores the process of helping and being helped and the people involved in these processes. Both general community members and helping professionals alike can combat depression and other mood disorders by being open about this illness and embracing productive grassroots tactics.

Keywords: depression, mood disorder, suicide, binging, substance abuse, therapy, grassroots support organization, GSO, helping profession, social work, self-care, non-profit.

For my family, a confederation of love, and for Roger.

This story started half my life ago. It is about my illness, but the larger narrative has ostensibly been with humankind from our beginning. Five to eight percent of American adults suffer at least one major depressive episode annually, and depression is predicted to supplant cancer soon as the United States' second leading cause of death (Duckworth, 2013; Horwitz, Briggs-Gowan, Storfer-Isser, & Carter, 2007). Many people with depression painstakingly wonder why they're ill and how to be healthier and seek help. I knew, or had some hazy sense of, my own answers, but I either didn't want to face them or I couldn't. Understandably, many people's stories are hushed up by social stigma and fear. I, however, will share mine—I would be shouting it from a mountain top if I could—because too many people are needlessly suffering from an illness that is far too commonplace to be so vastly under-addressed. What follows are instances of self-sabotage, hurt, and pain. Depression was the culprit, but the actions were mine. They are what can happen when this illness is treated like a harmless passerby rather than a ne'er-do-well lurking in the shadows. You will also see as I did, however, that depression can be used to elevate others.

Struggle

No single factor causes depression, though the scientific community maintains that it is rooted in a person's environment and biology and that it is experienced across demographic lines (Duckworth, 2009; Duckworth, 2013). Passed down to me from my family tree in Italy, depression was waiting within my chromosomes and cells. When it surfaced, it consumed me like an unforgiving plague. Eighty to ninety percent of people diagnosed with major depression can be treated and live more or less as they wish (Duckworth, 2009). However, from my diagnosis at 15-years-old to when I was roughly 20-years-old, I thought, like an untrained sprinter trying to chug past a well-conditioned opponent, that I could defeat my depression without the necessary hard work.

My first depressive breakdown occurred in Boston, where I moved after a few semesters at a college near home. The brisk autumn evening was accented by fallen leaves that crackled beneath my feet. I coaxed an older co-worker into buying beer for me. I said it was for a party, but secretly I knew I would doubtlessly get drunk by myself while reading the short stories of Raymond Carver, himself an alcoholic. I achieved my goal and then stumbled down the avenue to the restaurant where I worked. I don't know why I went there, perhaps unconscious self-destruction, but I was fired on the spot. I was angry and

confused. So what if I was drunk? It wasn't during my shift. What the hell was wrong with *them*?

I trudged back to my apartment, where drunken-depressive irrationality enveloped me. I decided that my personal library had exceeded its usefulness, and, clearly, the best way to discard it was to throw it book by book out the window. Perched on the radiator, I carelessly tossed Hemingway and Steinbeck and Carver to the sidewalk. I looked at the new John F. Kennedy biography my mother sent me and wondered, "Am I becoming *Ted* Kennedy?" To hell with the Kennedys. Out it went! A couple, arm-in-arm, stopped to see where the cascade of books was coming from. Outside the next morning, a man fixated on the literary hodgepodge asked me the same thing. I said I didn't know. That was that.

After a miserable year, I quit Boston and retreated to my parents' basement. I was deeply depressed and untreated. Depressed males are apt to suppress their emotions, potentially aggrandizing anger, aggression, and substance abuse; risky and addictive behavior likely increase too (Duckworth, 2009). Thus, the looming question wasn't *whether or not* I would have another breakdown but *when and how*. My friends were receiving their diplomas. I had a menial job and emotional scar tissue. I felt like a failure. Virtually every day, I obscured my pain with food like one would try to smother a ceaseless fire. My once slim, athletic frame succumbed to obesity. The basement, a veritable cave with a tiny corner window, became my sanctuary. Everything I needed—my bed, a desk, a couch, a table facing the TV—was in place for my ritualistic behavior. I would hurry out of work, buy food for two, and indulge inside the cave. At 22-years-old, this lifestyle's perversely elegant rhythm satisfied me.

I eventually entered a period of irritation-infused alcohol binging. For weeks on end, life was a continuum of sleep-work-eat-drink-repeat. If my parents said "Hi" (how *dare* they), I would offer distancing exclamations like, "I *just* want to be left *alone*!" If someone called down to the cave, I would hurl beer bottles across the room to accentuate my rage. Then, one cool summer night, the *when and how* were answered. All of my beer consumed, I hastily assembled a suds-soaked yet ingenious plan: I would walk to buy more and then continue walking indefinitely! I dotted through the suburban neighborhood. Imbibing as I went, my jaunt's debauched nature just didn't register in my submerged mind. I disregarded the colonial church whose spire reached ceaselessly to heaven. The passers-by who were wholesomely enjoying the evening didn't matter to me. I continuously ignored my parents' anxious text messages. Finally, with a bag of click-clacking empty bottles by my side, I returned home. My father confronted me by the door. My parents' love for me was exceeded only by their befuddlement. They thought I would kill myself. Who would live like this? My uncle drank himself to death—would their son do the same? Their instincts weren't off. More than 90% of suicides correlate with depression, other mental health illnesses, and substance abuse, and the year that this episode happened suicide was the tenth leading cause of death, taking nearly 35,000 lives (Moscicki, 2001; National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.).

Later that night, my now glassy-eyed mother bravely came down to the cave and said, "We're taking you to the hospital." I thought the whole notion was laughable, and I ignored her. She wouldn't leave, so I acquiesced to what seemed like a charade. Of course, this wasn't a joke—95 million hospital emergency department visits were made by U.S. adults in 2007, 42.7% of which were ascribed to mood disorders and 22.9% of which were alcohol-related problems (Owens, Mutter, & Stocks, 2010).

At the ER, my mother informed the doctor that I was suicidal. After a battery of tests, continuing what I thought was a game, I signed the admission form for 5 North, the hospital's version of a medieval chamber for the socially unfit. Dressed in a hospital gown, I was

wheeled to a place that epitomized lifelessness: a sterile décor, listless patients, worn-out staff milling about.

The next day, after group sessions and meetings with doctors, I retired to my room. My roommate was standing at the foot of his metal-frame bed with the Bible opened, his head arched back, and his arms extended like the Rapture was approaching. He was talking to God. This confirmed that my admission was not a joke, and, insofar as I was concerned, that I didn't belong there. I was depressed, but *these people* were sick! I ducked my oblivious roommate's reach and scurried to the bathroom. Peering into the mirror, I slicked back my thick, greasy hair with a sharp part convinced that its lustrous appearance proved that I was in the wrong place. I had to leave. After 48 hours in 5 North, a doctor finally signed my papers: AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE. I didn't care. I was going home.

Now, to be forthcoming with you (there won't be much to hide when we're done here anyway), my early-to-mid-20s weren't a continuously bleak period. Depression, with its peaks and valleys, doesn't work that way. When my symptoms lapsed, I thought, like I did after my diagnosis, that I could live without intervention or like I didn't have an illness. I managed to complete a few political internships and political science courses, and a state senate campaign hired me when I was 25. I even had a romantic relationship. These were positive happenings, sure, but my life was a veil of togetherness hiding a grandiose ego. See, grandiosity obscures depression, and the illness is buttressed by this grandiosity and by fantasy, both defense mechanisms against depression. Depression itself is a reaction to the painful loss of individualism and self-efficacy (Miller, 1980, p. 64).

We lost the senate campaign, and I lost a potential staff position. My girlfriend and I broke up. I slid into yet another valley and returned to menial work until I was hired by another campaign at the beginning of the following summer. Untreated and consequently too depressed and irritable to handle the hustle and bustle, I was fired by August. I idled until January when a local government project took me on as a project director. This was a boon to my confidence, so the grandiosity returned. What reasons did my unreconciled psyche have not to perceive successfulness? I often wore a suit to meetings with important elected officials. I had an office adorned with framed fine-art prints. I was portrayed in the local papers as a commander of good government reform. At a political fundraiser, I even met and talked with the governor and stood beside him during his obligatory speech. But this was not reality; instead, it was more akin to a fantastic Hollywood role. Behind this disguise, I was still living at home, was unhealthily overweight, had few friends, and wasn't in therapy or taking medication. I was fired after a year because my unbridled depression contributed to a mismanaged relationship with my director.

But, shortly after I was sent packing, *it* happened—yes, *it*! The truth about my life emerged as a grand epiphany, an orgiastic burst of emotions like a cannon's boom or a thunderous blast! Was it being fired again? Did some mental switch finally just click? Serendipity, perhaps?

Whatever it was, at 27—roughly 12 years after my diagnosis—the seemingly perpetual mist that obscured my self-image finally subsided, and the most vivid vision of reality appeared. Every thought and emotion suppressed over the years welled up inside of me like crested waves frozen in time. The painful reality of navigating this discovery set in. Each night, I was relieved to go to sleep because everyday was a terrifying mishmash of self-loathing, panic, and racing thoughts: *Had I been a bad brother and a bad son and a bad friend and a bad boyfriend*? *How much life did I waste? Did I do* anything *right so far? Would my heart explode? Who was I*? I needed direction and I needed answers. I urgently made a plan.

There was no time to waste, for I felt all I had done was waste time. Without a broad vision, I began a journey somewhere, traveling carefully

on the currency of hope.[1] Although vulnerable, unnerved, and desperate, I reentered therapy unabashed about my tumultuous feelings. My clinician kept me uplifted. It didn't matter that my journey didn't fit society's existential prescription because, as he often assured me, "there are many ways to get to Florida." I also offered emotional reparations to the people I felt I hurt, which, of course, was also an attempt to repair my self-image. For example, I asked my brothers, 7 and 9 years younger, respectively, to come down to the basement. Perplexed, they sat, what seemed uncomfortably, on the bed. I was at my desk, anxious and fighting through tears. I needed them to hear me acknowledge my illness and my fraternal shortcomings and, despite my actions, that I loved them. They assured me that I didn't owe them an apology and that it was all okay, but I laid out the changes I was making in my life. The past was unalterable, but I was sorry, I loved them, and I was going to do better. I was at the mercy of my illness, but now I was changing, and I needed whoever would listen to know this.

I also re-enrolled in college. My program comprised independent studies, most of which I took with one particular professor. Determined to graduate, I drove each week to an old stable house converted into a college. My life was raw and scattered outside of school, but inside my professor knew, and greatly supported, me as a driven, intelligent student. After three semesters, I had amassed a near-perfect GPA and even spoke at commencement. I asked the graduating class, "Whatever you do with your future, how will the determination you used to graduate make you a better person for yourself, your loved ones, and those in your community?" and I advised them that they "may surpass even the achievements represented by their presence here today" if they remembered the following French proverb: "Audacity, audacity; *always* audacity." I asked that question and offered that advice as much for myself as I did for them. I would soon start graduate school to study social work. I was in a relationship again. My journey was taking greater shape, and my life—yes, my life—was blossoming!

Elevating Others

Depression devours life, but, paradoxically, it can also nourish an existentially profound worldview. For instance, Abraham Lincoln exemplified this "depressive realism" (Alloy & Abramson, 1979). Some people with depression need to fight against something. Lincoln fought to preserve the Union and abolish slavery during the Civil War, and depression was perhaps his greatest asset. Shenk (2005) wrote that "the suffering he had endured lent him clarity and conviction, creative skills in the face of adversity, and a faithful humility that helped him guide the nation through its greatest peril" (para. 34).

I was convinced that my return to therapy and impending graduation were signs that I had achieved recovery. It was time to pay forward the support and good fortune I had received. I founded, and continue to direct, a 501(c)3 grassroots support organization (GSO) to elevate others beyond their mental health challenges[2]. With the proper resources and support, health and recovery were attainable. The stigma against people with mental illnesses was—*is*—society's misunderstanding of human biological imperfection.

[1] If you're wondering how I kept getting hired, you're asking an important question. When it was time to clean up, interview with a crisp resume, and convince my interviewer that I was the right man for the job, I shined in those 45 minutes. People with depression may tell white lies (i.e., I'm feeling well today, life is great, etc.) or omit unpleasant truths to avoid everyday pain and stigmatizing feelings, but we may also offer self-sustaining lies. In my case, I said what I had to for jobs.

[2] Seed funding came from this writer and from a generous donation by a member of our board of directors. Sustained financial support has come through fundraisers and private donations.

I also figured, who better to direct such an organization than someone who is living with depression and has experienced the gamut of mental health services? After my diagnosis, I was existentially disoriented, and I didn't know how to explain it to my friends and loved ones. Professional help had shown its precarious nature (a therapist once fell asleep on me midsession). In 5 North, the social worker asked me where I had last attended school. When I replied, "Harvard University," she looked at me incredulously, as if I told her Magellan's circumnavigation was a hoax and she better be careful on the edge of the earth. "*The* Harvard University?" she asked. And, why shouldn't she have—a person with a mental illness is *of course* intellectually deficient! I knew what self-reconciliation with a diagnosis felt like, how hard living with a mental illness could be, and that the potentially harrying nature of seeking services could deter people from possibly life-saving help.

Like depression's impact on Lincoln, my experiences guided my vision. The organization embraced the general GSO model: to empower marginalized people to lead healthier lives with actionable resource information and self-advocacy yet without continued outside intervention—all while providing the uplifting and indispensable support they deserved (Boglio Martinez, 2008, para. 5; Lane, 1995, p.184; Brown, 1991, p. 808; Daubon, 2002; Chambers, 1995; Slocum & Thomas-Slayter, 1995).
Our team of mental health professionals and I provide educational outreach to sufferers and people whose loved ones may have mood disorders[3]. Our cost-effective, workshop-style modality, called Info Talks, generally goes as follows: one of our mental health professionals and I go to a venue where I explain to the audience why I started the organization, hopeful that my self-disclosure defuses any tension, breaks the ice, and creates some camaraderie. The professional then presents on mood disorders in plain language for 20-30 minutes (and, if requested, any co-morbidity such as drug and alcohol abuse). Last, we have a question-and-answer session that generally becomes a dialogue among audience participants.

We literally "meet the clients where they are." Info Talks occur in spaces like the audiences' schools, social service agencies, and similar places. This spacial familiarity hopefully yields greater comfort. Importantly, we bring the information to the audiences. To find useful and reliable information on the Internet, especially for those unaccustomed to research, can be vexing. We bring in a professional, answer the audience's questions in real time, and distribute a list of local resources for services beyond ours, such as support groups and therapy. Would this down-to-earth, realistic approach have helped me earlier in my life? I'm not sure, but the following two instances (of many) speak to the promise of our approach.

The director of *Next to Normal*, a play whose protagonist is a woman with bipolar disorder, invited us to help his actors better understand and appreciate their characters' struggles. After we presented, one of the actors flagged down the doctor and me as we walked through the rain-slicked parking lot.

"I just want to thank you," he said.

"Of course. It was a pleasure and we hope that the talk helped you," I replied.

"N-n-no," he stammered. Then he looked at us with abysmal sincerity. "See, I have depression. None of the other cast members know, so please don't tell them. But, I wanted to thank you. *I feel less alone*. Keep up the great work." We shook hands and off he went. We had been thanked before, but never like that.

Our work that evening had an instantaneous impact. Other times, however, affecting

[3] Our standing Committee on Mood Disorder Information comprises a medical doctor, a psychologist, and a licensed social worker, all of whom have specific training in or practice within mood disorders.

someone takes longer. A middle-aged man interested in volunteering e-mailed me during the winter of 2011. I suggested he write a narrative for "Profiles of Courage," our web site's section for people to share their stories. He just wasn't prepared to be open about his depression. I understood, of course. A year later I unexpectedly received a message from him: "I'm ready." He submitted a gritty, honest piece that detailed the self-consciousness, fear, and struggle that mood disorders caused his family and him. "I am out of the shadows, courageously living my life anew with a great sense of who I am," he wrote. "I hope that my story, which reflects the challenges of so many, might help others in their journeys. Perhaps my story will encourage them to come to terms with their own illnesses and give them the courage to live healthier."

Reclamation

You may think that after my epiphany and new successes that my blossoming life became a sweetly-scented bouquet of prosperity. However, if I had ever truly developed control, then I lost it the spring before graduate school when I chose drugs to blunt my unresolved pain. I fit right in with the roughly 20% of Americans with anxiety or mood disorders who also struggle with alcohol or substance abuse (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2007). Not only did I withhold my drug use from my clinician, but I quit working with him. Appearing as a grown man, I was still living in my childhood home. I was selfishly consuming the medicine that liberated my parents from their own physical ailments, and it was all too easy—a cabinet in the charming suburban kitchen housed tiny, semi-opaque orange cylinders filled with the promise of happiness and optimism in mere minutes.

The ritualism returned, and my days revolved around "escaping." Just like the food and alcohol binging, this escape was depraved yet graceful to my deluded mind. I became not just an abuser, but a hypocrite. Let's take an evening the non-profit addressed a social services agency about the co-morbidity between drug abuse and depression. A demographic patchwork of clients squeezed into a circle with the agency's counselor, the non-profit's doctor, and me. The clients had to be there, yet we were there as good Samaritans. As they spoke, I felt like a fraud. I could not elude the incontrovertible truth that the clients were me and I was them, all of us struggling and in need of help. At the end of the evening, we applauded their honesty and encouraged their pursuit of recovery. Then, at home, I cowardly cast aside the truth and slipped into my escape.

My abuse continued into the summer. I relished the resolute sun like God placed it in orbit just so I could feel happier. When I coupled this warmth with my chemical escape, I felt like the golden orb was not far off, but was instead radiating within my very bones. In late August, I sashayed into social work school with this fabricated jubilation. Although autumn dulled the sun, I went home every night anticipating my encapsulated escape. By mid-semester, my middling academic work hinged nightly on an inner battle between sprawling out on my couch in drug-induced euphoria and hitting the books. Digesting Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed is demanding enough sober. Sitting limply at my corner desk beneath the lamp's meager light, I would sometimes attempt to read: "In dia-di-a-lec-ti-cal thought, the world…" Wait. "…the world and action are int-intimately interdependent. But action is human only when it-it-it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation that is, when it is not Di-chot-o-mized from reflec…tion" (Freire, 1993, p. 35). Most nights I chose the couch.

Naturally, my field work suffered too. I had been placed with high expectations at a community center. My supervisor said she read my resume and thought, "I have to have him here!" The drug abuse only exacerbated the inherent field challenges. I progressively arrived at the center late. I conducted one intake assessment sloppily and then simply failed to appear for the next one. I soon showed up spottily to facilitate adult day care programs. This was not just surprising but intolerable.

When my supervisor confronted me, I opened up to her. She was receptive and supportive, but the center's and clients' well-being took precedent. My future was jeopardized, more so than I realized—had I used drugs at the center, I would have automatically failed that semester. Luckily, I managed, with improved work, to finish, but "I have to have him" became "I'm sorry, but you're just not welcome back." My life choices led me to a forked road. There I was. One path demanded courage, character, and pain but led to recovery. The other one surely led to personal and professional oblivion.

Now, this is where I can be—must be—explicit about the necessity of helping professionals caring for themselves. Of course, many of us enter our lines of work inspired by those who helped us; but, as emotionally resilient as we may be, we are susceptible to the same afflictions our clients face. Each opportunity we don't take to prioritize our health jeopardizes our capacity to uplift our clients and communities. So, at the forked road, I chose the first path because I had to. Enough was enough. I reached out for a new therapist (whom I still see today). Without mincing words, our work together salvaged, and perhaps saved, my life. He contended that I could achieve recovery, but only through diligence, patience, and honesty inside and outside of his office—the necessary hard work I avoided for years. There was no "this is too damn hard" option, and there wasn't any looking back.

Whereas other therapists and I didn't mesh or didn't invest the proper work, this therapist and I developed a synergy of love and determination. He took the time to know me as a person, not as a DSM-rendered symptomatic list or a history of mishaps. He recognized my pain and acknowledged my errors yet pronounced my potential—the potential every person has to maximize his or her abilities. I wasn't just a patient on his list, but a priority in his professional life. I had never had a clinician call from his Hawaiian vacation just to ensure that I was doing well. And, not only did he meet me where I was, but I met him at the critical point of where he needed me to be. As winter 2013 thawed, my drug abuse abated, but I still periodically relapsed. Over the years, my dissociation had stunted my maturation, suppressed my feelings, and enabled my idle existence. Living in my parents' basement fostered my drug use and ritualistic life. I needed to move out, but I was concerned about supporting myself financially as a student. My therapist respected this practicality; however, one session he looked into my eyes severely and declared: "If you stay there, Andrew…you're dead."

I didn't disagree. I still had to finish the current year. I switched placements and shifted from the clinical to the community organizing track. My academic work and field practice began to thrive. The improved spring semester was capped off by a project that carried over into June. My colleagues and I organized an event for macro practice that drew students (as well as practitioners) from over a dozen schools. This summer was entirely different from the prior one. I parlayed my academic success into personal achievement. By this point, I had quit drugs completely. I hiked trails and kayaked the bays and harbors by day and ran the high school track beneath the moonlight. And, I will never forget the brightly burning June day that symbolizes my reclamation. I paddled my kayak beyond the moored boats into the open harbor. I removed from my shorts four oblong pills. I shook them in my hand like dice, and I looked at each one as if it encapsulated all the years of abuse, depression, and struggle. Then I tossed each pill, one at a time, into the water's abysmal darkness, and I kayaked onward. I was no longer a victim of depression but a person managing his illness.

In the fall, I moved into an apartment with two incredible people, who quickly became close friends. I was flourishing academically, and I was a leader at my field placement, exploring my practice abilities unfettered by a deleterious lifestyle. In September, my colleagues and I unexpectedly won a national student award for the June event. The award was to be given in Dallas in November. I volunteered to make the trip, which was in itself a personal victory. The

prior November I was mired in drug abuse—now I planned to fly across the country to accept an award and sit on a panel with social work professors to discuss the importance of enhanced macro education. But I didn't stop there. My tactical self-awareness was buzzing, and I knew I could make this trip special. With the support of a mentor, I rented a car in Dallas after the conference. I drove beneath the crystalline stars hanging over New Mexico to Arizona, where the sun blazed down on the palm trees. I kept going through northern Arizona's pines up to Salt Lake City, where the Jordan River courses and August canyons frame the land. I stopped at a half-dozen social work campuses along the way to present on the project's importance. A year before, I couldn't show up on time to my field placement 20 minutes from home; now, I was giving talks over 2,000 miles from my front door.

What's next for me? Well, when I was in Utah, a professor from the social work school put me up for the night. We talked at her living room table, articles and books appropriately strewn about. "What are you passionate about?" she asked. Taking her question to heart, I paused. "I'm passionate," I finally said, "about helping others find their passions in order to improve the world around them." I nodded my head in affirmation. This summer I will start my doctorate in social work, the next step in my journey towards further elevating people

Conclusion (or Beginning)

That, in brief, is my story. I have never been so forthright in its telling, but I wanted you to know it because Donne (1999) was right that no man is an island (p. 103). Just as the clients in the group were me and I was them, some of you reading this are me. People you know and love are me. When we share our stories, our hearts become tenderer and our wills become stronger in battling depression. Admission of depression's reality, however, is not sufficient. If we are ill we must be a people of action, not rhetoric, of resource, not excuses, and be willing to suffer failure and pain to obtain our most precious resource—our health.

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Getting Back to Basics: Developing a Therapeutic Relationship with a Formerly Homeless Veteran Client

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Abstract: Developing a therapeutic relationship is a complex process that can challenge even the most seasoned helping professional. This reflection presents the author's experience developing a therapeutic relationship with a formerly homeless veteran client now living in a supportive housing program. It describes the process through which the relationship was ultimately created and how this experience impacted the author's future work as a social work educator and researcher.

Keywords: homelessness, therapeutic relationship, engagement.

Carl Rogers hypothesized that positive personality change occurs in a relationship, relationships characterized by an unconditional positive regard for the client, an empathic understanding of their experience, and an ability to communicate this acceptance and empathy to the client (Rogers, 1957). Research has largely supported this proposition, demonstrating that a positive relationship is a necessary condition for a successful therapeutic encounter and a strong predictor of treatment success (Fluckiger, Del Re, Wampold, & Symonds, 2011; Horvath, Del Re, & Fluckiger, 2011).

Developing and nurturing therapeutic relationships with clients can be an incredibly satisfying, but also very challenging, aspect of social work practice. When it proceeds well, the client and the practitioner may feel empowered and affirmed. When it proceeds poorly, the client and practitioner may feel powerlessness and rejection. Rarely a linear process, the development of a therapeutic relationship is often a complex undertaking, a journey characterized by periods of collaboration and progress as well as periods of division and regression. The pace of this journey can also vary considerably, including moments of calm, intense activity, or even frenzy. In the midst of this unpredictability, however, an important lesson I have learned is that intentions and effort matters when engaging with clients, and that disruptions in the therapeutic relationship can often be repaired. This optimism, coupled with values respecting human relationships and the dignity of clients (National Association of Social Workers, 2008) and a commitment to strengths-based social work practice (Saleeby, 2000), support the development of positive therapeutic relationships. For the first half of my social work career, I had limited professional interactions with veterans, working primarily with adolescent-aged clients in residential treatment settings located in Mississippi, Montana, and New Jersey. It was in New York City where I began to work directly with veteran clients. The setting was a supportive housing program for adult men and women who had previously been homeless, but now resided in small apartments in a converted single room occupancy hotel (SRO). My role as staff in the program was to provide intensive case management services for a designated group of residents. With experience and training as a substance abuse counselor, I also helped residents with substance-related concerns. At any given time, approximately one-quarter of my clients were Veterans and my experiences with these clients dramatically shaped me as a social worker. Of these clients, however, my experiences with Michael were especially memorable, exemplifying the complexities involved with developing a therapeutic relationship.

Michael

Michael was an African-American male who served two tours of duty as a United States Marine, including an overseas deployment during the first Persian Gulf War. He was a native of Queens, New York and was in his mid-40s. He was born into a large family but he had minimal ongoing contact with them. Being diagnosed with bipolar disorder in the military, he received a medical discharge but collected no service-connected disability benefits, receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) instead. Michael entered the housing program after spending seven

years living unsheltered on the streets of New York City. He received regular primary health care at the local VA outpatient clinic but refused VA psychiatric care, relying on other providers instead. Michael had inconsistently taken his medication in the past and had been involuntarily committed for psychiatric care by program staff approximately one year ago. Doing better for a short time after his discharge, the local psychiatric Mobile Crisis Team had been contacted several times in the last six months as program staff again became concerned about Michael's well-being.

I met Michael soon after starting as a case manager in the housing program. He was unassuming, polite, and very agreeable. Selfishly, this was a relief as it somewhat calmed my anxiety about working with this new population of formerly homeless adults. I was very aware, however, that many differences existed between us, hoping we could find common ground and effectively work together. Initially meeting Michael with the director of the facility, we reviewed his time in the program to help me understand his history and current circumstances. Looking at his face, it was clear he was very uncomfortable as his life was laid bare for me, someone he had only just met. I was uncomfortable with this process as well, sure that this invasive experience was undermining my efforts to engage with Michael. The director's tone became especially serious as she discussed the challenges Michael had experienced during the last year. She noted staffs concerns about his declining mental health, complaints from other residents that he often asked to borrow money, and a pattern of being late with his rent. Finishing this sad tale, the director then made it clear to Michael that he was in jeopardy of losing his housing and his behavior needed to change quickly. Anxiously waiting for her to offer support and encouragement, I was disappointed when it didn't come, the meeting ending with her stern ultimatum. Speaking with him privately after the meeting, I told him that despite what was discussed, I had no preconceptions about him or how we would work together and my main goal was to support him as much as I was able.

After meeting with the program director and Michael, I felt that it was urgent that Michael and I begin our work - there was so much to do! Michael, however, had different ideas as he expertly eluded me, deflecting all of my efforts to engage with him. He did not attend required case management meetings and informal conversations, when we had them, were typically superficial and brief. Being persistent, I would try to meet with him in his room but he would not respond to my knocks on his door - despite clear indications he was inside. Seeing him pass through the lobby, I would ask if he had time to talk but he would always have a pressing appointment he needed to attend. He would always promise to stop by when he returned to the facility but he never did.

Michael and I continued this dance for the first four months I worked in the housing program. The consensus of the other staff was that he was using illicit drugs - most likely crack cocaine - and nothing could be done to reach him until he was ready for help. I struggled with this assessment, feeling it was too easy label Michael as "resistant" or "difficult to engage," a self-serving attitude that allowed staff to focus on Michael as the problem. Instead, I began to believe that Michael avoided services because he did not trust us. This distrust, I believed, was due to our exclusive focus on enforcing rules and guidelines, never taking the time to demonstrate empathy for his situation or try to understand his perspective. Coming to this realization, I knew a new approach to working with Michael was desperately needed.

Plan B

In addition to playing cat and mouse with Michael, another function I provided in the housing facility was to coordinate psycho-educational support groups and off-site recreational outings for the residents. Having made little progress with an assertive approach to engaging with Michael, I thought these activities might be a way to engage with him in a less threatening way. So, the next time I ran into Michael, I invited him to join us for an outing. He seemed genuinely surprised by my invitation but appeared interested. He ultimately declined the offer, stating he did not want to attend substance abuse recovery groups. I told him there was no expectation he attend the groups, assuring

him that our activity only involved seeing a movie and grabbing a bite to eat - nothing else. He still declined the offer - which was disheartening - but his reaction only confirmed that engaging with Michael was going to be more of process than an event. Backing off, I mentioned that these trips occurred weekly and I hoped he would join us at some point. He told me he would think about it, a response that offered a glimmer of hope.

Continuing to invite Michael to attend off-site recreation activities, my efforts paid off when he quietly joined the group as we left the facility one afternoon for a movie and an early dinner. First noticing him, I was startled by his presence but this shock was quickly replaced with excitement and hope. While we were out, I checked in with him. He said he was doing "ok" and thanked me for the opportunity to join the activity. I told him he was always welcome and hoped he would join us again. I also mentioned that I hoped he would let me know if he ever needed help. To avoid being too pushy, I purposefully kept the interaction short but I was excited that this new approach seemed to be generating positive results.

Over time, Michael continued to struggle but progress also continued as he regularly attended off-site recreational outings and seemed slightly less determined to avoid me. While we were out, he appeared comfortable and relaxed, even seeking me out for conversations at times. Reassured and excited about this progress, I became convinced that it was time to talk about formal service needs. There was so much to discuss and I was ready to get to work! My supervisor, however, encouraged me to stay the course as progress was being made and we wanted to avoid a setback. In retrospect, this piece of advice was well timed, as the nature of my relationship with Michael was about to take a major turn.

A few days later, Michael came to the case manager's office and asked if we could speak in private. We went to the patio at the rear of the building where he told me he had recently tested positive for HIV. He didn't provide much detail but did say that he had taken a second, confirmatory test, and I was the first person he had told. Hearing the panic in his voice and seeing the fear in his eyes, I told him I was very sorry to hear this news and asked if there was anything he needed. He stated it felt good to tell someone and thanked me for listening. He did, however, ask that I not discuss his situation with anyone. He said he was concerned about how other people would look at him and treat him. I asked Michael if he was seeking follow-up medical care, he said he had scheduled an appointment to see a physician about medication. I mentioned that I would be happy to go with him to any appointments but he declined my offer. Walking back into the building, I reiterated that I was glad he told me and expressed a willingness to help however I could. He seemed to appreciate my offer, saying that he would let me know how things progressed.

Over time, Michael struggled to accept his HIV diagnosis but our relationship continued to improve. Instead of avoiding me at every turn, Michael sought me out for support and encouragement and was open to offers of resources or services. He was also frank about his struggles to take his HIV medicines and with depression. Hearing his desperation and sensing his willingness, I brought up the idea of Michael seeking treatment for his drug use and depression. He seemed open to the idea but stated he did not want to go to the VA as he had sought care there previously but had a bad experience. I told him there were several programs in the VA that we could explore but he remained averse to the idea of seeking care from the VA. I said I would find another option.

After some investigation, I met with Michael and told him about a treatment program that seemed like a good option for him. It was a private, not-for-profit, long-term program that specialized in treating individuals with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems. It was located outside of New York City and came highly recommended. Understandably, he had many questions: would we keep his apartment for him while he was gone, what would happen at the treatment facility, how long would he have to stay at the treatment facility? We talked through his questions as best we could, spending time on the treatment program's website. Wanting him to be in

control of this process, I gave him contact information for the program, encouraging him to call with his questions. As we were parting ways, Michael asked me what I thought he should do. Having never sought advice from me in the past, I was caught off guard by Michael's question. Thinking for a minute, I said I wanted him to make this decision, but considering how his life had been for the last few years, it seemed worthwhile to try something different. He said he appreciated my perspective and would let me know his decision.

Meeting with Michael a few days later, I asked him what he thought about the treatment center. He responded by saying that he appreciated my help in locating the program and he did contact them after our last meeting. He said the phone call went very well and he wanted to go to the facility. Thrilled at his decision, I applauded him for calling the program. We talked about the admission process for the program and met with my supervisor, who was very pleased with Michael's decision to seek treatment.

Calling the program to arrange transportation, I was glad they were able to pick him up that afternoon, concerned he might change his mind. In the end though, Michael seemed very comfortable as he left for the treatment center in the early evening. Talking to him before he left, I told him I was proud of him for taking these steps and would be staying in touch. Michael thanked me for all of my support, climbing into the van to begin a new chapter in his life.

The program Michael entered had a 90-day minimum length of stay. If he participated in their step-down aftercare program, he could be away for up to 6 months. Michael gave permission for me to speak with program staff who requested I complete a questionnaire regarding my experiences with Michael.

With no family or friends involved in his care, I was the best source of outside information and I was honored to support him in this manner. As time passed, all indications were that he was doing well in the program and I was happy for him.

Moving On

Approximately two months after Michael left for treatment, I made the decision to leave New York City and enter a social work doctoral program in Texas. Before leaving, however, I knew I needed to tell Michael I was leaving the housing program. Since he had been gone, we had been speaking regularly and his mood and attitude had improved considerably. He was much more upbeat and hopeful. He sounded positive about his substance abuse recovery and, while he knew his journey had just begun, he was optimistic about his future. Considering the path our relationship had taken and wanting to support his progress, it was important for me to tell Michael in person that I was leaving the housing program. During the two-hour train ride to the treatment facility, I spent much of the time reflecting on our relationship.

Looking Back

My efforts to engage with Michael showed promise after I stepped back and allowed the relationship to naturally develop. Looking back, I cringe at how inauthentic I must have appeared to Michael, laying in wait for him to pass through the lobby, pouncing on him with my superficial pleasantries and predetermined agenda. Obviously, there were responsibilities I needed to attend to as his case manager (non-payment of rent, complaints from other residents, requirements for regular meetings), but my singular focus on these issues clearly undermined my ability to engage with Michael. For our relationship to develop, it was essential that I broaden my perspective and be more empathetic to Michael's situation. He was obviously struggling and my response to those struggles did nothing to demonstrate that he lived in a safe place and that help was available. My approach sent the message that I was more interested in him complying with program rules and guidelines than getting to know him. In retrospect, it was understandable that he would avoid me when this was my response to his struggles and pain. When I remembered that my role was to serve Michael and began approaching him with humility and concern, that is when the nature of our relationship changed. Making this shift was not easy but the process started after I realized that my focus on rules and guidelines was a way to keep Michael at a distance

so I did not have to feel the magnitude of his struggle. While protective for me, this did nothing to help him and it needed to change. Michael deserved someone who could be present and involved as he worked through these very difficult circumstances. Thinking about the first few months of our relationship, it was embarrassing to think that his "resistance" may have been a healthy and normal response to my attitudes and actions. When I remembered why I was there and how to help, Michael responded quickly.

In addition to authenticity and empathy, a nonjudgmental attitude was essential if I was going to work effectively with Michael. This was especially important as I began to understand Michael's harsh internal dialogue and the hostility he experienced from other residents and even some staff. Having worked in substance abuse treatment settings for many years, I understood the toll that addiction can take on individuals so I worked to highlight success, reinforced the distinction between Michael and his "condition", challenged his tendency to devalue himself, and advocated for him with other residents and staff. I also made sure our relationship was characterized by consistency and structure because, as Michael struggled to organize himself, it was important I be dependable. This is not to say that Michael was not held accountable in our relationship; he knew we were partners and he needed to take responsibility for himself. When we identified tasks to be completed, he knew I expected him to follow through. This approach was especially important as it conveyed to Michael that I had faith in him and his future. When we did struggle, we leveraged those moments as opportunities to take a breath, reevaluate our plan, and refocus our efforts. In retrospect, the manner we worked through setbacks was especially important, confirming the depth of my commitment to Michael and demonstrating to him that being perfect was not a requirement for my support.

Saying Goodbye

Arriving at the facility, Michael and I met in a common area. He looked healthy, his eyes were bright, and his mood seemed upbeat. He said his depression had lessened considerably and he was working hard at his recovery program; feeling very positive and hopeful. I asked him about his health and he told me he was receiving regular care from a local HIV specialist who had started him on a medication regimen. Excited to hear all of this news, I told him how pleased I was to hear of his progress and how grateful I was that he had taken the risk to enter the program. Reflecting on the year leading up to his treatment admission, Michael told me he was surprised he was alive. His drug use had taken him to some dangerous places and he was thankful to have a second chance.

As Michael was on track to discharge from the program in the next month or so, we talked about how we could help him make a smooth transition back to the housing program. He stated he had been discussing this very issue with his counselor and they had been working on an aftercare plan. Knowing there would never be a good time to tell him I was leaving and having already delayed my disclosure, I told Michael that this aftercare plan should not include me as I was leaving the program. A look of alarm on his face, he asked me where I was going and I told him about my plans to enter a doctoral program. He told me he was happy for me and that he hoped to go back to school one day himself. I told him I sincerely hoped he would do so and had no doubt that he would be successful. He then asked about his new case manager. I told him that was something we would be discussing, as I wanted him to have a say in who took my place. I also told him that while this would be our last meeting in person, I would stay in touch to ensure the transition process to the new case manager went smoothly. He agreed and thanked me for coming up to see him, then we shook hands and said goodbye.

Touching Base

My last few weeks at the housing program passed quickly and, before I knew it, I was a doctoral student living in Texas. In the midst of the crushing academic workload, however, I continued to think about my friends at the housing facility, eventually calling my old supervisor to see how everything was going. Catching up, things seemed to be going well and, while the usual suspects were

up to the usual shenanigans, everyone was hanging in there. When we got to Michael my supervisor took a deep breath and happily exclaimed, "Let me tell you about Michael!" She then described how well he had been doing since returning to the housing program, involving himself in a therapeutic day program and attending the substance abuse support groups offered in the facility. She said he seemed relaxed and comfortable with other residents even commenting on his transformation. I was so thrilled to hear how well he was doing, wishing I could be there to tell him how proud I was of him. When I asked about how he was getting along with his new case manager, she said Michael seemed to be very happy as they were working on new goals around education and employment.

This was exactly the news I was hoping to hear and I was thrilled for Michael. He deserved happiness and it seemed he had found it. My old supervisor then told me about a recent conversation she had with Michael while they were signing his new lease. Proud of him for going to treatment, she asked what motivated his change of heart - his willingness to seek help and to stay on track. Michael told her the cumulative effect of his drug use and depression had become too much to bear and he was desperate for relief. Being diagnosed with HIV also played a role as the fragility of life and good health, things he had been taking for granted, became very apparent to him. Michael then talked about his positive experience in treatment and how he was feeling much better after working on some long-standing personal issues. Returning to the housing program, this positive experience motivated him to seek additional support and his progress continued. Finally, Michael said that one of the biggest motivators for him to change was the interest I had taken in him and the lengths I had gone to trying to help him. Specifically mentioning my last trip to the treatment facility, he said that if I cared enough about him to make the effort to come see him, he thought he needed to start caring about himself too.

Amazed at what I heard, I thanked my supervisor for sharing that story with me. As we reflected on my work with Michael, she disclosed that she apparently had come close to evicting Michael on several occasions but held off as she saw our relationship develop. Impressed with my patience and persistence, she told me she wished she had more case managers like me. I thanked her for her kind words but I could not help but think that most of the credit went to Michael. I just helped him identify that a better path existed. He was the one who took the steps and I was thrilled he continued to take them.

Lessons Learned

Years have passed since I left New York but the memories of my relationship with Michael remain vivid in my mind. Early on, my approach was an excellent example of how not to develop a therapeutic relationship with a client. By the time we parted ways, however, my refocused efforts helped to facilitate a working alliance that supported Michael as his life took a very different trajectory. Looking back, I cannot think of a time when things started off so badly with a client, only to end so well. Now working as a social work educator, I often share the story of my work with Michael with my students to demonstrate the value of a client-centered and strengths-oriented approach to social work practice (Saleeby, 2000). I also use the story to illustrate that some of the greatest obstacles to the development of a therapeutic relationship can be social workers themselves with their biases, preconceptions, and agendas. Ultimately, I think the story of my relationship with Michael shows students that clients have so much to teach the professionals who are supposedly helping them - the professionals just need to be willing to learn.

As a social work researcher, my relationship with Michael has also informed how I have engaged with individuals participating in my studies. Unlike my relationship with Michael, my interactions with study participants are typically one-time occurrences, only lasting a few hours. Regardless of how short these interactions may be, it is still important to be thoughtful about how I approach and interact with my participants. When conducting focus groups investigating the relevance of military culture and training to the experience of homelessness, I let the veteran participants know that I saw them as experts.

Joining with them from this perspective, the study went very well and I walked away extremely impressed by the resourcefulness demonstrated by the veteran participants. For my dissertation, I studied the use of assistance services by homeless veterans living in an emergency shelter. During this study, the nonjudgmental attitude used with Michael was essential as I asked participants to discuss experiences with trauma, drug use, and their criminal history. Understanding this was asking a lot from people I had just met, I worked to demonstrate that I was not there to judge but to hear their unfiltered story. It was also through these interactions that I realized veterans' process their individual military service histories differently. Some, like Michael, view their military service as something they did for a time and, while they feel pride for serving, they have largely assimilated back into the mainstream civilian culture. Other veterans I have interacted with were much more connected to their military experience and the identity they formed as a member of the military. Seeing the variability in these reactions, it became apparent to not make assumptions about how veterans may view their military service.

Gratitude

While telling the story of Michael's transformation, I hope this reflection illustrates the impact of our relationship on me as well. I wonder what might have happened if Michael had not taken the risk to tell me about his HIV diagnosis. Would our relationship have developed like it did? Would he have made it to treatment? Would his life have taken the turn that it did? In the end, it is impossible to know but I like to believe he would have found someone, somewhere, who could give him the support he needed. For myself, would I have learned these powerful lessons about working with clients? Seen, with such clarity, the importance of acceptance, empathy, and a non-judgmental attitude? I would like to think so, but there is no doubt that my experience with Michael, as it happened and when it happened, profoundly impacted me and, through my work, the people I have met since. This narrative really is an amazing story, not just because of how far Michael came, but because of how far I have come as well.

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The Art of Happiness: Reflections on the Power of Creative Projects

Natalie Grant

Abstract: This reflection piece is intended to share an experience of a professor and a student as they journey through a semester long assignment entitled the Art of Happiness Project. The student's difficulties with the assignment create opportunity for imagination and creativity to take hold. The professor provides the platform for the student to overcome fears and present special works of art to a large class as well as prepare for a submission to a community art show. Both experience a reciprocal process of growth and definitions of happiness.

Keywords: creativity, happiness, family violence, healing, art therapy, teaching.

One project that I have enjoyed working through for several years has been one I call the Art of Happiness Project. This title was not stolen from the famous book that came out at the exact same time I created this semester long project, I promise. Prior to the project, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I really wanted these students to get from my class. What I wanted them to experience so they would always remember it and what skills I wanted them to gain to take with them in their bag of social work tools.

Remembering back to my social work practice days in mental health, when you ask most people what they want out of life they will tell you they just want to be happy. This seems so simple, yet so undefined, yet so individual, yet we all seem to think we know what at least a part of happiness looks like. What we know mostly, is how we would individually define our own happiness.

Happiness, for me, meant being in a supportive and safe, loving relationship with someone who never went away even if I tried to push them. It meant having three children like I always dreamed. It meant becoming a doctor. It meant giving my life to a profession that I loved and it loved me back just enough that I didn't want to run away from it. It meant having a great part of my life being spent with people who make me laugh, who love me back, who let me cry if I want to, and who accepted me…and maybe a big house someday with a pool. I've given this a lot of thought but I also know my happiness has changed as I have.

So my plan was to create an assignment for students in the BSW program to share what their happiness looks like. The parameters of the assignment were pretty loose but students were given an outline that stated they were to create an individual presentation using creativity to represent what "happiness" means to them. In class we discussed that art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. It is also an expression of an idea and it can take many different forms and serve many different purposes. There are no concrete examples given because I want the students to develop their own ideas rather than model after others.

The syllabus contained this statement as well: The Art of Happiness has many components. It begins with developing an understanding of what are the truest sources of happiness and setting your priorities in life based on the cultivation of those sources. "It involves an inner discipline, a gradual process of rooting out destructive mental states and replacing them with positive, constructive states of mind, such as kindness, tolerance, and forgiveness." Balance is a key element of a happy life. - Dalai Lama

I was away at a conference when I received an email from a student named Caroline. The student wrote: "I am having a hard time coming up with my Art of Happiness project. Every time I sit down to work on it, the same thing comes to mind. What I do have I know I could never share in class. I'm not sure what to do... I wrote out a paper of what keeps coming to mind to say and I have attached it here. I know you have no obligation to read it or anything but I was wondering if you could give me some advice. Thank you for your time."

I responded "Oh my gosh, that is BEAUTIFUL. Why don't you read this out loud? Even if you cry...even if we cry...this is a beautiful window into reality past and present and really represents your being here in social work for a reason. This is a wonderful project write up. Do you think you could just read it?"

Caroline said "I don't know if I could…I am not generally a sharer but your classes are inspiring me in ways I didn't think could be possible. I have changed so much in such a short time."

We went on to discuss that the piece could be read as poetry and creative writing. Leaving much up to the imagination of the audience can be very powerful. As a professor, I did not want Caroline to feel pressured or used and I struggled with having this conversation with her at all. I spoke with the chair of my department to ensure I was not exploiting our student but rather being supportive of her. We discussed that she would not have submitted the piece without any intent and to really follow Caroline's lead on the process.

The Reading

Caroline decided to read the piece as if it was written about someone else and also shared that she would be bringing a small painting/abstract picture to accompany her when she read the piece in class. Caroline stood in front of a class of fifty students. She propped her art piece up and began reading in her soft articulate voice.

Happiness is not something I think I can talk about, but rather the absence of it. If I try to talk about happiness I always stop and my mind goes to one thing, what happiness would have looked like. Happiness to me would have been wearing clean clothes. Or, to wear ones that didn't have holes. Happiness to me would have been my Dad coming to one, just one, of my sports games. Or, to come to my graduation. Or to not hear him say, "Maybe next time kid."

Happiness would have been eating three meals a day, or knowing what it was like to feel so full you couldn't eat anymore. Happiness would have been eating more than plain boxed rice because it was free from the church down the street. Happiness would have been waking up and not having to shake the roaches off of my blanket every morning, or to see my breath because there was no heat in the house. Happiness would have been feeling excited rather than scared to stay home when we had a snow day. To not feel afraid when I saw my own house.

Happiness would have been making a friend. Or staying in one place for more than six months at a time. Happiness would have been not having to hide the bruises. Not having to lie and make up excuses. Or try to explain why I couldn't change in the regular locker room with the other girls to hide the purple whip marks. Happiness would have been not to watch my sister get punched in the face and not being able to stop it. To not have my first memories be violent or bloody. Happiness would have been to say 'no' to my father that first time and having him listen. Or to be backed up by my mom who wouldn't force me to do what my father said "for her."

Happiness to me would have been never knowing what it was like to wake up after being choked out. Or, to wake up from a knock-out punch, or the taste of my own blood from loosened teeth. Or, being thrown down a flight of stairs, or my head held under water. Happiness would have been not having lost a day here or a day there that were just too hard or too sad to remember.

Happiness to me would have been not sneaking bottles of my father's scripts and taking them all at once hoping I wouldn't wake up. Or to not look in the mirror at myself hearing my father tell me I was too fat, too ugly. Happiness to me would have been not being born…

Happiness for me would be to hear "I'm sorry". To hear I'm sorry from my father for all the things he did. An "I'm sorry" from my mom for covering it up, for forcing me to do them. An apology from every adult in my life, every parent, every teacher, every church member, every social worker, every police officer, every stranger that looked at me but never saw 'me'. Who saw the bruises, who suspected something, who saw the signs, who never did anything. An "I'm sorry" from them for hearing the 'I'm fine' and for never taking a

second look. An "I'm sorry" from all of them who never cared. I want to hear an "I'm sorry" from God for making me.

I don't know what happiness would look like for me or what happiness is. I don't know if I would recognize happiness if I saw it.

But, I hope happiness for me today is to be a social worker. To be able to be the one that cares. To be the one that doesn't look away, who doesn't pretend like you are fine when you say you are. To hear another's pain and know exactly how that feels. To be the one to tell a child that needs to hear it, "I'm sorry for all of those that never were." To strip away all of the secrets. To intervene when no one else does. Happiness for me today is helping those that need it and to tell them that I am glad that they are alive even though they aren't.

The class was frozen. It was easy to see that the students were wondering if the story was about Caroline. Some sat with tears welling in their eyes looking as if they had just been through something powerful. But no one could deny the fact that this reading was amazing. Caroline was the last student to present that day. So the quiet group of fifty just faded out into the halls and onto their next class.

I had to cry, when the students had gone, for many reasons. Mostly because I was grateful to see one of our students reach inside and use her experiences in a creative way that helped to inspire and empower others. I was also worried. Worried that maybe she is not ready to pursue this field and help others when her pain seemed so raw…worried that maybe the act of reading this work out loud to a large group would make Caroline want to run away. But not so, Caroline was fine, she was actually energized and happy and came by my office to process a bit.

The next class day Caroline was not there. We discussed the presentations that had taken place over the last two weeks and the class talked about presentations that moved them. They agreed that many presentations were powerful but that Caroline's was the most memorable. They were impressed of her courage to communicate something so emotional and were intrigued by the way it was written in third person, they wondered if it was about her but that was not confirmed. This was one of those teaching moments that cannot be written in a lesson plan. Although it was a million dollar classroom moment, it was not all of my making. I provided the platform but the students took the experience into their own hands. Being a social work class, the processing of experiences and providing feedback is an important skill to gain. This powerful presentation offered an opportunity for the class to discuss emotionally charging topics and well as how they personally react to the pain or experience of others.

The Art Show

In our community, we have monthly art events that are called Final Fridays. Essentially, an art crawl is planned each month across the midtown points of the city. People can hop on a trolley, eat snacks, look at art in many different locations, and really make a night of it.

I had recently received an email from one of our community partners that an art show was planned a few weeks away that illuminated the issues of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, recovery and healing. Not only had Caroline written an excellent creative piece but she also submitted a mixed methods piece of art. When she completed her class presentation, she gave me her art piece. I told her I would hang it up in the social work hallway with her permission. But after I was reminded of the art show on the topic she had presented, I wondered if she would be interested in submitting her piece for the community art show. She was interested. Not to speak her writing, but only submit her artwork. It was accepted by the community agency and she wrote her first artist statement to include with the piece. It read: *the goal of the piece was to portray an absence of true happiness, but reaching out to find healing through the pain*. Simply stated and powerful.

As we prepared for the art show, I made sure that she would come see her art piece even though she was unsure of how to locate the show downtown. It was somewhat like an adventure. I took my children to the flower shop to pick her out some flowers that could help signify that this was a big

deal and she deserved to feel proud of this beautiful and impactful work. I wanted to maintain my boundaries with my student, but I really felt like I wanted to give her something to show my appreciation for her bravery.

The art show was in a thrift shop. There were multiple pieces hanging on the walls and a few displays set up with installations. The overarching theme was family violence, sexual assault, pain and recovery. Caroline brought her cousin to the show. Caroline is shy, she is very careful when she speaks, this can easily be misinterpreted but I figure she associates with people who have outgoing personalities so she can let them break the ice for her. Caroline's piece hung right in the center of all of them. We did not know it would have such a prominent place in the set up.

I welcomed her, introduced her to my family, gave her the flowers, and stood with her for a moment as she stared at her work. Then I backed away so she and her cousin could have their own experience of it. I did not really know what to say. I had never been through anything like this with a student. I knew that it felt right to communicate to her that I saw her and that I was interested in her learning and her own development as a student and a social worker. This can sometimes be difficult to communicate in words.

There were also guitar players and poets at this art show so that gave us something to focus our attention on and not have to keep making discussion over what was more an experience than something to be discussed. I looked at her in her tweed coat talking to her cousin and it was really more emotional than I had prepared for. I did not want to place any of my emotions on Caroline because I wanted her to experience this art show and the display of her heartfelt work for what it was for her, not for me.

That night, she said she hoped someone would be inspired by her. She said she wanted to do this because if there was anyone out there who read her work or saw her art, that they would know that she was willing to listen. That she understood what real pain felt like and that the reason she wanted to be a social worker was so that she could be something different than what she had.

When I got ready to leave, I said good bye and shared that I was really proud of her. I thanked her for being willing to do all of this. I got about a quarter of the way out the door when her cousin stopped me. She looked me straight in the eye and said "you may not know what you have done for my cousin, but you have changed her. From your class she comes home and talks about everything. She didn't used to do that. This project brought something out in her that has given her more confidence. She is learning to speak louder and share herself again. I don't know how I would ever say thank you for that, but thank you." As if this experience itself was not enough, her cousin's words shot through my heart.

As an educator, I want to make a difference. I want students to hear us and know that we really want them to succeed. Social work is a very special discipline. We do teach skills, values, and frameworks. We also empower students to heal themselves and others. I have this constant saying: "would I want them as my social worker if I ever needed them?" and this reminds me that our students come in at all different levels of development and process and it is the educator's job to help them become the social worker that can work with anyone in any setting. The professor has a very special place of privilege when it comes to the learning and development of students. I honor this space and tread carefully.

Caroline taught me a lot that semester. This class was the first time I met Caroline. I have often encountered exceptional students who usually know well of their exceptionalities. I am not convinced that she could even see what she had done with this work. I am not sure that she understood what type of impact she could make by sharing these words, these experiences, and this piece of art.

This essay serves as another opportunity for Caroline to share her story and also is an opportunity to share the impact she has made from many perspectives. Everyone is creative. Sometimes it takes a little more work to bring it out

but creativity is an outlet and an opportunity. When I developed the art of happiness project, I could have never foreseen this experience coming from it. We share this reflection for the powerful story it is and hope that others will feel inspired to use more creativity in their work and daily lives.

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Eleven Days in Israel: A Unique and Innovative Experience in Teaching Trauma Practice

Marilyn S. Paul and Roni Berger

Abstract: In our narratives we share our experiences leading a group of social work and psychology graduate level and continuing education students on an intensive, eleven-day elective course on trauma in the culturally diverse contexts of Israel. We begin with an introduction about our personal rationale for creating the course, follow with the logistical planning including challenges endured over the nearly two year planning period and our individual reactions to the eleven-day journey, and end with a summary of our students' and own learning. We hope that in reading our reflections, others will be inspired toward adventure and will take risks to explore and embark on teaching opportunities outside of the norm.

Keywords: intensive study abroad, trauma and multiculturalism, social work study abroad.

On May 18th, 2014, right after the end of the academic year, we - two co-instructors - headed to Israel with a group of eight students in the helping professions for an elective course designed to understand trauma in cross-cultural contexts. One of us (MP) is a US born social work practitioner and educator with strong personal roots in Reform Judaism, specifically the social action and human rights component, and with social work practice experience and research interest in trauma and posttraumatic growth. The other (RB) is a native Israeli who was raised, studied and practiced in Israel for over two decades before she migrated to the US a quarter of a century ago; however, she still maintains professional connections and travels to Israel frequently to teach in various universities. Trauma and posttraumatic growth have been part of her scholarly and professional expertise throughout her career. Our relationship is over a decade long. It started when the first author was a doctoral student and the second was her dissertation advisor and continued with scholarly collaboration as co-researchers and co-authors as well as friends and in recent years, neighbors. Other than their gender, the all-female group of social work and psychology students was diverse in every possible aspect, including age, ethnic/racial, personal and familial background as well as where they are in their professional education journey and their motivation to participate in the course. Here, we would like to share and reflect on this experience.

In the content that follows, we reveal our stories and experiences, reflecting and discussing those parts that were most meaningful, and offer lessons learned throughout the journey. We begin with our individual personal rationales for the course, followed by a description of the process of creating and implementing it, and end with our take-away, or "bringing it all back home". We hope that in reading our reflections, others will be inspired toward adventure and will dare to explore and embark on teaching opportunities outside of the traditional.

Personal Rationales

Motivation for developing and facilitating the course had unique meaning for each of us based on our individual backgrounds and histories.

MP: Reflecting on an incredible two-year journey of co-conceptualizing, planning, implementing and evaluating, it feels like only yesterday that my friend, colleague and mentor, Dr. Roni Berger, offered that we co-lead an intensive elective summer course on trauma in Israel. In fact, the suggestion was made mid-summer, 2012, when, just having returned to US soil after an extraordinary two-week Israel journey, filled with politics, human rights and Reform Judaism, I was overflowing with nostalgia and passion for the country, its history and multiculturalism. Thus, I could not have been more excited and enthused by Roni's idea. I could think of no reason, pedagogically nor personally, to hesitate at what seemed an opportunity of a lifetime. I responded to Roni with an unequivocal yes. Two years later I can admit I had absolutely no idea what lay ahead!

RB: For me this course offered the opportunity to view my homeland through a new lens of a diverse

group of individuals whose familiarity with Israel has been fed by the media and thus focused almost exclusively on the on-going political conflicts with its neighbors. It also offered me an opportunity to introduce in the deepest, most personal and experiential way some of the ideas that I try to convey to students about the experience and outcomes of living in an environment that is stressful and potentially traumatic because of consistent geo-socio-political context rather than particular individual events such as an accident, a natural or human -made disaster or a life threatening disease (Quiros & Berger, 2013).

The Process of Creating and Implementing the Course

We learned early on that there is no clear distinction between the steps; rather they are interdependent. For example, students' interest in the course seemed to be based on a combination of curriculum, travel and cost. As we tweaked one, we had to continue to tune the others in an ongoing effort to make the course pedagogically strong, cost effective, and enticing. It was a lot of work. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity, we present this cyclically evolving process below in a linear fashion, divided into four parts: Gaining support for the idea, preparatory phase that included educational and logistical aspects, recruitment, and the actual journey.

Gaining support for the idea

With the advice and support of our study abroad office, our own practice wisdom, and a basic collective hunch that even in a bad economy, in a large private institution, there would be enough of a student market for a trauma in Israel course, we moved the planning forward. Steps included seeking the approval of the Dean and administration, writing a formal proposal and submitting to the study abroad office, creating a preliminary syllabus for a three-credit elective course and submitting to curriculum committee and the institutional bodies responsible for approving courses. At each of these steps, we incorporated ideas for revisions that were offered to us.

Preparatory phase

Once the course was approved, we moved ahead with preparations that included educational aspects and the logistical.

Educational aspects. The course was designed to convey to students in an experiential way the understanding of the intersection of two axes that shape the Israeli stress and trauma experience. First, four main types of stressors that frame the Israeli discourse, i.e., intergenerational impact of the Holocaust, ongoing security threat, immigration and poverty. Second, the diversity of Israeli society in terms of religion, ethnic background, immigration status and culture (Jews, Muslim-Arabs, Bedouins, Druze, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, ultraorthodox, secular, etc.). Visits to four schools of social work and seven social service agencies (e.g. mental health clinic, community-based empowerment projects, residential facility for adolescents, service and advocacy center for African labor migrants and asylum seekers) were planned to offer students access to the characteristics, challenges and outcomes of belonging to each of the numerous and diverse population groups in Israel. Emphasis was placed on learning both from lectures and discussions with social workers, directors and clients in the agencies how cultural contexts shape and color the definition, reaction to, and intervention with trauma exposure. We further developed the preliminary syllabus, adding a reading list and assignments (a daily journal and final scholarly paper) that addressed issues of diversity, collective traumas and their intersection and planned visits to support the curriculum. We also negotiated with the field education department on how these visits would fulfill field hours. As visits were confirmed, the syllabus was continuously adapted. For example, to address the issue of African individuals who illegally cross the border through Egypt to seek employment and safety in Israel, we planned to visit a detention center. However, shortly before departure, we learned that visits to the center were no longer permitted and thus we sought and found a human rights organization that serves the same population. The intentional daily weaving in of tourist and cultural sites, and the teaching of history framed the experience within thousands of years of

oppression. As the diverse nature of the prospective student group combination began to emerge, based on previous experience leading study abroad groups (Berger, 2010), some concerns about possible tensions among group members that could impact the learning experience began to arise. Luckily, these concerns proved to be unfounded relative to this particular group.

Logistical aspects. Logistical aspects included determining timing and duration, identifying level of accommodation, comparing and contrasting travel companies' proposals, choosing service providers (the group traveled in a mini bus with a driver and tour guide), and general budgeting. These steps were done in collaboration with our university's international studies department and required many meetings and discussions, including international communication with the various hosts in Israel, to sort out timing that would not conflict with our personal and academic responsibilities, the academic year and availability of presenters in Israel, and Israeli holidays when agencies are closed. Each minute decision had multiple academic and nonacademic implications. For example, the original date of departure, two weeks after graduation, turned out to conflict with the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. Delaying the trip would have conflicted with the end of the academic year in Israel. As a result, we departed before university commencement. This presented bad and good news, i.e., the stress in lack of transition or down time at end of semester and no time for anxiety about all of the what ifs.

Recruitment

The timing of and engaging in activities to inform and recruit students was to take place largely within the four months of Fall semester since a student enrollment deadline of February 15th 2013 was required for the course to ensue, and our Spring semester begins in late January. Flyers detailing the course and student eligibility were distributed electronically and in hard copy across the main campus and three extension sites to students and advisors, especially during the pre-registration period in October. Several rounds of emails from the associate dean's office reminded students and advisors of the availability of this elective course. The study abroad office posted a web page for inquiry and application, which we monitored to expeditiously interview each applicant to assess their level of knowledge in required topics including basics of human development, principles of intervention in the helping professions and some previous exposure to trauma-related content. Approval of candidates was in collaboration with their academic advisors.

We endured two years of challenges, often colored by those unique to Israel's ongoing political conflicts. Since established as a Jewish state in 1948, Israel lives in a constant threat of war. While this is not news to either of us, we were no less deflated when late in 2012, just as we were making progress with recruitment, war broke out in Israel and as would be expected, our university put a hold on our course. Fall semester ended, and we accepted that the closing down of our course was out of our control. As late January came and the Mideast crisis subsided, the university gave "Trauma in Israel" a green light. With support from our administration, we set out to actively recruit students. Looking back, there were so many variables working against us; the window for enrollment was small, less than one month, and we had lost momentum. Though the crisis in Israel had passed and the environment was relatively calm and stable, the period of unrest was recent. In retrospect, it seems silly to have spent the time and effort we did at that time on recruitment, given the obstacles. By deadline, in mid-February, we had only one deposit. We agreed that at end of summer we would assess the political situation in Israel and if it remained stable, we would review our curriculum, resubmit our proposal for Summer 2014, and begin actively recruiting students again. We agreed on this plan because we believed this was a pedagogically strong and sound course, immersed in a country and cultures that others would be excited to experience. We believed in it, we wanted to make it happen, and we began Fall semester 2013 determined to make it happen. We used the same recruitment procedures as in the prior year adding email via relevant listservs to reach students external to our university who could attend as transfer or continuing education students.

The enrolling of students for the course was

mercurial. The university required a ten-student minimum, and we concluded more than sixteen would compromise the intimacy we were seeking in the teaching and learning experience. On any particular day from start of the 2013-2014 academic year until the extended March 1 deadline, it looked as though either we would never meet our minimum or we would have to turn applicants away. In sum, while recruitment emails often yielded many suitable applicants, the drop-off rate post-acceptance was higher than anticipated. Alas, on March 1, 2014, there were 10 students enrolled with deposits. By first payment due date however, two enrolled students dropped out due to unforeseen personal circumstances. Recognizing the importance of the course, the university was willing to support an eight-student class. In April 2014 we had a class of eight registered, paying, committed students. It may have been only after the close of the two-year planning and recruitment process, at our pre-departure orientation meeting, or it might have been later upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel, but it was surely not before then, that we knew and understood the miracle of being in Israel with students to teach a course was about to become a reality. This late realization was probably a good thing as perhaps earlier it could have led to anxious anticipation, which, because of the way the process unfolded, never really happened.

The actual journey

Our reflection on the actual journey includes our pre-departure orientation, experience living together and learning together, and some thoughts on anticipated and unanticipated emotional triggers.

Pre-departure orientation. Our pre-departure orientation combined in person and Skype attendance. After we each introduced ourselves, sharing some personal and professional interests, two topics were addressed. First potential challenges and strategies related to participating in a course in a foreign country were discussed, i.e., stepping out of one's comfort zone, culture shock, etiquette such as acceptable dress code and interpersonal behaviors (e.g. no to offer to shake hands with a religious individual of the opposite gender) and practical issues (by a representative from our study abroad department). Second, we presented a review of the course and its foci, introduced historical, social and political characteristics of the host society and culture, typical stressors and intergroup dynamics as the context for understanding trauma, discussed assignment and expectations, provided preliminary reading material regarding cultural diversity in Israel and addressed students' questions. We deliberately kept the discussion general because we wanted to minimize pre-visit bias to allow students to experience directly the country, its people, the meaning of trauma to the diverse population groups and the role of social work relative to traumatic experiences. We advised students on the need to maintain flexibility. In the airport on departure day, students were encouraged to think about and express their hopes for the coming eleven days, which motivated us to further consider and express the same.

Living together, learning together. Our formal, explicit curriculum began on the first day in Israel, when we left the airport and set out for a visit to a community of Ethiopians who are served by the social service organization, Friends by Nature in Gedera. Students learned of the challenges of immigration and absorption, highlighted in our host's story of immigration at the age of eight, when from his life as a shepherd ("a bad one") in Ethiopia, he was airlifted with hundreds of others, to Israel via Operation Solomon, later to become an attorney, and now 22 years later, to serve the community in which he was raised. Our host took us to an Ethiopian home where we were served traditional coffees and snacks and had the opportunity to informally chat with our Ethiopian host family, with our tour guide serving as our interpreter. This was our explicit curriculum for the day, but in the evening, as we all walked the beach outside our hotel in Ashkelon, the implicit curriculum, equally important, began evolving and unfolding. There was excitement among us, relationships were being built and a group culture began to take shape. This group culture, the implicit curriculum, would form a foundation for the explicit learning in the days to come and would provide a looking glass into group theory and group dynamics.

Anticipated and unanticipated emotional triggers. Because the various visits and experiences were as diverse as we were, it is probably safe to say that each one evoked strong emotional reaction(s). Visiting a school of social work that exists near the border of Gaza and is vulnerable to ongoing missile attacks (it lost students and offices were destroyed) evoked panic for some that required extra support and hand-holding from faculty, one of whom (the US-born, MP), struggled to be a support while feeling especially vulnerable herself. The visit to the Western Wall and tunnels evoked intense emotion in almost all in the group, especially in the six who were not Jewish and for whom this was a first visit to Israel. Initially, we were a bit taken off guard by the strong reaction. Having visited multiple times, perhaps we are sensitized, and yet as a first experience for most of our students, it was one of the most moving within the eleven days. Another emotionally intense experience was, as expected, Yad Vashem (the national memorial to the Holocaust). Here we were prepared for the strong student reactions, and scheduled a debriefing meeting a day following, in order to provide students ample time to process individually. Some students were particularly moved by the farewell dinner that took place in a restaurant where all waiters are blind and guide the diners who struggle to eat in total darkness.

The interaction with the students and efforts to address their questions forced us to realize how much tacit knowledge about this place we carry and how much needs to be explained in response to even the simplest question to contextualize and make sense of what is being asked. It soon became a slogan of the course that addressing almost every question began with "well, it's complicated", or "it says in the Bible…" leading us to realize and acknowledge how every minute aspect of life in this tiny corner of the world is rooted in thousands of years of history. It was clear from the students' reactions that they related it to aspects of their own lives.

Bringing it All Back Home

In bringing it all back home, we reflect on our learning during the course, specifically through periodic debriefing sessions, at our wrap-up session two-weeks following return, via informal chats with students, through student assignments, and in our own individual thinking and mutual dialoguing.

Periodic debriefing sessions

We talked about the importance of holding periodic debriefing sessions but knew that, aside for one following Yad Vashem, scheduling the others would best be organically determined. It felt right to have the first one in the evening after the second day because the two first days included intensive encounters with populations foreign to students such as Bedouin residents of an undocumented (and thus not receiving municipal services) village. A major topic that students addressed was the witnessing of the powerful taboo regarding discussion of some topics such as sexual orientation, especially in youth. They were equally intrigued by the immense challenges that social workers encounter in negotiating professional values in the context of unfamiliar cultures. At this first session, we began to see group roles emerging, i.e., internal leader, quiet member, encourager, (Shulman, 2012) and also acknowledged in this early stage of the group development, reliance on us as leaders, approval seeking and a basic sense of harmony (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015). We experienced the students as very polite to one another and to us, and with some expected inhibition.

Our second debriefing session was on a Friday evening, following a day of touring the Old City of Jerusalem including sites that are important to Jews, Christians and Muslims. We were nearly halfway through our trip and had several intense days prior including Sapir College in Sderot, near Gaza and Yad Vashem. We could easily see that the level of comfort between students was strong, emotions high and connections among students visible and palpable. This is where we experienced the implicit curriculum (group support and dynamics) facilitating the explicit curriculum on trauma. One (non-Jewish) student expressed how moved she was by the visit to the Western Wall, another how she admired and was surprised by how Christians from all over the world, in diverse traditional clothes, got together at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and several students choked on

their tears recalling the pictures and details they witnessed about the cruelty of the Holocaust that was previously only a vague abstract concept. One student reported running through the Children's Memorial in Yad Vashem because she could not tolerate the pain.

Leaving Jerusalem we headed to our next overnight stop at a hostel in Zfat, where we informally gathered and chatted on a beautiful outdoor patio overlooking the city. When we arrived at Tel Aviv on the following evening students were excited for the opportunity to spend time walking on the boardwalk and exploring the city. Based on our shared observations of the strong mutual support occurring between the students, we decided to wait until the final day to hold the last debriefing session at the airport. In retrospect, this was a mistake.

Group theory addresses the final phase as one of separation; a time when there may be feelings of loss and even anger (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015). As seasoned group practitioners and social work educators, we ought not have been surprised to witness this around the last days and yet we were. Furthermore, though we anticipated plenty of time at the airport, and planned to meet at the gate for our debriefing, curiously, students were everywhere but at the gate. The airport meeting never happened. After landing in NY, we met at baggage claim, said our goodbyes, and reiterated that we would be meeting again in two weeks for a post-journey wrap-up session.

Wrap-up session

Two weeks had passed after returning to the US, and at last our wrap-up session was held in a similar fashion to our orientation; in person and via Skype attendance. Students were first asked to discuss what they would want in a rerun of the course and then about their "take-aways". While initially there was a level of hesitation in responses that resembled the first debriefing session, very quickly students became forthcoming with recommendations for the course, and with quite intense personal sharing. Some students wished there had been more time for discourse with Israeli social work students, faculty members, agency workers and clients, and more time to simply explore the country on their own. All reported feeling that the journey was transformative both in terms of cultural exposure and introduction to trauma. They also reported feeling a sense of growth in ability to tolerate unfamiliar and stressful situations individually and interpersonally. The support and connection that was so profound during the middle phase of the journey was once again visible and palpable. In reuniting, it seemed as though, all of a sudden, there was confirmation and trust that the relationships formed during the travels were real and lasting, though naturally would need to be expressed and manifested in a different way.

Informal chats with students

The experience of intensive immersion travel as a method of teaching necessarily led us to know our students (and them us!) in a way that is characteristically different than is typical in a classroom. We spent hours together, often in a mini bus. We ate our meals together. We shared new experiences that took many of us outside of our comfort zones, i.e., the desert heat of Masada, the narrowness and congestion inside the Jerusalem tunnels, the pitch- blackness at dinner in the dark. Essentially, we were vulnerable together, and only in reflecting here and now, do we realize how profoundly the experience of shared vulnerability was part of the implicit curriculum. This atmosphere allowed for an open discussion of how the course content related to students' personal experiences. For example, meeting with a scholar who conducted participatory research with a group of poor women on poverty as a collective trauma, triggered a student to share behaviors she observed in her grandfather from his history of poverty later in life after he become affluent. Such connecting of the personal to the general allowed students to gain better understanding of the nature of traumatic experiences and the effects they have on those exposed. Relating to a discussion of the experience of the Holocaust, one student stated that their stories "reminds me of my own life story… I quickly learned how to swim…My life was not easy but I was determined to make the best of it."

Student assignments

A month after completion of the trip, students submitted a final assignment which required them to identify a specific topic related to stress, trauma, and post traumatic growth in multicultural contexts which emerged for them during the visits and lectures and discuss it from the personal experience combined with relevant theoretical, empirical and practice literature. Students wrote about topics such as the effect of immigration trauma on parent child relationships and the effects on youth of living under constant security threat. In reading our students' final papers, we sensed a transformation on both the personal and professional levels, which is what we thought and hoped would happen. Learning experientially seemed to have facilitated students' self-reflection, an important process in social work practice. For example, one student commented that she could best relate to the experience of a young woman who migrated from Ethiopia and identify with some of her struggles ("to gain perspective about my place in the community and with developing a sense of self that I am happy with. Her story inspires me to use my struggles to help benefit others and to look at them as a potential teaching experience. She inspired me to recognize what it will take for me to overtake the trauma of being a parental child and see this as an achievable goal."). Another whose sibling serves in the US Army was impressed by the use of cohesion in helping soldiers in combat units to cope with traumatic exposure and remarked that "it is only ethical that we, as social workers, advocate for military members and Veterans", and yet another student stated that "the trip was therapeutic and it changed my views on trauma. It allowed me to understand my own trauma and provided me with tools to start my own healing process. Even reading the literature for this trip was insightful. My role as an upcoming social worker is to take what I learned from this trip and apply it as part of my practice in the future". The course seemed to evoke an interest in learning more about specific population groups and also about specific trauma-related content. As a profession committed to ongoing inquiry and life-long learning, this delighted us.

Individual thinking and mutual dialoguing

Similar to how we began, with the individual sharing of our personal rationales, so too we now end with our individual reflections.

MP: Though I had absolutely no idea what lay ahead when I unequivocally agreed to co-teach "Trauma in Israel" with Roni, I would (and hope to) do it again, as soon as Summer, 2015. From an academic standpoint, as is the case in teaching any course, it is always important to me to teach a course again, in hopes of ironing out some of the wrinkles. Here, I learned that students need more down time. In fact, there was a time I overheard one student say to another, "Roni and Lyn have a lot of energy", and then the other respond, "Well, I guess you have to in order to get your PhD". While I enjoyed hearing that, and sharing it with Roni, and while in fact Roni and I each do have a lot of energy, I think we took for granted that others would have the same level of energy, which was just not the case. I also learned to expect the unexpected (e.g. reactions at Western Wall), and to expect the expected (group development). I learned it is important for me to do less of the work, and to allow the students to do more (an ongoing teaching challenge), and to trust the learning and growth process more and intervene less (something that took me a long time to learn in practice and is taking me equally as long to learn in teaching).

On a more personal level, this was the first time I co-taught a course, and it was an immersion course, with my mentor, friend and neighbor. There was risk involved, i.e., jeopardizing the relationship, and I had not even considered it. As expected in co-leadership of any type, leaders often have different personalities, and this is the case of Roni and me and though we knew it, I had not thought of the possibility of how it might play out as we traveled in the close quarters of our mini bus. Though we did not always see eye-to-eye, I think we each provided balance for the other (one of us has a tendency to be overly compromising, and the other a tendency to be direct - guess which is which!). Nonetheless, there was always mutual respect, its explicit expression part of the implicit curriculum. We twelve travelers (including our bus driver and tour guide) were not only a group but in

many ways a family, and for all intent and purpose, a well functioning one with clear and honest communication. Though Roni and I live only two blocks apart in NY City, because of our hectic schedules, it wasn't until the wrap-up session, two weeks after our return to NY, that we met again and had the opportunity to debrief amongst ourselves. The time lapse gave us the ability to fully process and consider how we did as co-teachers and as friends, and in general along our travels, and be able to share our feelings about it with each other in an honest and forthright way, which I appreciate beyond words.

RB: As Lyn correctly points out, we are very different in our personalities, backgrounds and experiences. In addition, I came to this adventure with a lot of experience in teaching immersion courses, including study abroad, across the globe in cultures as diverse as Australia, Hong Kong, Nepal, Ghana and Israel and consequently had a somewhat clearer idea as to what was to come. Finally, I went back home to a place where my roots are that I visit frequently, know the language and the culture and therefore am familiar with the nuances that can be mysterious to outsiders. Thus, it should come as no surprise that our reflections differ too.

I was interested in observing how sights and interactions that come natural to me affect those for whom they are not. Similar to my experience of parenting, when my son's reactions taught me to see familiar places and events through a fresh lens by observing his reactions, I learned new ways of seeing my homeland and its people through the eyes of my co-travelers. In spite of all these differences, I whole heartedly do agree with Lyn - if the opportunities becomes available, I will do it again together with her.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

What can social work educators who contemplate developing and leading a study abroad course take from our experience? Which recommendations can we offer? What are some do's and don'ts?

Our goal was for students to develop the ability to recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of diversity in shaping the interpretation of and coping with traumatic exposure in individuals, families and communities from different ethnic cultural and religious backgrounds, identify the effects of multiple traumas and acquire skills in practicing from a culturally sensitive perspective.

While a detailed analysis of the use of an intensive study abroad course for teaching trauma related content has been elaborated elsewhere (Berger & Paul, under review), our experience suggests the benefits of teaching about issues and services in social work in a format that combines direct interaction with those both on the providing and the receiving sides of services within the context of actually experiencing diversity rather than just reading and hearing about it.

Such an endeavor requires careful planning of a curriculum that incorporates lectures, agency visits, structured and informal group and individual discussions as well as opportunities for processing and relaxation. Future research can be helpful in identifying for which content in social work education such a course is effective, what potential barriers are and which are effective in addressing them.

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When Mentors Pass

W. Patrick Sullivan

Abstract: The process referred to as mentoring and mentorship is an important facet of the academic and practice world. Many definitions of mentoring abound, but in general most refer to an older and more experienced mentor who helps shape and guide the career of a younger and less experienced individual known as the mentee. Developmental models of mentorship describe a process that evolves from the formative stages of the relationship to one characterized by collegiality. Missing from these models is a final stage - when mentors pass. This narrative discusses the evolution of mentoring relationships over time, and the impact and reaction to this loss of mentors.

Keywords: Mentoring, mentee, higher education.

Resting in a far corner of my desk drawer sit two well-frayed spiral bound books that I have owned for over a quarter-century. In the electronic age these are now relics from another time. The cover proclaims that these are grade books, and about once a year I pull them out and reminisce. In my first days as a college professor I would painstakingly copy all the student's names in the far left column, and then record the score for each assignment over the course of the semester. For all teachers, at all levels, this was once standard fare.

A wide range of memories are provoked by simply scanning them. Some students' names and faces have faded in the background; others produce the fondest of memories, and frankly a few produce slightly unpleasant recollections. Sometimes it is truly hard to grasp how much time has passed since my first full year as a teacher. In reality some students from my early days in the classroom are now deep into their careers with many having watched their own children graduate from college.

There is a certain cadence to life in the academy, with time marked by passing semesters and each new class outline boldly proclaims that a new year has arrived. When I look back I often think about the process of getting here and those days when actually landing a job at a university seemed like a distant and almost impossible dream. Then there are the other landmarks that go with academic life such as the first published articles, the promotion and tenure process, and changing jobs. I find that as I age and ponder the end of my career that I have increasing gratitude for the many people who offered significant help along the way. I have also been confronted with a new reality - those very people who were instrumental in shaping my career are passing. It's a facet of professional practice and academic life that has seemingly garnered scant attention.

For many the college years produce the fondest of memories. Indeed, colleges and universities thrive on nostalgia. Musings of being young, free and irresponsible are the basic building blocks of reunions, alumni days, college football experiences and even the desire to make gifts to your alma mater. Often it is the institution as a whole that is the draw. Yet, for some of us the emotional attachment goes beyond the exterior and extends in a deep way to the faculty who had the greatest impact on our lives. We often refer to such people as mentors, and while for some the period of mentorship is circumscribed by college years, for others it is a relationship that lasts for a lifetime. This work takes a close look at the process of mentorship, buttressed by a personal recollection of important interactions with mentors over an extended period of time. Additionally, it is argued that there has been limited attention to this special relationship as it evolves from apprentice to colleague, and in particular the final phase, the death of mentors.

Like my grade books, long apprenticeships in a trade or craft may also be remnants from another time. Will the process referred to as mentoring and mentorship remain an exception to this rule? Sadly, this too may also become a casualty in an age pushing us so boldly into on-line education where relationships, at best, are mediated by technology. Increasingly we seemed driven by a reductionist urge to distill everything down to skills and technique, leaving less room for the power of the story or the spontaneous teaching moment. In

turn the field has become enamored with those measurable bits and pieces of data that all drive one to reach some mythical threshold level of competency. By virtue of their unique approach to teaching I'm not sure if the professors who were the most important to me would find a comfortable niche in today's classroom, or if students are as eager to develop a deeper relationship with the faculty who teach them.

So what is mentorship, why does it matter, and how is this enacted in academic and professional settings? A review of the literature on mentorship generally reports that it is a function that has been recognized for centuries, but a concept that lacks a precise definition (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Merriam, 1983; Wilson, Valentine, & Pereira, 2002). Indeed, following an extensive review of the literature, Crisp and Cruz (2009) note that over 50 different definitions of mentoring can be found. From a research perspective this lack of precision creates messy methodological problems. It is difficult to study and research a topic, let alone draw meaningful inferences if basic concepts lack a consistent operational definition. Nonetheless, when one examines the body of work on mentoring common elements emerge, and it is clear that most definitions found in the literature capture these themes. For example, Roberts (2000) defined mentoring as, "a formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning with a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that persons' career and personal development" (p. 162). Two decades ago Collins (1994) described mentorship as:

> an interpersonal helping relationship between individuals who are at different stages in their professional development. The mentor - the more professionally advanced of the two - facilitates the development of the protégés - the junior professional - by serving as a source of social support beyond what is required solely on the basis of their formal role relationship (p. 141).

Finally, distilling things down to the basics, in discussing mentorship in education, Merriam (1983, p. 169) notes that "the mentor is a friend, guide, counselor but above all, a teacher." Merriam's focus on education is germane to social work at all levels. For practitioners, mentors come in the form of teachers, field supervisors, and later experienced clinicians who guide them in the early stages of their career. In social work education, mentorship is generally an important aspect of doctoral work and often extends to the help of senior faculty when the first academic position is secured (de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004; Oktay, Jacobson, & Fisher, 2013). For some this mentor-mentee relationship extends over the lifespan of a career (Wilson, et al., 2002).

As the definitions offered above indicate, mentoring is posited to serve a wide range of functions from emotional support, role modeling, career advice and even protection from potential traps and missteps. Accordingly, Schockett and Haring-Hidorb (1985) separate the tasks of mentoring into psychosocial and vocational domains. Extending this work, Dominquez & Hagar (2013) note that research on mentoring is organized around three theoretical frameworks, developmental, learning, and social with the emphasis squarely on the process by which a mentee adapts to and thrives in their host environment and chosen field.

The widespread interest in mentoring, both as a formal and informal process, is easy to understand as it appears to produces tangible benefits for mentee's, mentors, and organizations. For the mentee a productive relationship with a single, or several mentors appears to enhance one's career trajectory (Collins, 1994; Kram, 1983; Tenebaum, Crosby, & Gilner, 2001; Slivinske, 2012; Welsh, Bhave, & Kim, 2012), positively impact personal development (Kram, 1983), and help's one discover and build upon latent abilities (Roberts, 2000). For the mentor, offering guidance to another provides a source of self-fulfillment (Roberts, 2000), and satisfies the desire to leave a legacy (Dominquez & Hager, 2013). Finally, for the organization mentorship is associated with improved employee performance (Collins, 1994; Roberts, 2000), increased commitment to the field (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gilner, 2001) and

formalized programs appear to increase staff retention rates (Roberts, 2000).

Because it has seemed to be such an overwhelmingly positive endeavor, many organizations have initiated formal mentoring programs. Formal programs can be more inclusive given that efforts are extended to ensure that all newcomers are matched with a more experienced member who is poised to offer needed support and guidance. This may be of particular importance in settings where, consciously or not, informal mentoring may only be extended to certain individuals and groups. This links the organizational neophyte with someone they can turn to as they adjust to a new situation that is naturally replete with new demands. The downside is that there are no guarantees that the two parties thrust together share interests or are compatible. To that end, Merriam (1983) feels that in formalized arrangements mentors are less likely to "exert the more intense, pervasive influence characteristic of classic mentoring" (p. 107).

The truth of the matter is that people often serve as mentors without ever knowing it. Welsh and associates (2012) found that both mentor and protégés were poor at noting where informal mentoring was actually at play. Furthermore, de Janasz and Sullivan (2004) feel that the sole mentor-apprentice model is insufficient when considering the complexities of contemporary organizational life. They contend that a far better strategy is to have a network of mentors who possess differing areas of expertise and reflect different perspectives. This network of mentors become critical when addressing the three key competencies in career development - knowing why, knowing how, and knowing whom (de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004). However it plays out it seems clear that some form of mentorship is an important ingredient to success at least for some, and may lead to the development of a powerful, deeply personal, and lasting relationship.

Kram (1983), who has conceptualized the developmental stages in the mentor-mentee relationship, notes that:

> A young adult, in the first stage of his or her career, is likely to be engaged in forming an occupational identity, forming a dream, forming intimate relationships, and forming a mentor relationship. It is a time when questions about one's competence, one's effectiveness, and one's ability to achieve future dreams are most salient (p. 609).

This period of life is marked by many why and how questions. As a young student I had vague ideas of where my education was headed but it appeared through reading the overall program and course descriptions that social work might be a match. Every class was a test of that choice. To this day I can recall the material and the faculty that captured my attention and when things fell flat. Nonetheless, once the decision was made to go forward with social work I never wavered on that choice. Looking back at how my career unfolded it is clear to me that many of the observations and theories about mentorship offered above hold true. First, I have had one primary mentor for many years; it is a relationship that is now well over three decades long, and appropriately, I am now viewed as a colleague. Second, as suggested by de Janasz and Sullivan (2004) I have benefitted from the help of many that I consider to be mentors, people who offered the perfect guidance needed at a particular stage in my career development. Finally, in so many cases the process was decidedly informal and it is doubtful that key individuals ever considered what they were doing as mentorship - they were simply doing what an involved member of the faculty should do.

Kram (1983) speaks of the initiation phase in the mentoring relationship. Here the novice scans the environment and finds people who they admire and wish to emulate as they take the first shaky steps in their career. If the relationship becomes established it is often because a more senior faculty or staff member saw something promising in the newcomer. Yet it seems to me, particularly given the more recent suggestions of de Janez & Sullivan (2004) that long before anything more concrete develops that the shrewd student, junior faculty, or newly hired staff member is wise to look for a wide range of role models.

For me one of the most vivid of memories was a meeting with my undergraduate advisor on a rainy morning. I had declared social work as my major and this was perhaps my first real face to face meeting with a member of the faculty. Before I tapped on the door I noticed he was sitting at his desk reading, and classical music was playing in the background. To me he looked like what I thought a college professor should look like. In contrast I stood there in faded jeans, long stringy hair and a scruffy beard. He looked up and said, "Yes. Hi. Come in and let's look at your folder." He pondered my transcript, pointed at one item that caught his eye and while tapping his finger on the paper looked up and said "Say, you knocked down that Philosophy class!" It is true that I had earned an A in an introductory class, and I recall working hard to do so, but why, I pondered, was he so interested in that one outcome? It would take over a decade for me to understand why he felt it noteworthy, but when I did he was standing in front of me teaching a doctoral level policy course. Later, as a graduate student I had a question about some work and he invited me to lunch to discuss it. During lunch he looked up and said, "You know, I have always seen you as a person who could take over as the head of the Social and Rehabilitative Services Administration." I laughed out loud. It was a remark I had totally forgotten until one day, another decade later, that I was walking into my office for the first time as a State Director of Mental Health. In short, he saw something then that I simply did not.

This is but one of several faculty members who had a key role in shaping my career. Even today there will be random moments when I remember antidotes, words of advice, and feedback that was offered. So much of it made more sense as I moved into a faculty role. For example, once when I was frustrated with how a paper was shaping up I remembered a faculty member in my first doctoral level class proclaiming "scholarship is slow." It was a memory that offered reassurance. Sure there has been the instrumental help, such as pointing to possible job or grant opportunities, offers to collaborate on papers, opening doors for further networking. That was all vitally important. However, in my case it was the emotional connections that mattered most of all. Things like believing in you, and providing room to develop skills and take on additional responsibility.

After several years in the field after receiving a Bachelor's degree I returned to pursue an MSW and had just completed my first year. One day there was a note in my box to stop by the office of a faculty member who had overseen my practicum. In my practicum a new innovative model of case management that he had designed was launched as a pilot project. As I stood at the door he enthusiastically waved me in. "I have a possible deal for you," he proclaimed, "I think I am close to getting a grant from NIMH and I want you to lead a project for me next year." I was floored. In my mind I was an ordinary student in a rather large class at that. I had been singled out and offered an opportunity that few ever receive. The support didn't stop there. Upon graduation I accepted a position in a rural community mental health center and tried to continue the work we had pioneered at our school. One day the telephone rang. "Pat, I have a deal for you. I would like you to come back to the U and run another project for me." In my mind there was little choice. Here was a request from someone who had not only offered me a chance to be a part of an exciting project, but who had essentially paid for my education. "One more thing," he said with a wry laugh, "You have to enroll in the PhD program." It was another career changing moment.

Kram's (1983) oft-cited stages of mentorship nearly speak to a parent-child relationship that eventually leads to a separation, that may be followed by a phase of redefinition where the relationship is less hierarchical and more collegial. Certainly not all mentor-mentee relationships follow this path. However, it is likely that when the relationship follows this blueprint that both the mentor and mentee experience high levels of satisfaction and a greater emotional bond. In the end these are powerful relationships, and because this is so, the final stage, one rarely if ever mentioned in the literature, is equally important to consider.

I recently returned to my alma mater to give a short address during an alumni event. It was a predictably fun and meaningful day, and that

naturally lead to some reflection. As I looked at the historic building that housed my former school I realized that I harbored a bit of a fantasy. In the fantasy I have changed and moved forward in my career but all those key people in my life were just like I left them. For me it was somehow easy to think of these mentors as just like the monuments and building on campus. All the familiar landmarks are still there, and because everything is in place it's easy to feel like you are home. So in your mind nothing much had changed. I realized that I felt I could climb the stairs, turn the corner and walk right back into my advisor's office and find him at his desk, classical music in the background, and offering a welcome. The truth is he has long since retired. That's one level of loss. Then, this summer two of the most important people in my educational life died weeks apart. It was then that I realized that I had never considered the emotional impact of losing your mentors.

I had followed a normal academic path. As noted by Kram's (1983) model here separation can be expected, and this break can be marked by ambivalence and in some cases even a bit of anger. Because of the nature of academia the separation can have spatial dimensions, as many begin their careers miles away from where their formal training was completed. Like that sometimes painful separation process that comes with adulthood, if the relationship had been a healthy one it is likely that this is viewed as a positive step. If there had been friction it is still possible that a reconnection will occur. When it does, the once grandiose views of an admired mentor is often tempered by a more realistic appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, but by then the mentee may have also developed an important level of self-awareness. In the best of all scenarios this ultimately leads to the formation of a collegial bond. As de Janasz, & Sullivan (2004) suggest,

> Ideally, the dissertation advisor/mentor would help guide the protégé throughout their career. The mentor would teach the new academics much like apprentices learn their craft from masters in the field. Usually, as the protégé progressed toward tenure, the two would co-author articles, and the mentor would help the protégé gain status and visible positions in professional organizations. As the protégé obtained tenure and moved toward full professorship, s/he would mentor newer scholars (p. 264).

For some this may seem like a Pollyannaish view of how such relationships proceed, but it was my experience, and I suspect it was the same for many others. Furthermore, there was little of the messy stuff that came with separation. Once I did return as a candidate for a position, which I subsequently turned down because of my deep history with the institution. I had been in the program at all phases of my life and remained unsure if some could make the transition and see me in a different role - as a peer rather than a former student. That was my anxiety, and my own sense that I could not come home again. Yet, the closest bonds remained intact.

It is nearly embarrassing to ask, particularly as years pass and one climbs the academic ladder, but how many of us are still driven by a need to please our former mentors? Even now I read some of the published work of those who influenced my development and I find myself saying "brilliant" out loud, and nearly sighing because of a sense of never being able to measure up. Perhaps this is a silly notion, but it is no less real for me.

So in many ways my mentors had always been larger than life figures. Furthermore, they would always be wiser, and what's more, they would always be there to guide. When the first jolt of reality hit home it was nearly impossible to come to terms with on an emotional level. I had returned to the University for a retirement party and I saw her sitting in the back of the room. It provoked an instant memory. I remembered the first time I had walked into her classroom, which was one of the very first she taught at the school. She seemed cold, distant and brilliant. It was complete intimidation. When I had returned for doctoral work many years later she was in charge of the program - and that alone convinced me that I had a short shelf-life. I remember a day she walked in my office, scrap a paper in her hand, and with a laugh she said "You do this all the time. Here

maybe this will help you." It was simple reminder of the difference between the word it's and its. It is a piece of paper I left taped on my computer for years. It was the laugh, the joke, and the human interaction; in short it was a side of her I had never seen. Later that year I was making a presentation in class and described the work we had been doing in mental health. In the midst of my remarks I noted in an offhand way, "We try to focus on strengths." It was here that she perked up and said "Say more about that." Shortly after she stopped by my office and said, "Let's explore this idea further. I think this is important." What followed was an offer to contribute to a paper that would eventually change my life. Now the relationship became truly collegial, and through the mutual work she was guiding me in so many different ways. Scholarly writing, the research process, and even the politics of publication were lessons I was receiving up close and personal. Everything had flipped. Most of my early impressions were turned soundly on their head. She wasn't cold, she wasn't distant, but she was indeed brilliant. Now, over twenty years later I looked at the back of the room as I talked and I knew something was terribly wrong. A call once I returned home confirmed what I felt. The feeling was one of emptiness. It seemed too cruel to be true. The sharpest of minds was dulled by an insidious disease, and worse, the prognosis was poor.

The second blow was equally hard. The scenarios were nearly the same. He was a newcomer in my academic life, accepting a position at my school when I was relatively deep in my doctorate program. He was funny, quick, and had a rare intelligence that covered incredible ground. In my first memorable interaction he was pointing at a computer on his desk, looked at me and said "what am I supposed to do with that damn thing." No, computers were not yet a part of his world and as the relationship developed his sharp wit always underscored that learning could be fun. He helped organize an early conference that centered on what we were now calling the strengths perspective. His presentation was spellbinding. We worked together for years following my departure on what were, at least to me, meaningful projects that captured the attention of many in the social work community. Seemingly out of nowhere I received a handwritten note in his imitable style; full of laughs, quips, but with a very somber message. He was very ill. Another call led to another confirmation, the condition was likely terminal. I returned to my old school again, the reason was to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the very paper I had been asked to contribute to as a student. It was viewed by some as a watershed moment for the program, He was there, but he was very ill. In my short remarks I recognized his efforts to bring what we had started as a small pilot project to a larger audience. When it was over he looked me firmly in the eye and simply said "Thank-you." It was poignant because I knew it was likely the last time I would ever see him.

Only weeks apart both individuals, giants in the field, had passed. It is a loss that was difficult to put into words. It was noteworthy that I received many messages of condolences from current and former colleagues and even former students. There was an innate sense that this was a personal and deep blow, much like the loss of a parent, but also unique in its own way. Like all events that can move one off of their moorings, how I viewed the world, and in particular my career, had changed. People of ideas, of depth, real difference makers were nearly immortal in my irrational mind. After all, weren't they really still there, sitting at their desk as they had always done, and working diligently on masterful ideas and projects? It was an illusion that was pierced to the core.

Where does loss of the mentor fit in with Kram's (1983) or any developmental model of mentoring? Is it assumed that at this stage in the relationship, by virtue of age alone that the importance or the significance of the bond has waned? Perhaps for many that holds true, but I realized I felt very different. I consciously re-read papers that both and written, and even assigned a work by one of them that had only peripheral contact with the class I was teaching. With their passing it felt as if they had now been relegated to those old volumes one found hidden in the darkest recesses in the University library or as a historical citation on a summary paper that traces the evolution of ideas. There is comfort in knowing that at some point an eager graduate student will stumble on one of their works and realize that they were somehow linked

across time intellectually - but then, the people I knew were living and breathing human beings.

On a personal level the impact of these losses were reasonably predictable. I was forced to reflect on everything from approaching the end of a career and even my own mortality. It is an easy thing to keep out of mind, particularly in some environments. In university life you are constantly among the young and thus feel perpetually young as well. The grade book in the back of the drawer confirmed what I only could grasp intellectually. Yes, I had been doing this for a very long time, I was far from young, and at some point I too would depart, and my published work would be found on yellowed pages or as mere footnotes in a current article. As time progressed a writing project required me to delve into social work literature as far back as the 1920's. I found myself wondering about the life and work of those who had made this contribution, and even took the time to search the internet to learn more about them. This exercise, along with the deaths of mentors also made clear anew that somehow universities and the rest of the world will soldier on without me.

A whole new set of challenges and decisions were at hand. Should one just retreat and turn inward, or simply reorder priorities? Does a legacy matter, and if so, how is that best secured. How do you leave your mark, and is that even important? Is a legacy secured through a series of articles, and/or by the students and colleagues you touch along the way? All this suggests that a study of the process of mentorship in all its phases may be an important addition to a very important topic. Others, I suspect, have experienced lifelong mentorship, and have found it to be helpful at all phases of their career. How can this kind of relationship be encouraged and nurtured, and does new communication technology help sustain such bonds long after the last days of formal instruction have ended? Finally, how do mentees deal with the loss of powerful personalities in their life, and is the significance of such losses truly recognized?

For me these are interesting questions and topics that I will likely pursue. Yet more than anything, as I have grappled with the loss of two powerful personalities I have come to realize that they remain with me, and as juvenile as it may sound, I still feel motivated to make them proud.

And there has been another reaction. Mike "Doc" Emerick is one of the most respected play-by-play announcers in sports. I read a recent article where he reported that he tries to write a letter every day to someone who has touched him or done something nice for him in even the slightest way. It seems such a simple and yet so powerful thing to do. I can't keep up with Doc, but I have tried to reach out to key people, other mentors in my career. There is a psychiatrist where I worked after my undergraduate years that encouraged me to go on to grad school. Then there is the teacher in the first college class I ever entered who made a simple notation on one paper that was monumentally important feedback. The motivation is really simple. I hope that I had truly expressed my gratitude to my mentors before they slipped away. If I didn't make it clear to them what they had meant to me then I am certainly trying to make up for that now. Even so, thank-you seems so inadequate.

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The Road Not Taken: Discovering a World I Never Knew

James G. McCullagh

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is two-fold. The first discusses the life of an extraordinary social worker, Howard Chandler Walkingstick, who was a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. He worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in primarily nine Western states serving numerous tribes for 30 years before retiring and receiving the Distinguished Service Award from the Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall. Afterwards, he worked for the State of Oklahoma for another ten years before retiring. He was a recipient of many awards, all in recognition of his many accomplishments on behalf of his work with Indians and non-Indians. The second purpose of this paper is a reflection on how my relationship with Howard for three years until his death impacted me personally and the direction of my professional career. Howard became a dear friend akin to a wise uncle, as he educated me about his life and family and his work. This, in turn, led the author to complete extensive research and publishing on various aspects of the Cherokee Nation.

Keywords: American Indian, Cherokee Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In the fall of 2000 *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* published in their Special Section on American Indians an article titled "Opening Doors for First Nations' Peoples" by Walkingstick and McCullagh (2000). Now, 15 years later I share how meaningful and significant my relationship was with Howard for three years until his death on August 24, 2002, and the impact of the education that Howard imparted to me about himself, a Cherokee, and particularly his father, Simon, who was a leader in the Cherokee Nation. Included are Howard's recollections of important events in his life. Our conversations literally changed the direction of my professional life and my writings. It has been, and continues to be, a life-changing journey. Over the three years we had together, Howard and I became close friends, and he was akin to a revered, wise uncle. Often, Howard and sometimes Galela, his sister, on special occasions would write me and sign "Your dear friends, Galela and Howard."

I am an Irish-American who was born in the Bronx in 1936 and grew up in Queens, New York, beginning in 1939 on a block where all the families but one had immigrated to the United States from Ireland, Germany, and Italy as my parents did in the late 1920s with the goal of owning their first home. I was a social worker, counselor, and an attorney, among many jobs held over a lifetime of work beginning at age eight delivering newspapers daily in Queens. I was not a social scientist, but a professor of social work when I first spoke with Galela and Howard. As I was preparing on June 23, 1999, to write an article on school social work in the 1930s, I chanced upon the names of about 25 school social workers who were employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which were published in a National Association of Visiting Teachers Newsletter in 1935. One name, Galela Walkingstick, stood out from the others. At that time she was reported as working in Stilwell, Oklahoma. I was intrigued and wondered what Indigenous Peoples were located in eastern Oklahoma, thinking that she possibly could have been a member. When I discovered that the Cherokee Nation had their headquarters in Tahlequah, I called the Nation's headquarters and asked if a Galela Walkingstick had been a member of the Cherokee Nation. Assuming that she was likely not a member or possibly had died, I was stunned when the response was, "Yes, she is a member." Almost speechless, I explained that I was a professor and my purpose for the call, and then asked if I could speak with her. She responded: "I will call her and let you know." Soon, she called back and gave me Galela's phone number.

The following day I spoke by phone with Galela and her brother, Howard Walkingstick, both able to talk with me using their speakerphone. After a 30-year career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs as social workers and a number of years employed by the State of Oklahoma, they retired to Holdenville, Oklahoma, each living in their separate homes and both having never married. Howard again retired in 1993 after having served as the Director of Public Assistance and Staff Development, directly reporting to the Oklahoma State Welfare Director. They invited me, based solely on our two-hour

phone conversation, to meet with them in Holdenville.

I had planned to attend a conference at Tulsa in September and thought how meaningful it would be to write about a school social worker who was a Cherokee and also worked in the 1930s for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Prior to my trip I obtained additional information about most of the other Bureau school social workers employed in the Western states with the expectation that I would continue writing about school social workers. My wife always thought that she was of Cherokee blood but without haven't done any of the necessary genealogical research and thus no proof. Yet I wondered. If she were also Cherokee then our son would be also. Having never been to Oklahoma or spoken to someone who is Cherokee I was curious, intrigued, excited to begin this journey with no clear expectations of what to expect other than authoring an article on Galela Walkingstick. As demonstrated below my chance encounter with Howard literally, in time, not only changed the direction of my scholarship but, more importantly, my appreciation for Cherokee peoples and their institutions and, over time, other tribes.

First Visit With Howard and Galela

In early July 1999 I received a letter from Howard stating: "You are welcome to our 2 homes. I have a tremendous Indian collection in my home (3 bedroom brick). . . .It has a huge Indian tipi in [my] backyard made & set-up by Indians (Kiowa-Choctaw) & lots of trees, flowers . . . . You may come and stay anytime" (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, June 4, 1999). That September I flew to Tulsa, rented a car, stayed overnight at a motel, and then drove to Holdenville and met Howard and Galela at her house around noon. We had a long and pleasant lunch, and later I began to interview Galela and Howard. Howard and Galela each gave the author written permission to obtain a copy of their personnel records during the time they were employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which the author later received.

Howard gave me his home for four days while he stayed with his sister. I interviewed both Howard and Galela each day, and I continued to interview Howard by phone almost weekly for a year after my visit. All the interviews were tape recorded with their permission. On the last day of my visit Howard, then 84 years, brilliant and articulate, talked for six hours into my tape recorder. Both willingly shared stories of their professional lives, discussed their father's and aunts' education at the Cherokee National Male and Female Seminaries, as well as their careers, and the history of their people, the Cherokees. Howard and I became friends, and we talked often until his death on August 24, 2002.

From the beginning Howard and I connected while Galela was quieter and more reserved. Howard had a keen intellect, was charismatic, enthusiastic, humorous, and engaging. He often recalled events regarding Galela's career with the Bureau and thus I spent most of the time with Howard. As I listened to Howard and especially on the last day of my visit I realized that I was in the presence of a truly remarkable man and an extraordinary social worker who continued as a volunteer after his retirement. We became friends. I do not believe it mattered to him that I am an Irish American.

During that first visit Howard drove us to historic Park Hill, once the home of the legendary Chief John Ross and many other notable Cherokees who moved to Park Hill beginning about 1836, including the Reverend Samuel Austin Worcester and his family who arrived on December 2, 1836 (Foreman, 1948). We visited the Cherokee Nation's Heritage Center, once the site of the Cherokee National Female Seminary which burned to the ground on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1887 (Starr, 1993). At the Center there was one sculpture, *Exodu*s, which instantly captivated me. Created by Willard Stone (1916-1985) from a "block of native walnut," he, in his own words, reflecting on his people's exodus, known as the Trail of Tears, "tried to capture the tragedy, heavy load of sorrow and heartache being overcome by a courage and determination seldom, if ever equaled by any race in history against such heavy odds" (Boatman, n.d., p. 23). Howard had begun educating the author into a world I never knew.

Later that day Howard drove Galela and me a short distance to Tahlequah where the Cherokee Nation has its headquarters, and I visited their gift shop,

had lunch, and purchased my first books pertaining to the Cherokees. We then drove to the campus of Northeastern State University and walked around Seminary Hall, the first building of Northeastern State Normal, which was once the Cherokee National Female Seminary, constructed in Tahlequah and dedicated on May 7, 1889, with the "grandest public demonstration ever witnessed in the Cherokee Nation" (The Arrow, 1889, p. 2). The Seminary building and 40 acres were sold to the State of Oklahoma on March 3, 1909 to serve as the Northeastern State Normal School (currently Northeastern State University) (The Herald, 1909).

On our last day together at his home on September 27, 1999, I asked Howard numerous questions, and for six hours Howard responded. Selected responses follow. These first responses pertain to life growing up in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. General topics are bolded and Howard's responses are indented.

High School Education in Okmulgee

> I really enjoyed the glee club. Really, I had a good singing voice. . . . It gave me rich experiences to intermingle with students who I might not have in class. . . . I used to grade papers for an algebra teacher and chemistry teacher. . . . I was sort of a teacher's assistant. . . . I took French and I loved it. . . . I took all of the chemistry that I could. I loved art. I took a class one year in art. I wanted to go over to the business field and I took typing and bookkeeping. As life went on this was very good for me. This gave me the foundation at least I could do secretarial work. My sister became the first valedictorian in the Okmulgee High School of Indian blood. This was somewhat a hard decision for the school. Were they going to give it to a non-Indian or to my sister, who is of Indian blood? She really showed Indian. She had long black hair, her skin coloring was tan, not from the sun. I had some tan coloring, but I could pass for anything really. And my sister is going to get this. I will see to it if she deserves it, if she doesn't then I won't push. My father wouldn't have done this because he was a quiet, un-disturbing person . . . but my mother was a pusher. In history and English I would have friends, wealthy friends, non-Indian, sitting beside me or wanting to sit beside me because they didn't study and would want to look off my paper and I would let them so they could pass. I did grade papers for those classes as well in English and in History. It was helping other people and really this is the background for me as I became a social worker in later life. Helping people to help themselves. I saw nothing wrong with it. I was a pretty frail little thing, pretty sickly. . . I took extra hours and this helped me to move forward quicker than others. I started high school at age 12 and graduated at 16 years. . . I was selected to be on the National Honor Society, which my sister was also. . . . My IQ was tremendously high (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, September 27, 1999).

Howard's interest in social work, as noted above, began while attending the local high school. After receiving his Associate of Arts degree he began working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the supervision of Mrs. Vera Harmon, a school social worker, who introduced him to the profession of social work. Other factors that may have led him to social work included his sister, Galela, who became a social worker in 1935 after attending the MSW program at the University of Minnesota for one year. Also, while working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC, he became friends with Lucile Ahnawake Hastings, a social worker, and the daughter of Congressman William Wirt Hastings. During Howard's deployment in Chicago he lived at Hull House and volunteered while continuing to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. After World War II Howard lived at Chicago Commons, another settlement house, and continued to volunteer. He appeared destined to become a social worker and continue with the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a social worker.

Howard's Reflections on going to Washington

Howard applied and was one of four accepted to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC. He began on September 23,

1935 as a Junior Clerk. Howard also enrolled at George Washington University, taking six to nine hours each semester after work. The following year he was initiated into the Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) fraternity. A long-time member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, he shared with me a copy of the TKE Educational Foundation 1998 Annual Report in which he was featured as "A Distinguished TEKE." Reflecting in 1998 on his TKE membership Howard remarked: "The key to my success is from my fraternity days with strong determination and imagination; things that are established in fraternal living. I have benefitted tremendously over the years from the rich and social experiences from my early days in Tau Kappa Epsilon." The article's closing sentence captured Howard's life: "Going strong at 84, Howard Chandler Walkingstick, a Teke for life, vows to be of service until the end" (Tau Kappa Epsilon, 1998).

> I was asked if I would have tea at the White House every Saturday afternoon with other college students. I said that I would. There were students from all the colleges from D.C. visiting with Eleanor Roosevelt. Just being in the White House was an experience. It wasn't like a tourist thing. They knew you were coming and the cards, you just went in and were cleared. It was a new thing for me and really I was not fearful. Somehow I never get scared of anything. I would tackle anything and do the best I can. We came back and one or two others from George Washington would sit in the corner in the Union and talk about it and laugh. . . . I found this to be a stepping stone for me just to be around the president's wife and everybody. You learn from everyone, even the students; you learn from each other (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication September 27, 1999).

> I was rushed [by several fraternities]. But I saw a fraternity that I wanted to join even more and I thought I could make a big contribution to its growth. So I joined Tau Kappa Epsilon. . . . I became the social chair for the fraternity in due time. Then eventually before I knew it, I was the social chair for all the fraternities. [Howard detailed how with others he planned a "huge inter-fraternity prom."] We had to arrange for a big dinner for all the fraternity brothers and their dates, who had to be from a sorority. I wasn't dating a girl from a sorority, but I had to find one that would go with me and be my escort, and I did. I was so surprised one Sunday when I was reading the Washington Post. I saw "Walkingstick," in big letters, "leads the big fraternity prom". . . . It got my name out all over the country and I would get calls from all over the place, because of the name, I think. . . . I was used to getting dressed up in a tux. After work I would change into a full dress or a tux and go to an embassy or a legation party. My name was brought to the attention of the other fraternities from the Washington Post article. It was nothing for me to go to these parties and asked to speak. [Howard continued to reminisce.] My life is just filled with fond, fond memories of Washington, DC (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, September 27, 1999).

World War II, MSW Education, and Social Work Practice

Howard was transferred to Chicago with others with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, became a resident and volunteer at Hull House, joined the United States Army in June 1943, and was discharged in April 1946. He returned to Chicago and to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He became a resident of Chicago Commons and volunteered every night for the settlement house. That fall in late September 1946 Howard began his graduate social work education at The University of Denver and completed all course work in one year, but not the thesis requirement, which was accepted in 1949, and Howard was awarded an M.S.W. on December 9, 1949. (Walkingstick & McCullagh, 2000, pp. 10-13). After completing the required course work at the University of Denver, Howard returned to South Dakota, and then was assigned to New Mexico for 2 ½ years. He was headquartered at Albuquerque and he was responsible for all of New Mexico, and he also worked in Colorado and Utah. He worked with Navajos, Pueblos, Mescalero Apache and Jicarilla Apache

(Walkingstick & McCullagh, 2000, pp. 14-16). Reflecting on his work in New Mexico with the Apaches Howard remarked:

> I did what I thought was social work, what I've been taught in school. A lot of group work. Group work with the Mescalero Apache, mostly children and heads of families, but the men would be out herding sheep. Nomadic, they didn't live in houses, they just moved from place to place with their kids. Also, on the other side near Santa Fe the Jicarilla and I did a lot of group work. I had to call in advance. I had the Superintendent get the people into his office. I would call from Albuquerque to tell him I wanted to see so-and-so. They were nomadic; they herded sheep and they didn't collect materialistic things. (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 16, 2000)

> [Howard's work with the 19 Pueblos]. I visited families, visited those in nursing homes, visited those who were sick. It's a regular home visit. Sometimes there would be someone sick in the home and I was alone not with the nurse. If I felt like the person needed to be seen by the doctor at the hospital clinic, then I would refer them to the pueblo clinic. Big clinics and a big nursing home at the pueblos. Beautiful nursing homes. The Indians lived to be real elderly. I visited them at the nursing homes to see if they were getting care, if they wanted something. They were run by the Indian Health Service. Each pueblo had its own money. They weren't poor. Days schools there too. We visited the schools to see if there were any problems with children in the schools. Once I put on a program at one of the schools. . . . About Indians beyond their areas. Telling them how the Sioux lived. Over toward El Paso, Texas there were the Mescalero Apaches. And they did have boarding schools. A bit more progressive. I visited boarding schools all the time. The kids got homesick or had special problems, where they wanted to get a letter to their parents. I would sit down and help them write a letter (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 17, 2000).

Howard completed a study with two anthropologists on the youth of the Southern Ute tribe that had been awarded 33 million dollars, a judgment award for the loss of land. The Bureau of Indian Affairs didn't want the money spent hog-wild. So we came up with a plan and how it would be spent. A lot would be for good, constructive causes. As a social worker, I was to put the plan into effect (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 16, 2000).

I asked Howard: "As you think about this part of your life in New Mexico and you now have your MSW what do you remember as your most important accomplishments?"

> I organized with two other people the first New Mexico welfare conference [in Albuquerque at the University of New Mexico] and the Native American was predominant and he was in the majority and not in the minority [in New Mexico] which gave it a good background to get that conference organized and let the Indian stand out. Pueblos in particular (H.C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 17, 2000).

"Other accomplishments, Howard?" I asked.

> Well, I thought it was good to integrate the local hospital and the Indian Office put up a certain amount of money for integration of beds in the hospital for those of Indian blood. It was an accomplishment. And to this day the Indians have a certain number of beds in that hospital and they have to take them. The top person and I had many meetings with many organizations about integrating the hospital and it finally came to be (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 17, 2000)

When I asked again about his accomplishments in New Mexico, Howard responded:

> I thought also an accomplishment was being a consultant of the Child Welfare League of

> America where I was really helping them to [develop a plan for] the admission of the people of Indian blood in schools of social work. I really think that it's important. Traveled everywhere and made big speeches. Like Seattle, Washington and they had one on racism. That was to open the doors for those of Indian blood and my primary focus was to get them into areas of social work. I served as a consultant just for the sole purpose to get Indian students in the school of social work so they would work with some of their own people. I went to Washington University and Washington State, Arizona University and Arizona State and New Mexico University. I spoke to classes and I would talk about Indian families and Indian people. They loved it. I really think it was a big one. That really opened the doors for Indians.

By about 1970, when he retired after 36 years of service, Howard had "served approximately 35 tribes, pueblos, and villages in nine states." Gridley (1971) described his service in saying that he provides a vigorous leadership for those he contacts, and has contributed greatly to the alleviation of differences between state welfare programs and the federal government. . . . (p. 462). Howard also was a consultant and technical supervisor in the early 1970s to Indian agencies in selected counties in western Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. He was also a liaison to the Alabama-Coushatta tribe in Texas (Gridley, 1971, p. 462).

When Howard was near his proposed retirement at age 55, he was brought to Washington, DC for final interviews to become the Director of Social Work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but finally declined stating that he was close to retirement and that he would be unhappy in Washington, DC. He received the Bureau's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award. He next was employed by the Oklahoma State Department for 12 years and then retired and became a community leader (Walkingstick & McCullagh, 2000, pp. 16-19). These comments are snapshots of Howard's life as a social worker with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

A Mason for 50 years

During the Fall Reunion on October 6, 1999 at the McAlester Scottish Rite Masonic Center Howard was honored with a 50-year pin. Howard joined the Masons at Fort Thompson, South Dakota in 1949, and then in 1964 joined the McAlester Scottish Rite "and shortly thereafter earned his 32 degree" in Yankton, South Dakota.

Howard stated, "The Masons are for helping others and I think it's a wonderful thing that I've been able to be with them for so long" (Mathes, 1999). "Such an accomplishment means a 50-year dedication of the highest standards of ethics and morality" (McAlester Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 1999). Elizabeth Gaberino, a resident of Holdenville, on October 15, 1999, sent a note congratulating Howard: "'Congratulations' on your fine record with the Masons. I can attest to your being kind and good to others, always willing to help a good cause. God smiles down on you with happiness" (E. Gaberino, personal communication, 1999). Howard remarked:

> I am to receive their 50 year pin and not many Masons with a 32nd or 33rd degree live to receive this award. . . . The Masons is based on the Bible. . . . It's giving of yourself with biblical teachings behind and within your frame of mind. It's helping people to help themselves and never let a fellow Mason to be in need but to help them. It's really Christianity, the Bible. I received my 50 year pin in the Blue Lodge. I went off of an Indian reservation to a neighboring white community. I was the only Indian going into the Blue Lodge. I was appalled when I went to the reservation to learn that the Mason's neighboring the reservation didn't have a Native Indian in the Lodge and I was not accustomed to that because I was going into the ones in Virginia and didn't get to finish and this is where George Washington, our first president received his in the Blue Lodge.

Howard began sponsoring Indians who were accepted as Masons (Walkingstick & McCullagh, 2000, pp. 19-20).

Walkingstick Family Cemetery

When Joe Scraper, Jr. first met Howard, based on his background, Joe was apprehensive about how Howard would treat him. Joe shared his first encounter: "Cousin Howard had an instinct, a gift that was completely beyond me. When we met, it was as if he waved my prejudice away with a flick of his wrist like so many dandelion seed in the wind. My cautious nature was simply no match for the love of all people that emanated from Howard. Within a short time we became very close. It seemed that we had known each other all our lives. We were definitely kindred souls" (J. Scraper, personal communication, July 26, 2014).

In May 2001, Joe Scraper and Michael Walkingstick Gregory brought Howard to the old Walkingstick cemetery on Walkingstick Mountain to support Howard, but "it was Howard who somehow found the strength to uphold all three of us as the full import of the desecration at the cemetery hit us" (Scraper, 2001). Joe Scraper, in response to the shock of the totally destroyed Walkingstick family cemetery wrote "Sacred Ground," a poem. In part it reads:

> Perhaps one day you too will have your own small piece of land.
>
> Perhaps, in a few years, or in a few centuries,
>
> Someone will stop by and place a flower, or a feather on your land out of respect.
>
> Perhaps, they will gently place a stone on your land to honor you, and then carefully back away.
>
> I hope that no one disturbs your Sacred Ground,
> and I hope that you will not disturb the Sacred Ground of others.

On another visit Howard, Joe, and Michael, and I traveled to Walkingstick Mountain, owned by a non-Cherokee, to visit the Walkingstick family cemetery, which was in complete and total disarray, and actually destroyed beyond recognition as a cemetery. As I looked around what was once a cemetery, I was appalled at the utter disregard for this Cherokee cemetery. We devoted the day to erecting an iron fence and then placing all the broken and falling head stones into what was hoped would become a protected area. The area was essentially land for grazing cows, who may have trampled on the stones in the Walkingstick family cemetery. I had only been to cemeteries related to deaths in my family, all of which were well maintained. I was quietly shocked and dismayed as we worked to make sense of the headstones before placing each stone within the newly constructed fence. Since then, visiting cemeteries where Cherokees rest has occurred on each subsequent trip, which may seem surprising, but it is my way of being with Cherokees-many of the names on tombstones I now know-resting for eternity. Michael Walkingstick Gregory (2001) said it well in May 2001 when he, Howard, and Joe, met to visit three family cemeteries, including the destroyed cemetery on Walkingstick Mountain. "Three distant family members met together for the first time to walk the ground of their ancestors, to feel the wind in their faces and strain to hear the voices of the ones who went before them."

Later Visits

On another trip Howard, Michael Walkingstick Gregory, and I traveled to Anadarko to visit the National Hall of Fame for Famous Americans Indians which features busts of 41 members of numerous First Nations, including Howard's father, Simon R. Walkingstick (Bowen, 2008). Another world I never knew existed came into sharp relief as we stood by the bust of Howard's father mounted on a red granite pillar. Howard proudly shared memories of his father and particularly his early and significant accomplishments as a graduate of the Cherokee National Male Seminary on June 30, 1887 (Starr, 1993) and his many later accomplishments (McCullagh, 2001).

The induction ceremony for Simon Ralph Walkingstick occurred on May 8, 1999, with the dedication of the portrait in bronze of Howard's father. The dedication began with the Lord's Prayer in sign language by Eva Lu Russell, a member of the Kiowa Nation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Welcome, and introductions

of board members and guests. The Walkingstick family and sculptor were then introduced, which was followed by a War Dance. A dedicatory address was delivered by a grandson of Simon Walkingstick. The unveiling was done by Howard, the Master of Ceremonies, and Kiowa War Mothers and was followed by a Smoking Ceremony. The dedication was concluded with a prayer in sign language by Eva Lu Russell. Simon R. Walkingstick's portrait in bronze joined such memorable leaders as Jim Thorpe, Sequoyah, Geronimo, Will Rogers, and many others (Baird, 1999; The Anadarko Daily, 1999; The Okmulgee Daily, 1999). During this trip Howard shared his father's framed diploma with me when I stayed in his home. It was a proud moment for Howard that his father was being recognized for his many accomplishments.

Howard's Community and Church Involvement and his book, Cycles of Life

Howard was a Life Member, on the Board of Directors in 1998-1999, and 2nd Vice President of the Holdenville Society of Painters and Sculptors Art Center (1999). In 1999 he was also the Director and Host of a Garden Party at his home. Galela was a Past-President and Howard and Galela were listed as the only "Benefactors." Howard's home was a mini-museum of pottery, baskets, sculpture, paintings, dream catchers, drums, various artifacts by Cherokee artists, and many walking sticks. In 1999 Howard completed his book, *Cycles of Life: Learn from their lives: the Walkingsticks* (Walkingstick, 1999). It was a special occasion for Howard when he donated a copy of his book to the Director of the Grace Pickens Library in Holdenville. He was featured on the front page of the *Holdenville Daily News*. The article was titled "Walkingstick Leads Life Opening Doors and 'Donates Written Legacy to Library.'" Howard remarked: "People should be proud of what they are. . . . The American Indian has come a long way in my lifetime, and all races enjoy affiliation with their heritage group. I think that Native Americans need to get involved in their local community, but still maintain their heritage proudly" (Baird, 1999). The dedication, on the inside last page of an autographed copy of *Cycles of Life* to the author read, in part, "I am a Grandpa Moses writing so late in life, memories of excitable experiences among people and more so the Native American Indian people, nationwide as well as other minorities." On page one, Howard wrote: "Helping Others is Our Motto," and that was how he lived his life.

While at Anadarko we met the editor of The *Anadarko Daily News*. She and I had some quiet time during which she asked me write a short paper on his father, Simon R. Walkingstick (1868-1938), a full blood as determined by the Dawes Commission. Another path was taken, which resulted in an article titled "Simon R. Walkingstick: A Cherokee of Conviction and Courage" (The Anadarko Daily, 2001). Simon's grandfather, Archibald Scraper, and great-uncle, George Washington Scraper, crossed the Trail of Tears, were officers during the Civil War, and had been elected to various political offices in the Cherokee Nation (Starr, 1999). Simon R. Walkingstick was the son of Thomas Walkingstick and Betsy Scraper, the daughter of Archibald Scraper.

On February 4, 2001, the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Howard sang The Lord's Prayer at Barnard Memorial United Methodist Church in Holdenville. A member wrote: "Thank you for making Sunday a special spiritual day. The solo was a very gracious way of setting the tone for worship. You are very special to many people. Thanks again - May the Lord continue to take care of you" (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 11, 2001). In June 2001, Galela and Howard made a sizeable donation to their Methodist Church in Holdenville for youth-members and non-members-to attend Egan Camp and Retreat Center in Tahlequah for a week, which was one their many efforts to help youth. Those who attended sent a note to Howard stating, "Thank you so much for providing expense money for us to attend Camp Egan.

We had a really great time! Thank you for being so kind & generous" (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, June 17, 2001). Again, on April 28, 2002, the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Howard sang the Lord's Prayer during the Services to honor "Native American Awareness Sunday." Howard, in a note to the author, stated: "Church packed" (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, ca.

May 6, 2002; Barnard Memorial United Methodist Church, April 28, 2002).

On March 1, 2001, Howard received a letter thanking him: "This note is to give you a great big thanks! Thank you for the money you gave me at Christmas; I applied it toward the purchase of my favorite cologne. Thank you for the books you gave me, also. I keep them at school and read them during my duty time in 'In-School-Suspension.' You are a talented writer!. . . Finally, thank you for providing special music at church. You are a dear" (unknown author, personal communication ca. February 26, 2001). Another letter that Howard received on March 2, 2001 again thanking Howard: "We want to thank you for the journal and for the song (Lord's Prayer) at _____'s [name not included] celebration. Both were very impressive. You have been such a good friend to us. All your hard work has brought _____ [name not included] a lot of recognition and it would not have happened without you. Thank you for everything" (unknown author, personal communication, ca. February 27, 2001).

Howard Received the Ga-du-gi Award

The Cherokee Nation honored Howard with the Ga-du-gi Award on October 15, 2001, which means working together on behalf of the Cherokee people. I had nominated Howard and was present at the Tribal Council meeting when The Honorable Chad Smith, the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation presented Howard with a "a piece of Cherokee pottery and a plaque to signify his accomplishments for the Cherokee people and other Indian nations." Chief Smith remarked: "The results of Howard's work on behalf of Indian communities have had a tremendous positive impact. . . . Howard believes that his purpose in life has been to serve the Creator. He has given time and money to promote Indian causes and help Native Americans" (Chavez, 2002). One of his cousins, Michael Walkingstick Gregory, after the ceremony presented the author with a walking stick personally crafted with inlaid bead work, which hangs in my office in appreciation for having recommended Howard for the Ga-du-gi Award.

On October 31, 2001, Howard wrote Chief Chad Smith the following and also gave the author a copy:

> As you know, I received from you the "Ga Du Gi Award," October 15, 2001.
>
> This occasion is one of two highlights in my life; the other the Distinguished Service Award presented to me by the Secretary of the Interior, June 8, 1967. I have received numerous forms of awards during my lifetime, but none like the two mentioned above.
>
> The Cherokee Award I will always cherish and hold dear to my heart; it is from my people, the Cherokee. The setting, the Tribal Council meeting auditorium, I enjoyed with immense interest. The décor and seating style so exquisite. For years, I have collected Indian pottery from all over the States, where I had worked for the BIA. The Chestnut Burr Pot, Recreations of Sequoyah Pottery, is beautifully designed, the deep impressions of the thumb prints so well done prior to the firing of my pottery. I love it and it is now added to my tremendous collection of Indian artifacts.
>
> While I write, I am playing a tape, "The Cherokees National Children's Choir." So, so peaceful and from the Creator's Children, The Cherokee way of Life and Spirit.
>
> Peace and Grace, Chad
> Wado,
>
> Howard C. Walkingstick
> The Cherokee Indian Writer

Other Awards and Acknowledgments

Howard was selected as an "outstanding American Indian Leader" for the fourth edition of Indians of Today. The editor and compiler, Marion E. Gridley, remarked: "Howard Walkingstick is one of the outstanding social workers of the country, and is also internationally recognized for his work. His eminent and humanitarian career, marked by an exceptional ability to work with Indian and non-Indian groups, has brought him a numbers of

honors." Other honors are the following: "Who's Who in Oklahoma, Who's Who in the Southwest; Outstanding Personalities in the South; Dictionary of International Biography. . . Distinguished Service Award, Oklahoma Health and Welfare Association (Gridley, 1971, pp. 462-63). And, as mentioned, Howard received the Distinguished Service Award from the Secretary of the Interior.

The Ga-du-gi Award came from his people, the Cherokees. Howard grew up in the Creek Nation in Okmulgee, went to public schools, attended and graduated from universities when very few Indians were enrolled, and never learned to speak Cherokee. As Michael Walkingstick Gregory, a distant cousin, stated. "Howard and Galela's generation were the first to decide to wholeheartedly follow the path of the mainstream American to prosperity and leave behind the beliefs, mores, language, and culture of their Cherokee ancestors. At the same time, they were staunch defenders of their fellow Indians and worked hard to lead them into a new age" (Gregory, 2014). Thus, the Ga-du-gi Award may have been his coming home to his people.

In September of 2001, Howard received a key to the city of Holdenville. Mayor Jack Barrett, who presented the key, remarked: "'Every once and a while you meet an individual who gives more to the community than they take out. . . . Howard did not only give to the Art Center but he gave to the community also" (Pixler, 2001).

In early November in 2001, Howard mailed me a gift of a 3x4 foot photograph of himself complete with Indian headdress, which was taken in the rotunda of the Oklahoma State Capital while he was "introducing Miss Indian Oklahoma, a Cheyenne (Oklahoma) from Clinton, Oklahoma" (Walkingstick, November 3, 2001). The framed photograph hung in both his and Galela's home, and he suggested that it should hang in my office (Walkingstick, November 3, 2001). It does.

How Howard Would Like to be Remembered

> I think that my work will live on and people will know and I've written this book and it is helping to establish my permanence. And also that dedication of our father's there at Anadarko - that is another legacy that will help to have me live on. My name is inscribed along with Galela's and our nephew on that monument and it won't be forgotten and Howard won't either. Howard's not even going to be forgotten he still isn't. (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, February 16, 2000)
>
> I planted seeds that will grow, and I made a rich contribution. (H. C. Walkingstick, personal communication, March 19, 2000)

A Professional Life Changing Journey

Howard had impressed on me his father's and aunt's education at the Cherokee National Male and Female Seminaries, and that his father was a graduate, as he named others who graduated. Another path to take-to learn about the Male Seminary-took many years to collect and organize data before I could begin writing about it. A paper on the Cherokee Male Seminary football team was recently published (McCullagh & Schmidt, 2014), as well as another paper on the Male Seminary baseball team (McCullagh, 2015). I am currently finishing a manuscript titled The Cherokee National Male Seminary (1851-1856): Board of Directors, Teachers, Pupils, Graduates, and Their Families who attended the Seminaries (McCullagh, 2015). Howard mentioned during my first visit that his father, Simon, had graduated from the Male Seminary. I was intrigued and later began collecting and compiling information about the Seminary from various sources, primarily newspapers and Tahlequah newspapers.

A list of the graduates, both of the Female and Male Seminary, was published in the *History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folk Lore*, authored by Emmet Starr, who had graduated from the Male Seminary on June 28, 1888, just one year after Howard's father graduated. Both Seminaries were originally elite residential campuses of higher education for young Cherokee women and men. The first pupils began their studies in May 1851, and both Seminaries graduated their first pupils in February 1855 and again in February 1856, with three more graduating in October 1856 from the Male Seminary. The

Male Seminary closed in October 1856 and the Female Seminary closed in February 1857 for want of funds (Starr, 2008).

The men were destined to be leaders, and the young women "attending the Female Seminary believed they were destined for superior status: if not all May queens, then at least all rosebuds" (Reese, 1997, p. 87). About half of the Female Seminary graduates in 1855 and 1856 married men who had attended or graduated from the Male Seminary, and Chief Joel Bryan Mayes, who graduated in 1856, married three graduates (McCullagh, 2006; Starr, 1993). With the closing of the Female Seminary on February 11, 1857, the remaining pupils never had an opportunity to graduate, yet many married Male Seminarians. For instance, Mary America Scrimsher married Clement Vann Rogers, who had attended the Male Seminary. Clem Rogers, after a record of distinguished service, upon statehood, Rogers County was named after him (Starr, 1993). His son, Will Rogers, born on November 4, 1879, was a national celebrity before his untimely death on August 15, 1935, at Point Barrow, Alaska (McCullagh, 2006, Yagoda, 1993). Lulu Mayfield Starr, who graduated on June 29, 1993, married William Wirt Hastings who graduated from the Male Seminary on June 26, 1884. Among his many accomplishments and offices held, he was elected a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1915 to 1921, and again was elected and served from 1923 to 1935 when he retired (O'Beirne, 1892; Starr, 1993; Adair Family Reunion Book Committee, 2003).

I flew into Tulsa on another trip and drove to Claremore to visit the Will Rogers Memorial Museum and to meet with an archivist. The following day I drove to Oologah and then on to Dog Iron Ranch., the birthplace of William Penn Adair Rogers. Will, as he was known to everyone, was a movie star, a syndicated newspaper columnist, a Broadway star, an advisor to presidents of the United States, and so much more (Lowe, 1997, Will Rogers Memorial Museums (n. d.). Interconnections among the elite were common. For instance, at Claremore on June 29, 1899, Ida Mae Collins, the daughter of Doctor and Mrs. A. J. Lane, at her home suggested that a club be organized for the young women living in Claremore. Eighteen girls were at her parents' home that day. They chose the name of the club to be the Pocahontas Club. Later the neighborhood boys heard of the club, and Will Rogers, chosen as their spokesman, spoke to Ida Mae, the first elected president. At their second meeting the neighborhood boys, including Will Rogers, were made honorary members, and during the second year were voted in as active members (Pocahontas Club, 1949). "The names of those charter members read like a *Who's Who* of early Claremore and Rogers County" (Indian Women's Pocahontas Club, 1999, pp. 13-14). A number of the 27 charter members, all young women, and others who later joined, attended the Cherokee National Female Seminary, and several of the charter members continued or obtained their education in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, or in New England. The last Principal of the Cherokee Female Seminary was Arminta Ross Foreman, a charter member, who served from 1906 to 1909 when the Seminary was closed. Since Will Rogers' death he has been remembered each year on his birthday by the Pocahontas Club. Also, one of the early presidents was Dr. Emmet Starr, who served as President from 1906 to 1908 (Indian Women's Pocahontas Club, 1999).

Later I drove to Chelsea to spend quiet time at the gravesite of Clement Rogers (1839-1911), buried in the Chelsea Cemetery, as is his first wife, Mary America Schrimsher (1839-1890), and many of their children. I wanted to quietly respect him and acknowledge his many accomplishments and his wonderful family. As mentioned, both Clem and Mary America attended the Seminaries in the 1850s (Starr, 1993). Mary's sister, Alabama, and Clem's sister, Margaret Lavinia Rogers, both graduated in February 1856. Three of Clem and Mary's daughters also attended, one of whom was Sallie Clementine, who graduated July 2, 1880 (Starr, 1993). Clement Rogers was a Captain of a company with the First Cherokee Mounted Volunteers, Confederates States of America, serving under Colonel Stand Watie. Captain Rogers later was a District Judge and a Senator, who was elected five times, serving the Cooweescoowee District in the Cherokee Nation. He was selected to serve on the Committee to Negotiate with Commissioners to the Five

Civilized Tribes, and, in 1907, he was the oldest member to serve on the Oklahoma State Constitutional Convention (Starr, 1993).

The Seminaries would not reopen until the 1870s, some years after the devastation of the Cherokee Nation by Cherokee men who chose both sides of the Civil War conflict. In early 1861, Stand Watie organized a company with the intention of cooperating with the Confederacy and became the Captain. On July 12, 1861, other companies that had been formed met and formed the Cherokee Mounted Rifle regiment, and Stand Watie was elected Colonel (Starr, 1993). The Confederate Forces in Indian Territory were led by Colonel, and later Brigadier General Stand Watie, the only Confederate General who was an Indian, and the last General to surrender his command of the First Indian Brigade of the Army of the Trans-Mississippi. The surrender, which occurred in the Choctaw Nation, on June 23, 1865, included men of the Cherokee, Seminole, Osage, and Creek Nations (Cottrell & Thomas, 1995). Stand Watie (1806-1871) was also selected as the Principal Chief at the second and final session of the Confederate Cherokee Convention. Clement Rogers, representing Cooweescoowee District, was a member of the convention (Starr, 1993). Grant Foreman, a well-known author, succinctly stated that "Most of the Cherokee Nation was now one vast scene of desolation, a heart-rending, graphic record of tragedy and suffering" (Foreman, 1942, p.131).

Emmet Starr's (1993) *History of the Cherokee Indians* has been an essential resource for my own research for more than a decade. A physician, Dr. Emmet McDonald Starr, practiced for five years, and then for the remainder of his life became the foremost historian and genealogist of his people. His modest grave stone at the Woodlawn Cemetery in Claremore, Oklahoma, simply states "Dr. Emmet M. Starr, Dec. 12, 1870 - Mar. 31, 1930, 'Cherokee Historian,' Roll 2423" (Mechling, 2001). Dr. Starr had enrolled and was approved for membership in the Cherokee Nation. His card number was #890, and his roll number was 2423. Both the card and roll number were assigned to Dr. Starr by the Dawes Commission, or known by its official name, The Final Rolls of the Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory. The Commission was named after Henry L. Dawes, from Massachusetts, who had just retired from the United States Senate and was selected to chair the Commission from 1893 until his death in 1903 (United States Congress, 2005). An account of the allotment system and its tragic impact on the members of the "Five Civilized Tribes"- Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole- was well told by Angie Debo (1940).

When Emmet Starr was 31 years old, about 1902, the Dawes Commission determined that Starr was Cherokee by blood, and that it was one-fourth. His father, Judge Walter Adair Starr (1845-1906), was determined to be one-eighth Cherokee by the Dawes Commission, and Emmet's mother, Ruth Ann Alberty, née Thornton, may have been three-fourths. The Commission was authorized by Congress in 1893 to allot land to each Indian so that eventually assimilation by the Five Nations would occur within the dominant culture. The Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations' governments would eventually be abolished. On November 16, 1907, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory became a state named Oklahoma when "President [Theodore] Roosevelt signed a proclamation declaring Oklahoma to be a state of the Union" (Foreman, 1942, p. 316).

One of the first two United States Senators representing the state of Oklahoma was Robert Latham Owen (1856-1947), a Cherokee (Harlow, 1928; Brown, 1985). He had been a teacher, and then the principal of the Cherokee Orphan Asylum between 1879 and 1881 (*The Advocate*, 1880; *The Advocate*, 1881). His mother, Mrs. Narcissa Owen, was a music teacher at the Asylum when her son was the principal, and later she was the music teacher at the Cherokee National Female Seminary for four and one-half years in the early 1880s (Owen, 1907; *The Advocate*, 1880, *The Advocate*, 1882a, *The Advocate*, 1882b, *The Advocate*, 1883).

An early Cherokee Member of Congress was William Wirt Hastings, who graduated from the Male Seminary on June 26, 1884 (Starr, 1993). One of his daughters, Lucile Ahnawake, chose social work as her profession. With an

undergraduate degree from Vassar College and a master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, Ahnawake worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs from August 1, 1942, until her retirement in 1968. Ahnawake was awarded a "Unit Citation for Meritorious Service from the Department of the Interior for her services on the Navajo Reservation" while also working to improve housing for Indians (Adair Family Reunion Book Committee, 2003, pp. 139-140). Howard Walkingstick, who also had worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was a friend and colleague. Ahnawake (1899-1986), who did not marry, is buried at the apex of the Tahlequah City Cemetery in the family gravesite. The Hastings family gravesite is easily noticed as a miniature of the Washington Monument is at the site of William Wirt Hasting's grave with other family members. I devoted many hours to walking, taking photographs, and marveling at the many leaders who rest for eternity on the apex of the Tahlequah Cemetery.

One, Mayme Jane Starr, interred not far from the Hastings' plot, who received an excellent education graduating from the Female Seminary and later Forest Park University in Saint Louis, returned as the Fourth Assistant Teacher at the Female Seminary, her alma mater, in September 1901. She died after a failed operation on her appendix. At the age of 22 years, 8 months, and 26 days her life ended, a tragic death. Her first cousin, Eldee Starr, who had an equivalent education, took over her job, and continued to live a long life, and she rests not far from Mayme in the Tahlequah City Cemetery (McCullagh, 2013).

Next to the William Wirt Hastings Indian Hospital is a cemetery, named after Stick Ross, a freedman. I toured and photographed a number of gravestones and noted that there were many unmarked graves. Stick Ross was Joseph "Stick" Ross, a Cherokee Freedman, born into slavery and owned by Principal Chief John Ross until the slaves were emancipated. Stick Ross later became a civic leader and also donated the land that once was a slave cemetery (Newton, 2008). There is no grave stone for him or his wife, Nancy, but there is a memorial marker for his contributions as a "Tahlequah pioneer and civic leader" (Jackson, 2011). It was another discovery for me that some Cherokee men of wealth brought their slaves from the South to the Cherokee Nation. In February 1863, the Cherokee Nation, by an Act of the National Council, abolished slavery. Article 9 of the 1866 Treaty between the Unites States and the Cherokee Nation affirmed that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist in the Cherokee Nation (Starr, 1993).

Subsequently, and for the first time in 1869, the Superintendent of Education located two schools for "Negroes" in the Tahlequah District. Over time more schools for "Colored" children were established, including the Colored High School which opened in 1890. Realizing the paucity of publications, McCullagh and Schmidt (2010) published *The Cherokee National Colored High School: Superintendents, Principals, and Teachers*, and McCullagh (2008) published *Educating Negro Children in the Cherokee Nation: Primary Schools and Teachers-1869-1907*. The article included a listing of all the schools by district, when they opened and closed, and the name and ethnicity of the instructors when known. Another table listed all the teachers of the Cherokee Nation Freedmen Schools and other schools, taught by semester.

While the Tahlequah newspaper infrequently reported on activities of "Negroes," deaths that were published almost always indicated their race as Negro or Colored. Of the 284 reported deaths that were published, homicides were the cause of death for 65 percent (McCullagh & Saffold, 2007). This article included all the reported death notices, of which about 10 percent could be considered obituaries and another 26 percent constituted a minimal notice. I believed that it was important for 21st Century readers to be aware of such notices (McCullagh & Saffold, 2007).

Historic Cemeteries

During each of my seven visits to primarily Eastern Oklahoma-the home of the Cherokee Nation-I also visited cemeteries, some of which are noted above. I share those experiences with you as I attempted to leap back in time to the 1830s up to the early twentieth century. I began with Okmulgee Cemetery in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, where Howard

(1915-2002), Galela (1910-2005), and their parents Simon R. (1868-1938), and Rebecca (1883-1975), are buried. Howard took me to the cemetery one day to point out where he would be buried just as I, in the summer of 2013 with a cousin, pointed out to us where my wife and I would be buried in the St. Patrick's church cemetery in Green Castle, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland next to and nearby my father's side of the family-aunts, uncles, cousins, and grand-parents and great-grandparents.

Howard died in his 87th year while I, now 79years of age, rush to finish up a number of papers and books with the full realization that my time at the University and my life journey will end. I have made plans to donate my extensive collection of books, microfilms, and thousands of documents for use my others. It has been and continues to be an exciting journey and I continually thank Howard for our time together and the direction he facilitated in opening many doors for me just by being with him and sharing many stories. Indeed, I think of Howard almost daily and miss our weekly conversations. He was akin to an elder who helped guide me.

In Park Hill, now a hamlet but once a thriving community, there are three historic cemeteries that I often visited and where I photographed many tombstones. Worcester Mission Cemetery, Park Hill Cemetery, and the Ross Cemetery - all relatively close to each other - are the resting home for many of the leaders and supporters of the Cherokee Nation. The Honorable Alice M. Robertson (1854-1931), the granddaughter of Reverend Worcester and the second women to ever serve in the United States Congress, referring to Worcester Cemetery remarked, "There is no acre on earth in Oklahoma which means so much to the history of the state" (Foreman, 1948, p. 177).

The Reverend Samuel Austin Worcester (1798-1859), missionary to the Cherokee Nation in Georgia, the most prominent to be buried in the cemetery that bears his name, was remembered by Altheas Bass (1936) in her *Cherokee Messenger*. Reverend Worcester died on April 20, just 61 years old, and was buried at Park Hill next to his first wife, Ann Orr, who died in 1840, as well as his second wife, Erminia Nash, who rests at the foot of his grave (Ballenger, 1953). Bass' final words were:

> Even now, to the third and fourth generation, they remember that a good man came among them, and cast his lot with theirs. When they were sick, he was their physician; when they were in trouble, he suffered imprisonment for them; when they were exiled, he shared their banishment. Words, of which he was so great a master, were not needed for the lesson he taught them. They learned a way of life from him, and they have not forgotten it. (Bass, 1936, p. 345)

Reverend Worcester, ordained a minister of the Congregational Church in 1825, began his missionary work with his wife, Ann Orr, at Brainard Mission in Tennessee, and then moved to New Echota, Georgia two years later, where he translated the Bible into the Cherokee syllabary created by Sequoyah. This was published in the first issue on February 21, 1828, in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the "first aboriginal newspaper in the United States" (Foreman, 1936, pp. xiv-xv). It continued publication until May 31, 1834, when it "was suspended by the authorities of Georgia" (Foreman, 1936, xv-xvi). Arrested in 1831 with other missionaries for failing to obtain a permit and take an oath of allegiance to the State of Georgia, he, along with the others, was to be imprisoned for four years in the Georgia Penitentiary. Chief Justice John Marshall delivered the Court's opinion in the famous case of *Worcester v. Georgia*, which was decided by the United States Supreme Court in 1832. The Court held for Reverend Worcester stating that "The act of the state of Georgia . . . is consequently void" (Prucha, 1991, pp. 60-62). Reverend Worcester was eventually released from prison, left Georgia, and in 1836 arrived at Park Hill to continue his work among the Cherokees. A few other noteworthy persons are buried in the Worcester Cemetery. Their names and brief notes of many are included in the cited publication (Tyner & Tyner-Timmons, 1970).

I have trekked over the Ross Cemetery in Park Hill many times. Chief John Ross, for whom the cemetery is named, died in Washington on August 1, 1866, and was originally interred in Brandywine

Cemetery in Wilmington, Delaware, in the Stapler family plot. The Cherokee National Council subsequently decreed that the remains of the Chief should be returned to Park Hill. Three men, including his nephew, William Potter Ross, were directed by the National Council to return the coffin. In early May 1867, the remains were returned, and the coffin was placed in the Male Seminary, where it lay in state until June 1 to allow the Nation to pay tribute to the deceased Chief. He was reinterred in the Ross Cemetery not far from his Rose Cottage, his once palatial home. Now there is no trace of it (Moulton, 1985, Moulton & Ross, 1978).

Many Ross family members are interred at the Ross Cemetery, including Eliza Jane Ross (1825-1894), niece of Chief John Ross and sister of Chief William Potter Ross. She was the first Cherokee to teach at the Cherokee National Female Seminary in the early 1850s and was an Assistant Teacher when the Seminary closed on February 11, 1857. During the Civil War she lived at the George Murrell House in Park Hill and was in constant fear of Confederate soldiers. Elizabeth Ross recounted the time when Stand Watie, later promoted to Brigadier General, broke down their front door and then a locked door leading to the dining room, and the Confederate soldiers took what they could. At another time, the Confederate soldiers set the house on fire and took all their money. Somehow Eliza Jane put the fire out and found ways to eat. Her brother, William Potter Ross, graduated from Princeton University and held many leadership positions, including Chief of the Cherokee Nation, whereas Eliza could only attend Female Seminaries. If she had lived in the Twentieth Century, I thought she also could have matriculated at Princeton or another elite university. I wrote an article on her life and the times in which E. Jane Ross, a teacher and a courageous woman, lived (McCullagh, 2009). These cemeteries, and many others in the Cherokee Nation, are the lifeline that connects Cherokee families to their beginnings in the Indian Territory. They are a significant part of the Nation's history and culture.

Conclusion

Fifteen years later, after that fateful day when I chose to call Galela Walkingstick, there have been, and continue to be, so many different pathways that I took and will continue to take, each opening up another world of the Cherokee Nation in Eastern Oklahoma. My new awareness became an unfolding as I listened to Galela, but primarily Howard until his death three years later. I then read books, journal articles, and significantly-over time-purchased at least 60 microfilms primarily from the Oklahoma Historical Society that included all extant issues of the newspaper published in Tahlequah, all of the Cherokee Nation papers pertaining to education, and newspapers from other cities (Muskogee, in particular), all of which I read for more than a decade. During subsequent trips, I spent days at the University of Oklahoma Western History Collections, Tulsa University Library, Northeastern State University archives, Bacone College library and special collections, the Oklahoma Historical Center, the Talbot Library and Museum, and the Will Rogers Library in Claremore. Over the years, I have written, e-mailed, and spoken to specialists in Cherokee history and genealogy along with archivists, staff, and many librarians and staff whose specialty included Cherokee genealogy. Many more resources were discovered and utilized which I continue to use to this very day.

The focus of my writings pertained to Cherokees who were primarily mixed-blood, educated, often held leadership positions such as educators, attorneys, physicians, land owners, and elected officials. Their lives took place within a larger context: early contact with Europeans in the South; the beginnings of more formal education by missionaries; the beginnings of the Cherokee Nation's public primary school education in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma); the beginnings and endings of the Cherokee National Male and Female Seminaries, both which opened in May 1851; Sequoyah's development and use of the Cherokee alphabet, or syllabary; the Trail of Tears for the Cherokees in 1838-1839; the Civil War which divided and destroyed the Nation; the emancipation of slaves; and the eventual creation of the State of Oklahoma in 1907. With the publication of newspapers in primarily the Cherokee Nation and

the official records maintained by the Cherokee government, it became possible and feasible to learn of the lives of some of the more elite Cherokees, and then to write about their public lives. My intent has been to recover information about the lives of Cherokees and their educational institutions (public primary education, the Seminaries, and the Colored High School) for both Cherokees and the Freedmen's children. The Cherokee Nation adapted many times and has thrived into the 21st Century. From the Nation's own journey over the 19th and 20th centuries, I have highlighted Cherokee social workers and educators, while also noting the heroic efforts by missionaries, particularly Reverend Worcester.

As Howard and I talked and became friends, little did I realize how my life would change-how I would take a path that has been not only a meaningful educational experience, but also one that has consumed almost all of my time with the reading of microfilm and many books and articles, traveling to Oklahoma many times, and writing for publication to share with others. I hope my published contributions will lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. I miss Howard, and I think he would be pleased that I took a different direction in my personal and professional life, and that it has made an amazing difference, a life-changing journey that continues.

On May 10, 2002, Howard wrote: "*Jim, I want you to know your kindness made all the difference* (note on the card). I want you to know this my good friend before it's too late. Fondly, old Stick, Howard." Earlier, on February 26, 2001, Howard talked about his death and his financial affairs. He said: "I will be buried in a white beautiful casket and white is purity in Christ. Not virginity. Purity in Christ and my minister will mention this" (H. C. Walkingstick, February 26, 2001). His death came on October 24, 2002. I was one of four he chose to deliver a eulogy on his behalf. My final words: "Howard's time came too soon, but he will be welcomed by God, his Savior. I miss my dear friend. I miss his magnetic personality. I miss his enthusiasm, his essential goodness and acceptance of others. I miss his quickness, his wit, his fantastic memory, his zest for living, and so much more." I didn't say, and wish I had: "Thank you for letting me enter your life and your families' lives, and educating me about your life and your family's life and so much more. Thanks for becoming a dear friend."

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