

European Conference for Social Work Research 

1st European Conference

Social Work and Social Care Research:
Innovation, Interdisciplinarity and Impact

St Catherine's College, Oxford

23rd – 25th March 2011

Outline Programme

Wednesday 23rd March

1600-2000	Registration
1800	Welcome
1815	Opening Keynote: Joan Orme
1900	Reception

Thursday 24th March

0900	Welcome and Introduction
0915	Keynote 2: Peter Sommerfeld
1000	Parallel Sessions – 1
1115	Refreshments
1145	Parallel Sessions – 2
1300	Lunch, Poster Viewing and Interest group meetings
1415	Workshops and Symposia – A
1530	Refreshments
1600	Parallel Sessions – 3
1715	Keynote 3: Eileen Munro
1815	Break
1930 for 2000	Conference Banquet

Friday 25th March

0900	Keynote 4: Marketta Rajavaara
1000	Parallel Sessions – 4
1115	Refreshments
1145	Parallel Sessions – 5
1300	Lunch, Poster Viewing and Interest group meeting
1415	Workshops and Symposia – B
1530	Panel Session
1630	Closing event and plans for Basel (Switzerland) 2012
1645	Refreshments and farewells

Inaugural Conference

Social Work and Social Care Research: Innovation, Interdisciplinarity and Impact

The inaugural conference is held in association with the *NIHR School for Social Care Research*.

"We are pleased to be involved in the first of the European Social Work Research conferences, particularly because the wider social care perspective will be represented in the programme and hopefully in the interests of participants. In the School we are working hard to encourage and develop interdisciplinary learning and multidisciplinary collaboration in our research on adult social care practice"

Professor Martin Knapp, Director, NIHR School for Social Care Research

Conference Planning Committee

Ian Shaw (Chair)
Kathy Boxall
Colette McAuley
Jonathan Scourfield
Steven Shardlow
Elaine Sharland
Brian Taylor

Conference Administration

The planning committee would like to extend special thanks to Samantha McDermott for her extensive work behind the scenes, planning and organising the website and conference and liaising with staff at St Catherine's College.

Donors

We would like to acknowledge generous support towards the funding of the conference from the following donors:

Department of Health (England)
Joint University Committee for Social Work Education
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Social Care Institute for Excellence
Social Work Research Association

Abstract Reviews

We would also like to thank the following reviewers, who donated their time and expertise to review the many abstracts we received for the conference.

Kathy Boxall	Shula Ramon
Karen Broadhurst	Roy Ruckdeschel
Ian Buchanan	Deborah Rutter
Annamaria Campanini	Justine Schneider
John Carpenter	Jonathan Scourfield
Nigel Charles	Steven Shardlow
Paul Clarkson	Elaine Sharland
Michelle Cornes	Ian Shaw
John Devaney	Peter Sommerfeld
Julie Fish	Justine Schneider
Mike Fisher	Roger Smith
Claire Goodman	Martin Stevens
Rachel Fyson	Brian Taylor
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Jo Moriarty	
Liz Price	
Jackie Rafferty	

Speakers

Professor Eileen Munro



Biography

Eileen Munro is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. She was a social worker for many years before taking up an academic career. She has studied philosophy, in particular the philosophy of science, and this has fuelled her interest in the reasoning skills needed in social work. She is currently working with Professor Nancy Cartwright on a project funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council, examining the philosophical assumptions implicit in the debates about evidence in child welfare. Her current research interests include how best to combine intuitive and analytic reasoning in risk assessment and decision making in child protection. She is also studying the role of the wider organisational system in promoting or hindering good critical thinking.

Presentation: 'Evidence and Outcomes in Social Work and Social Care Research'

RCTs show that an intervention works somewhere but can we infer from this that it will work for us? This lecture discusses what else is needed to help us make this inference. It is argued that we need a great deal of additional theory, local knowledge, and empirical results. RCTs alone provide only weak evidence.

Professor Joan Orme



Biography

Prof Joan Orme is Emeritus Professor of Social Work in the Glasgow School of Social Work. She has been involved in the development of social work research at a number of levels in the UK including being the Vice Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council's Training and Development Board and a member of the group that developed the UK Research Strategy. As a member of the Board of the International Association of Schools of Social Work she worked closely with the European Association of Schools of Social Work and has worked with the Academy of Finland, Research Council for Culture and Society. She is joint editor of *The Sage Handbook of Social Work Research* and co-author (with David Shemmings) of *Developing Research Based Social Work Practice*.

Presentation

I will use the opportunity of the opening plenary to provide a brief (and probably very partial) analysis of developments in social work and social care research in Europe. This will include a discussion of the focus of current research, methodological developments and existing infrastructures. Using the Tripod's' descriptors of international research I will explore the implications for developing 'European social work and social care research'. I will argue that we have to identify what is distinctive about European research and develop innovative ways of collaboration while recognising difference and diversity.

Professor
Marketta Rajavaara



Biography

Marketta Rajavaara is currently professor of social work at the University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research and senior researcher in the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), Research Department. She has her field practice from school social work and child protection, and over the years she has held various positions in social policy and social work education, research and development. She has been the director of the Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and the president of the Finnish Society for Social Work. Her work includes professionalism, practice research and knowledge production in welfare services, quality management, the history of evaluation in Finnish social services, long-term unemployment among older workers, and work-related rehabilitation.

Presentation: 'The Impacts of Social Research'

My provisional intention is to analyse the role and impacts of social research in the post-expansive welfare state, and set social work and social care research in this wider context. I will discuss evidence-based policy as part of this theme. In addition I will consider and analyse the structural changes in the welfare state, and the effects they have on knowledge production and knowledge regimes. I may link the conference theme of research innovation to some comments on policy innovations, asking where they come from, different types of innovations, and possible preconditions for helpful innovations.

Professor
Bruce A. Thyer

Biography

Bruce A. Thyer is Professor of Social Work at Florida State University. His research interests are in the areas of evidence-based practice, behavior analysis, and clinical social work. He is the founding and current Editor of the bimonthly journal *Research on Social Work Practice*, now in its 21st year of publication. He has served on the governing bodies of the U.S. Council on Social Work Education, the Society for Social Work and Research, the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, and of the American Psychological Association.

Professor
Peter Sommerfeld



Biography

Peter Sommerfeld is professor of Social Work at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, and head of the institute for "Social Work Research and Cooperative Knowledge Creation". His research interests are grouped around the development of Social Work as a profession and the theory-practice link. Knowledge production and knowledge transfer in Social Work therefore are of special interest to him. Recent research has been completed in the fields of probation services, psychiatry and occupational social work. Following the idea of "cooperative knowledge creation" these recent research projects also are conceived as huge development projects on the level of concept and methods in these practice fields. He mostly published in German on a broad variety of themes such as social work research, professionalism, adventure pedagogy, social work and psychiatry, social work and urban development. In English he published on Evidence-based Social Work. He teaches theories of Social Work and General Systems Theory. He is co-president of the Swiss Society for Social Work.

Presentation: 'Innovation in Research and Practice'

My starting assumption is that today the research questions as well as the practical problems needing innovation are complex ones at least in most cases. One of my leading arguments therefore will be that innovation in research methods and innovation in practice are likely to be coupled in a process of co-evolution. This means that I will talk about innovation on both sides - research and practice. I believe that if we really want to have innovations in practice, which means achieving significant change and amelioration, we can't have that just for free. We need to use our resources and bring the two different epistemological systems (science and practice) together in cooperation. In this sense I plan to touch on impact as well, the impact of research on practice but also the impact of practice on research and scientific knowledge production. My main goal will be to open our minds to the fact that there is a lot going on, that there is a lot of "gold" to be discovered and that we are not at the end of history.

Abstracts

Abreu, Sonia Guadalupe Alarcão, Madalena Farate, Carlos
Title Social support for social supporters: a study about social support among family members of adult cancer inpatients
Abstract In a systemic perspective, cancer is an accidental crisis and strongly challenges and deeply disturbs the family system. Family is usually the main support for the patient, but it also needs to be supported to improve its protection to distress. This study describes the characteristics and analyzes the interaction between social support and distress among 167 family members of adult cancer in-patients (aged 25 to 64 years old) followed in a specialized health unit of the central region of Portugal. The majority of participants are spouses (58%) or sons/daughters (26%), mostly female (58%), married (73%) and 40 to 60 years-old (53%). The variables in study were evaluated through the following psychometric instruments: a social-demographic questionnaire; a medical questionnaire; the Escala de Suporte Social (EAS) (Matos & Ferreira, 2000), a social support scale to assess functional dimensions of social support (emotional, informational and instrumental); the Instrumento de Análise da Rede Social Pessoal on its revised summary version (IARSP-RS) (Guadalupe, 2009); a social network inventory to evaluate its structural and contextual dimensions; the Portuguese version of the Mental Health Inventory (MHI) (Ribeiro, 2001) to assess psychological distress and well-being. The perceived social support is high for all dimensions (emotional, instrumental and informative) although a little lower for the last one. Social support is higher among younger, single and more educated family members. The social support networks are cohesive, with an average number of 8 members and mostly composed by relatives, friends and neighbours. The social support is positively associated with mental health and negatively (though weakly) correlated with distress. The relevance of cancer in Portugal and the problems of mental health in the family of these patients, together with empirical evidence, point out to the need of creating strategies to evaluate and follow family members, developing therapeutic and supportive programs, so to help them overcoming difficulties and to deal with difficulties inherent to this process and be better supporters to the members facing cancer. This demands improving intervention strategies on health services with a special focus on family.

Albuquerque, Cristina
Santos, Clara
Almeida, Helena

Title

Empowerment in social work and social care practice: indicators for measuring and evaluating empowerment in practice

Abstract

Considering that empowerment is produced in the confluence of people's agency and opportunity structures we will, in this presentation, critically analyse the conceptual and methodological issues associated with the evaluation and measurement of empowerment processes and outcomes.

Empowerment is nowadays a concept largely used in several policy documents and is presented, in social work and social care professional universes, as an operative orientation to reduce vulnerability and to increase the power, or capabilities, of individuals and groups, to make choices and to transform these into actions and results. However, to move beyond rhetoric and paternalistic practices we need to understand what empowerment means in different contexts and to different populations, and specially, how to evaluate what has changed or is changing, both in an individual and a collective level.

Some populations have, in fact, limited choices available. The inequality in terms of power to have an effective voice and to make life-changing choices is influenced by policies, life experiences and social-economical structures of opportunities. Therefore, social research is essential to design policies and more effective and innovative social interventions that can increase, on one hand, the amount of assets that people have at their disposal and can effectively use, and on the other, to question the dynamics that reproduce inequalities and poverty. So, to evaluate empowerment processes and outcomes, in different contexts and different dimensions, we need to identify and analyse the social, economical, political and personal indicators. An actionable framework both for action and (critical) analysis is then essential to avoid palliative practices and specially to identify the impacts of policies and interventions in concrete situations, as well as to embed those analyses into a larger on-going inequalities monitoring system. There are, however, some methodological issues that need further discussion.

We will structure our communication in two interrelated parts. In part one, we will begin with a critical discussion of the empowerment framework considering various speciality insights. We will also identify and question some of the possible problems and resistances to the operationalization of empowerment, specially according to power related issues and the necessary distinction (and articulation), both in research and in practice, between empowerment processes and outcomes.

In a second part, we will discuss specific issues about methodological strategies to "measure" empowerment, as well as some questions about the indicators and elements of empowerment, identified in some of the World Bank projects (access to information; inclusion and participation; accountability; local organizational capacity) in a Portuguese context.

Allen, Mary
Title A model for enhanced social work intervention with abused women
Abstract This paper outlines and describes how original research with women who have left abusive relationships can inform social work services for such women and their children. It proposes an enhanced social work intervention process with women who have left severely abusive relationships. The paper is based on the findings of a qualitative study which utilized a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology and involved two in-depth interviews with 10 women who had left abusive relationships. The women's narratives highlight the role of women's identity, their meaning constructions and their consistent resistant responses to abuse in their individual journeys to safety. These three concepts, and the interrelationship between them, contribute a new conceptual understanding of women's resistance strategies in the face of both external barriers as well as formal and informal supports. This 'conceptual trinity' provides the basis for a model of analysis of women's decision making in their transition from abuse to safety. In developing an enhanced approach to social work practice, the study examines the contribution of contemporary and postmodern narrative approaches to social work and counselling in situations of such abuse. The conflicts and challenges of contemporary social work practice with abused women are outlined and an intervention approach which supports women's safety is presented. This intervention approach is designed to ensure that issues of child welfare are neither ignored nor allowed to dominate the professional intervention. Based on the study's data analysis, a Narrative Social Work Intervention for Intimate Partner Violence has been developed. This narrative counselling approach also introduces the concept of 'survival resistance' which enables women to continue to seek permanently violence free lives.

Andersen, Maja Lundemark
Title ADHD in adult life and the implications in social work: a form of category or forms of ability?
Abstract In this presentation I draw upon a segment of my research that reflects on how a diagnosis like ADHD intersects with a Danish focus on the labour market which regards the latter as the most powerful path to create inclusion for social work service users. I will discuss how a shift in social policy from welfare to workfare (Torfing 2004) has created particular and complex ways of making sense arising from an ADHD diagnosis for social work users. The PhD thesis itself builds on narratives offered by various young persons and adults diagnosed with ADHD. The ambition of the research was to give people with this diagnosis a voice by making their experiences with the diagnosis in their daily life visible. In addition, my aim was to give their perspective as actors "a say" in the ongoing research and discussion about how to understand and deal with an ADHD diagnosis in the context of social work and in public life generally.
Background Research in the field of ADHD is extensive across Europe (Thomsen, 2009), but it is significant that the bulk of this research is characterised by: Research within a biomedical or psychological discourse. Primarily focused on children and young people. A virtual absence of user perspectives (with a few significant exceptions such as the work of Geraldine Brady 2004) and of adult perspectives and, indeed, sociological and social work research. At the same time, the diagnosis is increasingly popular and growing numerically very quickly. In Denmark the number of diagnosed people is ten times as high today than ten years ago. Social work in Denmark with adults is concentrated on returning people to the labour market and adopts different forms of categorisation in attempting to reach this target. In my research, the categories available in social work did not match the narratives of the informants in my study. The analysis within my project suggested that the diagnosis of ADHD has become filled with so many different kinds of meaning that it was necessary for me to create a "new" concept in place of disability, disease or lack of skills. For I found that these more traditional concepts could not encompass the complex patterns of understanding mentioned above nor give adequate meaning to the diagnosis. Therefore, I developed the concept of "ability" partly as a counter-concept that builds on a strengths perspective rather than a deficit one. "Ability" also possessed the capacity to adequately capture and express the complex meanings and ways of interpreting the diagnosis. The analytical results and the concept of ability are then used as a means of connecting the research with a vision of social work for the future. This connection is created in two ways: first, by using the users' narratives about their wishes for the future; and secondly by providing examples of co-construction between the users and researcher in the interviews as a potential model for co-construction in the process of doing social work.

Arias Astray, Andrés
Barrero Buch, Tatiana
Escalante Ruiz, Gracia
Iglesia Martínez, Marta de la

Title

"E-social work": a "new" field for social work and social care research?

Abstract

The discourse around social work and "new" technologies is an old one. While the so called new technologies are no longer new, social workers still seem unable to go beyond that discursive effort and to put into practice what might be named e-social work or whatever preferred synonym (virtual social work, cyber-social work, Internet- or web based social work, etc.).

When comparing with the figures presented by other allied professional colleagues (e.g.: psychologist) the number of social workers offering their services on the Net is surprisingly scant. Many reasons are at hand to give logical argument to this situation, but a suitable answer has to come from rigorous empirical research. This is the main argument of the present paper in which a research agenda about e-social work practice is presented.

Research is needed in order to explore the personal, professional and organizational factors but also the ethical issues that are hindering the proper development of e-social work practice in a social context in which "everybody is on the Net".

It is also a crucial matter the identification of the contexts in which e-social work could be used for enhancing and complementing face to face practices and/or as a mean of promoting a greater access to social care for particular groups. Attention has to be paid both to the new profiles of social services users that may be in favor of an online solution and to the characteristics of different technological tools available for the e-social worker.

Last but not least, outcome and process research has to be underlined in this research agenda if social workers aspire to operate effectively within a changing social context in which virtual social interaction becomes more and more important.

Athanassiou, Andriani

Title

Considering the cultural dimension in conducting qualitative interviews

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the role that culture has on the application of qualitative research methods. In particular, the author will discuss her experiences of conducting 42 semi-structured interviews, as part of a doctoral dissertation, with members of various stakeholders groups found in voluntary organizations in Cyprus. The purpose of the study was to determine the type of programme evaluation activities these organizations engaged in and to identify the factors that either enhanced or impeded the development of evaluation capacity within these voluntary organizations.

While much of the academic and professional literature relates to qualitative research in western countries and urban settings, it is essential to understand how the process of qualitative research can be differentiated when applied in smaller countries and rural contexts. In social work literature, some writings have focused on the distinctive features of rural social work, which seem to apply in the case of conducting qualitative research (specifically during the process of data gathering) in a small island like Cyprus.

It was apparent from the beginning stages of research and during the pilot interviews, that culture influenced many aspects of the qualitative interview such as:

- The choice of participants (age and status),
- the physical setting of the interview,
- the length of the interview,
- the flow and atmosphere of the interview and,
- the dynamics of the relationship between the interviewer and participants.

The author will also discuss the features of Cyprus culture that were likely to account for the differences on the above-mentioned aspects of the qualitative interview. These include among others, the immediacy observed in social relations, lack of anonymity and the need to place the interviewer within the community and the fact that even formal relations develop on a more personalized basis.

“Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzil & Lincoln, 2005, 4).

Qualitative researchers should not only take into account the meaning people bring to the phenomena under study, but they should also understand the meaning participants bring to the process of research itself. A meaning that is influenced, as evidenced from this research, by culture. The aim of this presentation is not to provide guidelines for conducting qualitative research in non-Western, rural contexts and small countries like Cyprus, as this would negate the premise of this paper. Its aim is to remind all new researchers that while adherence to the principles of qualitative research should be a main concern, at the same time they need to employ a degree of flexibility in order to incorporate the cultural dimension in all aspects of research.

References

Denzil, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds). (2005). Handbook of Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publication Inc.

Attar-Schwartz, Shalhevet
<p>Title</p> <p>Staff abuse in residential care for children at-risk: the perspective of adolescents in Israel</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The study examines the prevalence and the correlates of verbal and physical victimization of adolescents aged 11-19 by staff (including: social workers, direct caregivers, teachers, directors, volunteers, etc.) in residential care. The study is based on a large-scale sample of 1,314 adolescents in 32 rehabilitative and therapeutic settings for children who were removed from their parental homes in Israel, who completed a structured anonymous questionnaire. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was used to examine the relationships between staff abuse and child-level characteristics (e.g., age, gender, emotional and behavioral difficulties, etc.) and institution-level characteristics (e.g., social climate, ethnic affiliation, etc.). The study shows that a third (33%) of the adolescents reported being verbally maltreated by a staff member and more than a quarter (28%) reported being a victim of at least one type of physical maltreatment in the last month. The most vulnerable were young adolescents, boys, adolescents in Arab institutions, adolescents with more emotional and behavioral difficulties and residents in settings with more of a negative social climate as evaluated by the teens. The study emphasizes the need for an ecological perspective in addressing staff abuse of children in care.</p>

Barter, Christine
Title Teenage partner violence: implications for UK social work policy and practice
Abstract <p>Although a body of UK evidence exists on adult experiences of domestic violence little is known about violence in young people's own relationships. This paper reports on the first UK research to systematically explore physical, sexual and emotional forms of partner violence in young people's relationships.</p> <p>Two research studies will be reported on. The first school-based study used a multi-method approach. A confidential survey was completed by 1,353 young people, equal numbers of boys and girls, between 13 and 17 years-old, from eight schools in England, Scotland and Wales. In total, 91 in-depth interviews were also undertaken. The second study looked at the experiences of 90 disadvantaged young people, including young people in care, teenage mothers and pupils permanently excluded from school.</p> <p>The research findings from these two studies show that young people experience high levels of coercive control, physical and sexual violence within their relationships and that these experiences are highly gendered in relation to incidence, impact and intent. The presentation will explore the key research findings and provide messages for social work policy and practice in this area. Importantly young people's own experiences and views will form a central aspect of the presentation.</p>

Bell, Linda Ann
Villadsen, Aase

Title

"A sense of belonging": examining how social work students acquire professional values, identities and practice competence through group support

Abstract

This paper discusses findings from an evaluative study of group-based tutorial support for social work students, conducted within one UK university setting. The study used an innovative combination of research methods (semi-structured interviews with 11 staff, focus groups with students; documentary analysis; non-participant (ethnographic) observation of 8 groups) to explore the purpose of these 'tutor groups'. We examined staff and student expectations of tutor groups, issues of power and identity, and whether study participants thought these settings can enable successful integration of social work theory and practice. Results were analysed thematically.

There are few studies of this kind of student group support. Watson and West (2003) suggest that the role of the (university based) tutor has become less clearly defined since the development of a competence based model of social work education in the UK; s/he is arguably no longer the key focus linking together students' 'knowledge, skills and values'. They suggest that whilst this implies that recognition of the tutor's power and knowledge has decreased, this situation offers opportunities to develop and 'empower' students.

We found both staff and students recognise the support and monitoring functions of tutor groups, however students emphasise the supportive function whilst staff highlight the monitoring of student progression and development, and fitness for social work practice. Students get support not only from the tutor but also from the group, and group support buffers student anxiety and isolation often felt in relation to social work practice placements.

We argue that these tutor groups are ambiguous ('liminal') spaces, embedded within their larger 'parent' structures (i.e. academia and social services systems) which 'produce' professionals, but whose purpose(s) remains contested (see also Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003). Some study participants regarded them mainly as 'academic settings', others emphasised their value lies in links to what one student defined as the 'real world'. From ethnographic study data in particular, we suggest that this tutorial space had temporal / psychological ambiguity that may allow students (and staff) to behave in ways not be possible in other more strictly 'academic' or 'work-related' settings and so to construct different forms of identification with their 'profession'.

Tutor groups were also spaces where 'symbolic' events raising issues around professional accountability, anxiety and identity (such as the recent 'Baby Peter' case) could be discussed. 'Expert' tutors could call upon powerful discourses of risk and professional responsibility to legitimise their authority within these groups. There was a focus on values and personal identity construction which is subjective yet is also tied to a notion of 'professional' identification (see also Bell, 2007; Bell & Allain, in press). Students 'belong' to 'their' group, yet are also part of a wider, international, 'professional' enterprise. Tutors act as powerful role models and mentors and, in their advocacy of reflective practice, have opportunities to modify or consolidate their own identification(s) with 'social work'.

References

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Equal opportunities International, 26 (4): 287 - 304

Bell, L & Allain, L (in press) Exploring professional stereotypes and learning for inter-professional practice: an example from qualifying level social work education. *Social work education*

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Watson, D & West, J (2003) The role of the tutor in social work education: building an emancipatory tutorial relationship. *Social Work Education* 22 (2): 139 – 149

Bergman-Pyykkönen, Marina
Haavisto, Vaula
Karvinen-Niinikoski, Synnöve
Mattila-Aalto, Minna

Title

Developmental implementation of a social innovation: case family mediation in Finland

Abstract

The Finnish divorce services are traditionally segmented in two: on the one hand, there are the social and therapeutic services, such as child welfare officers helping parents to agree on the child custody, or family counselling helping the spouses to work out their intimate relationship and its breakdown. On the other hand, there are the legal services given by legal aid and the court system in conflicted cases. In this polarized context, family mediation can be regarded as a social innovation, intertwining the social and the judicial aspects of divorce.

The Finnish matrimonial law from 1987 states that family conflicts should be solved by negotiating and mediating. Family mediation is voluntary for families, but municipalities are obliged to arrange services. However, changes in practices have been slow and still in progress. At the moment, the field of Finnish family mediation is blurred and discontinuous. The municipalities have no uniform guidelines in how to arrange the mediation services, and very often, the family mediation is a dead letter. Also professionals working with divorce families understand mediation in different ways.

In a developmental research project, organized by the Finnish Forum for Mediation, the aim is to study the future possibilities of family mediation in resolving family conflicts. Following the method of Developmental Work Research (Engeström 1987; 2005), the project studies the present field of family mediation services and divorce aid in general, as well as collaborates with different service providers in planning and experimenting new types of mediation services, models and practices. Altogether six municipalities in the capital area of Finland are involved, including several branches in social services, as well as legal aid, districts courts, and family counselling done by the church. The main data collection methods are interviews with the social workers and other professionals, interviews with divorce clients, and observations of professional-client -interactions.

The project can be understood as a developmental implementation of a specific method: mediation. It increases its individuals' knowledge and capabilities in family mediation, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, enriches and cultivates the method itself both theoretically and methodologically, on the basis of their local prerequisites and their clients' needs. The aim is not pre-given, but evolves during the project. It signals a need for intervention methods that allows practitioners not only to apply a given new method, but also to analyze collectively the need for change and to develop and implement new ways of working in order to meet current challenges.

The family mediation project is an effort to produce a learning network for studying, creating, experimenting and implementing new models, practices and tools for family mediation. It evokes questions of how to promote cross-organizational collaboration in developing social work. Major question is how to support the learning network to evolve form independently acting individuals into a collective subject of decisive transformation and implementation effort, and shared transformative agency.

Bergmark, Anders
Bergmark, Ake
Lundstrom, Tommy

Title

The mismatch between the map and terrain: evidence based social work in Sweden

Abstract

Since the end of the 1990s, debate on the research – practice relationship in social work has often been carried out under the heading: evidence-based practice (EBP). When EBP was placed on the agenda proponents argued in favour of a rationality where social work should learn from medicine, with RCT as the gold standard for establishing EBPs. The hardest opponents argued that EBP is just another trick to (re)establish positivism. It is also possible to identify a pragmatic EBP-stance with those arguing in favour of an empirical research-oriented practice without a one-sided dependence of RCT:s.

In Sweden the most far reaching efforts to implement EBP in social work have been carried out by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which also has established alliances with organizations as The Campbell Collaboration. The introduction of EBP in Sweden may be depicted as a top-down guideline project, with RCTs as the gold standard, rather than a critical appraisal project. In international literature Sweden is often described as a European beacon of EBP – at least by its proponents in Swedish central bureaucracy. This is, however a questionable standpoint. With at least a ten year history the National Board can still not give strong recommendation for a single evidence based intervention.

The development towards increasing external pressure to implement EBP within social work has to a certain extent also brought about dissolution of the basic concept. There seems to be a substantial amount of uncertainty as to what constitutes the content and limits of EBP. This situation calls for a more critical as well as a more empirically oriented consideration of the relation between the map and the terrain of EBP within the context of Swedish social work. In the present paper we intend to present such an analysis with specific attention to (a) different and co-existent models/maps of EBP, (b) which types of evidence are put forward as valid, and (c) to which extent contextual aspects are considered. All of these aspects are also discussed against the background of information concerning actual practice that is launched under the rubric of EBP.

The paper concludes with an elaborated assessment of how current conceptions of EBP relates to professional and contextual conditions of Swedish social work practice. This includes an argumentation in favor of a more pragmatic stance where unrealistic expectations of critical appraisal models are rejected on the one hand and top-down inflicted guidelines sidestepping professional expertise on the other. We also address the issue of how to establish what adequate and valid evidence is by suggesting an approach that deviates from predominant evidence hierarchies and polarized extremes.

Bettmann, Joanna
Morrison, Debra Olson
Wright, Rachel

Title

Attachment as a protective factor in adolescent refugees' experiences of trauma

Abstract

Research maintains that nearly half of all young refugees experience trauma-related mental health problems (Ehnholt & Yule, 2006). Yet, certain protective factors may mitigate these potentially adverse effects. One such factor is security of attachment (Arnold, 2006; Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada, & Moreau, 2001; Rousseau, Drapeau, & Rahimi, 2003).

Attachment theory is a useful framework through which to view the impact of adolescent relationships on mental and emotional health. Attachment theory purports that supportive and consistent parental relationships, from infancy and beyond, enable children to grow into healthy and adaptive adults. This exploratory study sought to answer the question: how do adolescent refugees' attachment styles influence their experiences of traumatic events?

Of the initial 54 participants in this study, only 37 completed all instruments due to poor English fluency. Thus, data was analyzed for those 37 adolescent refugees resettled in a major U.S. city. Researchers used purposive and snowball sampling, beginning with participant recruitment from youth groups for refugees. Twenty-one (56.8 %) of the 37 participants were female and sixteen (43.2 %) male. The average age of participants was 15.9. Fifteen participants came from Somalia, six from Sudan, four from Kenya, two from Liberia, two from Rwanda, two from Congo, and one participant from each of the following countries: Russia, Guinea, Vietnam, Mexico, Burundi, and Togo. Participants completed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) and the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ).

On the AAI, (48.7%) participants in our sample were classified as secure-autonomous, (45.9%) as dismissing, (2.7%) disorganized and (2.7%) as preoccupied. On the HTQ, the average PTSD score was relatively low at 1.56 (SD=.40). Results indicate that securely attached participants reported less intense traumas than those classified as dismissing. The slightly elevated dismissing scores in our sample's distribution may result from van IJzendoorn and Bakerman-Kranenberg's (2008) hypothesis that higher percentages of dismissing classifications represent adolescents' desire for individuation or a reflection of adolescents' coping mechanisms due to refugee stressors. The scores could also represent cultural norms where dismissing styles of attachment are more prevalent. No studies have yet investigated adolescent attachment among diverse refugee populations or native African populations so comparisons cannot be drawn.

Sable (1995) hypothesizes that symptoms arising from exposure to trauma reside in a fear of loss, particularly from support systems and attachment figures. Still, it is unknown why some individuals develop PTSD while others do not. While some theorists purport PTSD originates in an insecure state of mind with respect to attachment, our study highlights that secure attachment does not necessarily inoculate against the development of PTSD. This descriptive study highlights possible relationships between how adolescent refugees perceive trauma according to the AAI, how they narrate trauma on the HTQ, and how their HTQ PTSD scores reflect their traumatic experiences. Understanding refugee's attachment dynamics in clinical settings can enhance social workers' comprehension of complex interpersonal dynamics within our clients (Brandell & Ringel, 2007; Holmes, 2010; Obegi & Berant, 2009). Thus, a more thorough understanding of adolescent refugees' attachment deepens our insight into social work and practice with this population.

Bhatti-Sinclair, Kish
Wilkinson, Ann

Title

The evidence base for working with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) service users: an integrative review

Abstract

Background

Social work researchers have gained a great deal of methodological learning about rigour, bias and accuracy from reviewing empirical studies. BME service users may be included generically or specifically in such research, however, relatively few studies and literature reviews contain material which extends the depth and breadth of social work knowledge on BME issues. The authors argue that the data, evidence and concepts derived from such reviews are likely to be limited and suggest examination of BME research combining empirical and theoretical literature.

Aim

To explore the research evidence on BME groups in social work literature. The review will describe: methods used to study the impact of social work with BME service users; define concepts of 'race' as a social construct, ethnicity and inter-sectionality; issues of access, recruitment and retention of BME groups; the influence of BME researchers on the research process; reporting and dissemination approaches and evidence of social work impact on BME services.

Design

The paper is based on an integrative review methodology which aims to collate and summarise empirical and theoretical studies in order to extend understanding and develop theory, policy and practice. The approach is used to scrutinise the research process and findings using the following key words: research methodology; social work and BME groups. Individual search strategies were designed for Assia, Medline, PsycINFO, Scopus, Social Care Online, Social Policy and Practice, Web of Knowledge. Searches were combined in Endnote and duplicates removed. A small number of previous reviews were summarised as background to the main review. Referencing tracking produced a number of additional sources. Inclusion criteria were studies published since 1989 in English to align with Section 22(5)c of the 1989 Children Act. Exclusion criteria were editorials, commentaries, discussions of methodological issues without details of studies, articles and opinion pieces. The remaining studies were included for appraisal using the CASP appraisal tools.

The majority of studies included were from North America and the UK. They demonstrated a wide variety of research designs both quantitative and qualitative including: retrospective analysis of large data sets; surveys, longitudinal prospective time series and retrospective; focus group; phenomenology; grounded theory; ethnography and; mixed methods. Sample sizes were similarly varied.

Key findings

- the description of methodology is often poor;
- ethnic categorisation results in merging together of disparate groups;
- quantitative studies (testing inter-relationships across uniform and regular comparison groups) tend to exclude or ignore hard to find groups and dispersed minorities;
- few BME related studies meet the criteria for a systematic review; and
- reliability, validity and rigour are not always addressed or revealed as major limitations.

Conclusions

The paper seeks to make an on-going integrated methodological review of the studies and generate a narrative analysis. It will address how 'race' and ethnicity are conceived and examine the impact on social work knowledge in relation to BME service user needs. This will have implications for both the design of future studies and for policy and practice.

Bittschi, Benjamin
Pennerstorfer, Astrid
Schneider, Ulrike

Title

Churning in social services

Abstract

Labor input is essential for social service provision. The production of personal social services, in particular, is highly labor intensive. In human services, quality and outcome of service delivery depend to a great extent on interpersonal communication, interaction and relationship building between social service workers and service users. Therefore staff shortages translate directly into bottlenecks in service delivery, challenging intended service quality and – ultimately - service outcomes. In extreme cases, staffing problems may even put clients at risk.

Against this backdrop, job creation and destruction (job flows) and, even more so, movements of workers into and out of jobs (worker flows) constitute key issues for social service providers and for social policy. Churning flows, as a third concept, are the numerical difference between job and worker flows and can be regarded as excess worker turnover. The last two flow concepts have much less been in the focus of discussion in the social service industry. Especially churning is a useful approach for the analysis of job and worker flows as it allows for investigating both topics at once.

Against this background, our paper discusses the following research questions:

(i) What is the aggregate level of job flows, worker flows and churning in the social services sector?

(ii) Is worker and job turnover distributed equally across major sub-sectors of the social services industry and across different types of service providers?

(iii) Which workplace characteristics indicate excess worker flows on the level of individual provider organizations?

To answer these questions we use a unique data set for Austria. The data were gathered in 2006 by a postal survey that was sent to all Austrian social service nonprofit organizations with at least one employee and a control group of public sector organizations. For the purpose of this paper, we study a sub-sample of 351 public and nonprofit organizations delivering health and social services. In order to explain (excess) worker flows on the level of organizations, we apply different econometric estimation techniques. We can show that churning is a widespread phenomenon in the social service sector. With regard to churning on the organizational level, our results indicate that shrinking firms continue hiring workers and that growing firms still proceed to make workers redundant. The churning flows, job and worker flows depend on the size of the establishment, the structure of the workforce, trends in the revenues and expenditures of the firms as well as on working hours of volunteers.

Against the backdrop of the findings, we close with a brief discussion of possible solutions for providers of social services on how to avoid dysfunctional worker turnover/ achieve retention of social service workers. Our findings are likely to stir up and inform the general discussion on working conditions in the social services industry. The organizational level analyses in particular could provide the grounding for developing or reshaping workforce and human resources strategies of provider organizations.

Boxall, Kathy Beresford, Peter
Title Service user research in social work and disability studies
<p>Abstract</p> <p>1. Background and purpose of the proposed presentation: There has been growing interest in the involvement of service users in research as well as in research studies which are led by service users. Although this interest in service users' roles in research has been evident in both social work research and disability studies research, the two disciplines may have different epistemological underpinnings. Disability studies is founded on social model understandings of disability, which do not locate disability in individual disabled people. Disability studies research therefore takes as its focus the barriers to inclusion in the mainstream of society experienced by disabled people, rather than any (perceived) individual deficit (Oliver 2009).</p> <p>Social work, on the other hand, takes a more individualised approach and "intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments" (IFSW 2010). In the United Kingdom, social work doctoral training requirements also acknowledge that social work research frequently adopts individualised approaches:</p> <p>"The focus of social work research is often on those with asymmetrical, stressful or divergent relationships with their fellow citizens, the formal agencies of the local or national state and the formal and informal institutions, processes and structures of the communities and societies in which they live" (ESRC 2005, F15 - 1.2).</p> <p>Depending on how this (ESRC 2005) statement is read, it either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is in direct conflict with social model disability research (since the social model does not locate problems in individual disabled people) – or, • it resonates clearly with social model disability research (since disability studies also acknowledges that disabled people often find themselves in divergent relationships with individuals and state structures). <p>2. Summary of the main points of the presentation: This paper will explore the tensions, possibilities and power dynamics of collaboration between social work research and disability studies research and will also examine the transformative potential of the two research approaches, both independently and in collaboration.</p> <p>3. Conclusions from and implications of your presentation for practice, policy, or subsequent research: The paper will argue that social model approaches offer useful epistemological underpinnings for any research which involves, or is led by, service users. Shared epistemological approaches also offer helpful starting points for collaborations between social work research and disability studies research; the paper will outline possibilities for such collaborations and their potential for social work practice, policy and research.</p>

Braun, Margriet Holsbrink-Engels, Gerialien
Title Young and leaving supportive housing
Abstract <p>For behaviorally challenged juveniles who leave supportive housing or reach the age of 18, there are no obvious follow-up steps. Formally they fall under social care for adults, yet often this transition away from social care for juveniles brings with it problems of its own.</p> <p>In this light it was in 2007 that an additional housing for young persons was realized: Riwis housing. The target group of this housing exists of younger people of 16 to 23, showing severe behavioral problems. Only youngsters who have lived in the Hoenderloo Groep (i.e. supportive housing for young people who have Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)) can enter the Riwis housing. The juveniles can choose to go and live in the Riwis housing when they leave the Hoenderloo Groep, but they are not obliged to do so. In the Riwis-housing a method is used to coach the youngsters and to help them reflect on what they want to achieve in their life. More specifically, the housing is aimed at preparing the youngsters for, for instance, living apart, following education, or finding a job. The housing is aimed at offering a safe place to move from the supportive housing to a more independent life.</p> <p>In the Riwis housing a method is used concerning 8 important areas of life that are given attention to. These areas are: living, work, learning, social contacts, personal development, finances and sexuality. The method is developed on the basis of a review of 32 effective methods and methodologies (Holsbrink-Engels, 2009). With the current study we set out to investigate the impact of the Riwis housing for youngsters. All 24 youngsters having lived in the housing since September 2007 were approached to participate. They were all interviewed using a semi-structured interview. In this interview the 8 areas of life used in the method of the Riwis housing were addressed. In addition the youngsters filled in the young adult self report (YASR; Achenbach, 1997). We compared these youngsters with a similar sample of young people who did stay at the Hoenderloo Groep, but did not live in the Riwis-housing. (Because we are currently busy collecting data, there is no insight into the results yet, At the end of November however, the data collection will be finished).</p> <p>This study gives more insight into the effectiveness of a method for young people who leave supportive housing for behaviorally challenged youngsters.</p>

Briggs, Stephen
Froggett, Lynn
Hingley-Jones, Helen
Harvey, Anna

Title

Working with practice-near research: an interactive data analysis workshop

Abstract

Practice –near research is an activity which connects researchers who use a range of research methods to apprehend and render coherent the complexities of what happens at the interfaces between service users, practitioners and their organisations. Such methods – for example thick description and reflective panels - are often congruent with practice methodologies and may be used by themselves or in conjunction with ‘practice distant methods’ to develop research which is responsive to the concerns of practitioners. Developed through an ESRC funded seminar series (‘Practitioner research and practice-near methods in social work’ 2006-8), the notion of practice-near research has the potential to bridge the perceived gap between research and practice. The workshop aims to explore, through active participation, the potential for this approach to provide innovation in social work research. The workshop aims to explore, through active participation, the potential for this approach to provide innovation in social work research.

In this workshop we aim to create a setting in which participants work on the analysis of an example of practice-near data. The data example will be a text with data from a current research project. The participative exercise will be undertaken in four stages; initial orientation; sharing of perspectives; predictive hypotheses and actual outcomes; evaluation. Participants will work in small groups (or alone if preferred) and with the group as a whole. Results of the participative data analysis discussion will be evaluated within the workshop using the following key practice-near requirements:

1. How the data uses or yields ‘thick description’ of the social world to provide understanding of the experiences of service-users and professionals in a way that has relevance for a critical appraisal of policy.
2. How the data and its interpretation allows exploration of emotionality and relational approaches to practice and policy.
3. How the discussion affords opportunities for adequate theorisation of practice and the experiences of research participants.
4. How the research presentation based on this data conveys the vitality of research participants’ experiences.
5. Whether or how the practice-near analysis might be combined with ‘practice-distant’ perspectives.

Briggs, Stephen
Froggett, Lynn
Hingley-Jones, Helen
Whittaker, Andrew

Title

The role of practice-near research: theorisations and applications

Abstract

The idea of 'practice –near' research has grown from the need to develop strategies for social work research which afford inclusive approaches to knowledge generation, promote social work research's distinctive strength of its closeness to practice, and bridge the perceived gap between research and practice. An ESRC funded seminar series 'Practitioner research and practice-near methods in social work' (2006-8) articulated practice-near research as aiming to render coherent practice activity and to systematically study the interfaces between service users, practitioners and their organisations. In its applications, practice-near research encompasses a range of methodologies, which are able to demonstrate robustness and benefit to practitioners and practice. Key criteria include:

1. Gathering data that uses or yields 'thick description' of the social world to provide understanding of the experiences of service-users and professionals, and their interactions in ways that have relevance for a critical appraisal of policy.
2. Allowing in the data collected and its interpretation, the exploration of emotionality and relationships, including reflexive understanding of the research participants' experiences.
3. Affording opportunities for adequate, transparent theorisation of practice effected through the application of an interdisciplinary approach to making sense of practice-near data
4. Making links with more 'practice distant' methods either within the same project or through making links between the kind of knowledge generated by researching subjectivities with broader contexts.

This symposium will aim to illustrate the breadth of application of practice-near methods, and to generate a critical appraisal of the knowledge thus generated. Each paper aims to demonstrate the vitality of practice near research in a specific area of practice and the robustness of findings in these approaches. The first paper (Hingley Jones and Briggs) focuses on an observational study of learning disabled adolescents in which a small cohort of young adolescents were observed weekly in the family homes. The second paper (Whittaker) demonstrates an observational approach in an organisational setting with child protection social work teams. In this study observations are supplemented by semi-structured interviews. The third paper (Froggett) conceptualises the potential relationships between practice-near research and 'practice distant' perspectives, illustrating the paper with examples from her research.

The symposium relates to exploration and appraisal of the potential contribution of this methodology to social work research, and the practice implications. Practice-near research integrates an interdisciplinary perspective through the emphasis on relational approaches to research and the importance of theorisation of practice, through drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, from sociology, psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies; these are represented in this symposium.

Using observational techniques to explore severely learning disabled young people's experience of 'becoming a subject' in adolescence.

This paper discussed an in-depth observational study of a small group of severely learning disabled young people. This observational method was adapted from the model of psychoanalytically informed infant observation, in which a baby is observed at home, for an

hour each week. This model was adapted to meet the requirements of this study's participants and the data – detailed descriptive accounts of each observation - provided vivid, 'thick' descriptions of the emotional qualities of interaction in the family and researcher.

The method facilitated an exploration of the often hidden dimensions of relatedness for severely learning disabled adolescents in their families. It drew on current psychoanalytic theorisation of the quest for subjectivity (identity) in adolescence to make sense of these observations. The theory of subjectivation ('becoming a subject') developed in France by Robert Cahn and by Roger Kennedy in the UK, stresses that identity is formed through the struggle to make sense of oscillating states of mind generated in adolescence by tensions between dependency, separateness and intimacy, demands to take on ownership of bodily changes, thoughts and impulses, and increasing separateness from parental figures. This approach will be described, illustrated with examples of young people in psychodynamic psychotherapy and then applied to the observational material. This will be described and illustrated with extracts from the observations to show how the young people and their families encounter and manage, often in very painful ways, the processes of subjectivation.

The paper concludes by discussing how this practice-near, exploratory methodology identifies a different dimension for understanding severely learning disabled young people, one which has the potential to help sensitise practitioners to the experiences of identity development of learning disabled children and their family members, negotiated in the context of relationships of high dependency with their caregivers.

'Sense-making in child protection: A practice-near approach'

Child protection maintains a high profile both within and outside the social work profession. A history of child deaths inquiries has contributed to intense scrutiny of errors in decision-making by individual practitioners. Set against this context, this paper will discuss a current study of decision-making and 'sense-making' processes that social work practitioners and managers use within child protection settings.

The study uses in-depth observational and interview methods to get close to practitioners' emotional and relational experiences, their thinking and decision making. Observations included interactions in formal and informal settings within local authority childcare teams in an inner-city setting. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with practitioners were used to explore the processes that practitioners use to understand complex information about families.

The paper will explore and illustrate with examples from the data how this practice-near methodology makes sense of real life decision-making processes. The discussion focuses on the aim of understanding how explicit and tacit cultures in organisations influence decision making processes through applying theoretical frameworks from sociology (including Bourdieu), theories of human learning (Dreyfus and Dreyfus) and the psychodynamics of organisations to the specific contexts of these child protection teams.

Applying these frameworks to the data leads to articulations of how practitioners organise complex information about families into distinctive kinds of narratives. These aim to describe and explain identified problems within contexts of practice, and the emotional impact of the work on teams and individuals. They are influenced by a dynamic interaction between anxieties, on the one hand, and a sense of competence, on the other; they are profoundly contextualised by local cultural practices and also connected to wider debates about globalisation and the changing relationship between the family and the state.

The practice-near method in this study thus contributes to an understanding of the practice experiences of child protection teams.

Combining practice-near and practice-distant perspectives

The concept of 'practice-nearness' derives from Clifford Geertz' conceptualisation of 'experience-nearness' in research, but transposes it from naturally occurring settings to the domain of practice. However just as Geertz remained adamant that good anthropology requires both experience-near and experience-distant perspectives in combination, so social work research needs to explore ways of combining practice-near and practice-distant perspectives.

Drawing on examples from the author's research, this paper highlights three possible combinations. In the first instance practice-near and practice-distant perspectives could be regarded as deriving from incommensurable epistemologies leading to incompatible forms of research practice. They would therefore be used in separate research projects, though findings might triangulate. A second and common instance is where practice-distant and practice-near methods are used alongside one another within a mixed method project, each affording different views of the object, and each informing the other both in the conduct of the research and in the findings. The third and most interesting possibility is where experience/practice -near and distant perspective are distinct moments within data collection and analysis processes, but are nevertheless thoroughly imbricated and co-dependent. This will be illustrated with an empirical example in which Alfred Lorenzer's notion of scenic understanding was used to render intelligible the researcher's relation to a specific care setting. The paper will argue that the third option is both challenging and promising in that it demands a sophisticated and attentive reflexiveness and impels researchers to find or develop new methods and concepts which apprehend the complexity of practice-based experience from the perspectives of practitioners, researchers and the people who use social work services. Such approaches have the potential to generate innovative methodologies congruent with social work practice and hence to contribute to a discipline specific research base with enhanced credibility and impact.

Buchanan, Ann
Title Pathways to impact: the new ESRC policy for funding
Abstract As a member of the Council of the ESRC and Chair of the new Evaluation Committee, I will have a responsibility for justifying to Council and Government, the £200 or so million spent on social research. Demonstrating the economic and societal benefits or 'impact' of our research will be central to our work. The ESRC is keen to fund more social care research. This talk will explain how researchers can maximise their chance of funding by better describing the possible 'pathways to impact' of their research. The talk will be illustrated by case studies.

Buchbinder, Eli
Enosh, Guy
Tzafir, Shay
Gur, Amit

Title

The marginalization of client aggressiveness towards social workers

Abstract

Background

Client aggressiveness toward social workers has gained increasing exposure over the last decade. Extant research indicates the levels of violence as well as its impact on the workers. The present study is part of a larger study aimed at verifying the extent of the phenomena in Israel, as well as gain insight as to the dynamics of client aggression and ways of coping at the individual and organizational level.

Method

The current study is a qualitative research based on 24 in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interviewees represent the four counties of Israel, and a balance between urban and agrarian areas, and Jewish and Arab settlements. Analysis was based on inductive thematic analysis and cross case comparisons.

Findings

Analysis of the interviews indicates the marginalization of client violence, on the individual as well as organization and cross-organizational levels. On the individual level, social workers are expected to be able to be empathic, accepting and understanding towards the clients. Thus, drawing a line between professional conduct and self-sacrificial altruism becomes a major hindrance to assertiveness and self-protection, raising a dilemma over issues of acceptance and forgiveness.

On the departmental level marginalization is expressed by non-reporting of aggressive occurrences, and lack of discussion and attention to issues of client aggression. Furthermore, colleagues and supervisors communicate expectations of acceptance and forgiveness on the part of the workers. Furthermore, on the inter-organizational level, the municipal welfare agencies are perceived by other social and municipal services as a "clearinghouse" and "wastebasket" for all unsolved and unsolvable problems.

Discussion

The discussion will focus on the social work ethos, based on the goal of eliminating personal and social hardships, while fighting oppression and social injustice. Thus the expectation is for a stance of partnership, defense, and client empowerment. The attempt to create a bridge between the "zero-tolerance" as a formal attitude and empathic understanding and acceptance is an attempt to bridge between deep-seated beliefs and values to the harsh reality they face.

Burgon, Hannah
<p>Title</p> <p>Horses as healers? Equine assisted learning and therapy: risk and resilience and attachment perspectives</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The research study was a practice-near reflexive ethnography interested in exploring the experiences of seven 'at risk' young people participating in a therapeutic horsemanship (TH) programme as part of my PhD. TH is an emerging, innovative, method of working with people to offer therapeutic and learning opportunities through horses. Aligned fields are equine-assisted therapy (EAL) and equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP). Research questions centred around looking at the processes of TH, concentrating not so much on the outcomes of TH but on what was going on between the young people and the horses. In addition, as a practitioner-researcher I was interested in the interactions between myself, the young people and the horses. Data collection methods adopted a mixed method approach included participant observation, open field interviews, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with both young people and some of the adult carers involved in their lives. It was hoped to follow a participatory research framework with the young people being involved through the entire research project. This endeavor proved problematic due to the young peoples disjointed and transient lives, and some of the pitfalls of this approach are introduced. Analysis followed a thematic, open coding process and uncovered themes which were organised alongside theoretical frameworks. The themes were loosely based around issues of nurture, attachment and trust, social well-being and resilience, identification with the horse, a 'safe' space, calming influence, role of the horse in the therapeutic space, and the natural environment and spiritual dimensions.</p> <p>For this presentation I concentrate on themes related to the risk and resilience and attachment literature; of how horses seemed to help provide 'at risk' young people with resilience factors. Many of the young people developed relationships and attachments to the horses which enabled them to feel safe and trust the horses. In turn they were then able and motivated to learn more about looking after the horses and try new and challenging activities with them which led to an increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy gained from learning new skills and overcoming challenges.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged that only 'moderatum generalizations' can be drawn from a small scale case study such as this, it would appear that the young people's personal experiences with the horses were meaningful for them, and these observations were mirrored by the adult contributions. Larger scale evaluative studies would be useful in order to gain more insight into the marginal interventions of TH, EAL and EAP. It may be that by providing these interventions at a preventative stage, young people may gain resilience factors that would equip them to lead more fulfilling and positive lives in the future.</p> <p>The research study provides an example of innovative social work practice employing little utilised research methods of practice-near research with young service users, which it is hoped will provide a useful contribution to the knowledge base.</p>

Bywaters, Paul
Soskolne, Varda
Donnelly, Sarah
Fish, Julie

Title

Emerging research issues in social work and health inequalities

Abstract

Tackling health inequalities is a matter of social justice; it is essential in ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop their potential and live a flourishing life. Increasingly, there is recognition that coherent action is needed to mitigate the impact of inequalities across the lifecourse and for those who are socially disadvantaged (WHO, 2008). The commitment to reduce health inequalities was restated in the UK White Paper, Equity and Excellence 2010 and in a summer speech by the health secretary Andrew Lansley in which he pledged to build on the findings of the Marmot Review.

In addition to economic inequalities, a range of other factors including gender, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation shape people's experiences of health and well-being (Marmot, 2010). They signal structural differences which place limits on the freedom to participate in economic, social, political and cultural relationships. Being included and having equal access to social and material goods is fundamental to social well being and equitable health. Social workers practise among people who are the most socially disadvantaged and they play a pivotal role in reducing health inequalities and promoting inclusion, agency and control. Despite this focus, there is little awareness in current initiatives of social work's contribution. For example, in the UK context, the links between health and social inequalities, identified in, for example, the be healthy outcome of Every Child Matters 2003 is already supporting social work interventions to promote healthy eating among children and their families. Moreover, there are relatively few research examples which demonstrate the contribution of social care research to reducing health inequalities.

This symposium brings together recent research from the Social Work and Health Inequalities Network (SWHIN) which seeks to enhance international research capacity in social work and collaborative working. Drawn from across European nations, the papers consider the impact of health inequalities in relation to class, age and sexual orientation. The first paper calls for greater recognition of the role of UK social work and social care in addressing health inequalities and argues for an international programme of social work research. In the second paper, data from population based studies are used to inform social work interventions to address the impact of socioeconomic position on people's health in Israel. Older people's participation in care planning meetings in Ireland is the focus of the third paper which took an action research approach to bring about organisational change to promote health and well being. User and carer led approaches were used to inform UK interprofessional practice and develop relevant and effective social care services for lesbian and bisexual women with breast cancer in the fourth paper.

Taken together these papers develop the knowledge base about social work and social care's role in addressing health inequalities and examine the relationships between research, policy and practice. The conference offers a unique opportunity to build links with other European social work researchers and develop the work of SWHIN cross nationally.

Paper 1

Social work research on reducing health inequalities: new priorities, new methods, new

directions

The Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (The Marmot Review, 2010) included the first authoritative, public statement in England of the importance of social work and social care to policies aimed at reducing health inequalities. However, the key arguments underpinning this case lack a substantial evidence base, lack recognition within the social care and health workforces and lack a proven, costed intervention armoury. There is a substantial need for new knowledge to underpin these conclusions of the Marmot Review.

This paper makes the case that research to establish the actual and potential contribution of social work and social care to reducing health inequalities has the potential to create benefits for both social care and health services internationally. Greater recognition of the potential role of social care in reducing health inequalities and greater effectiveness in doing so could contribute significantly to national and regional health priorities. Addressing the social determinants of health and reducing the social gradient would create substantial benefits for social care service users and might, in the medium and longer term, create the conditions in which social care itself could be more effective. As Fair Society, Healthy Lives (p94) says in relation to early years services, 'later interventions, although important, are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations.'

Reviewing the other presentations in this symposium and the existing research on social work and social care's impact on health, the paper concludes by outlining the key elements of a future international programme of social work research on health inequalities.

Paper 2

Explanatory factors of health inequalities: evidence base for social work interventions

Background and purpose: Identifying explanatory factors of social inequalities in health serves as the basis for efforts to reduce health inequalities. This presentation reviews findings from studies in Israel that focused on socioeconomic position (SEP) inequalities in self-rated health (SRH) or in mortality and examined psychosocial, behavioural and community variables as explanatory factors. They contribute to research evidence of factors that ought to be targeted by social work interventions.

Methods: Drawn from studies of two national random samples (Study 1, N=1328 individuals aged 30-70 years; Study 2, 5055 individuals aged 60 or over). SEP measures included education or income. In Study 1, educational mobility from childhood was also examined. Dependent variables included SRH in Study 1, mortality over 8 years in Study 2. Explanatory variables included individual psychosocial factors (e.g. stressors, social support, coping efficacy), health behaviours and community variables (e.g. social capital and social participation). Explanation of inequalities was assessed by the decrease of the association between education or income and SRH or mortality when the explanatory variables were added in multivariate analyses.

Results: In Study 1, a consistent and significant social gradient of health was found: with every decrease in the education or income measures, SRH was poorer. Additionally, upward education or income mobility was associated with better SRH. The inclusion of psychosocial and/or community factors, but not health behaviours, reduced the association between education and SRH. In Study 2, psychosocial variables and health behaviours reduced the association of income or education with mortality.

Conclusions: The studies identified psychosocial and community factors as explanatory factors of health inequalities. Several factors, such as coping efficacy, social participation or trust in the community are amenable to change, suggesting the design of social work interventions at the individual and community level, in health and social care.

Paper 3

Inequalities in participation rates of older people in care planning meetings: an exploration using action research

Background: For many social work service users, poor health often instigates social work contact. Compared with people in other life stages, older people (OP) have often been neglected in research on health inequalities. This paper examines whether 'active participation' actually occurs for OP within the context of hospital care planning meetings.

Methods: An action research approach was chosen because of its transformational potential and its ability to "investigate" whilst introducing change. A 3 stage action research cycle was adopted with the multidisciplinary team (MDT) involved as co-researchers. Cycle I and 2 included a convenience sample of 10 care planning meetings (CPMs). In Cycle II inpatients all had a cognitive/communication difficulty. Cycle III involved the development and implementation of an education/training programme. The study design included participant observations of family meetings, questionnaires and staff focus groups.

Results: Within Cycle I, inequalities in participation rates of OP were noted: those with higher levels of cognitive impairment had noticeably lower participation rates. Participation rates of family members were noted to be much higher. The MDT decided that for Cycle II the meeting name should be changed to 'Care Planning Meetings' to be more inclusive of OP. The study resulted in other changes to practice and further organisational change through an education and training programme introduced by the MDT in Cycle III.

Conclusions: Findings highlight how healthcare professionals can both promote and impede patient participation through informal processes and good/poor communication. A staff training programme has been developed that has potential to be rolled out to CPMs for other patient populations and within other settings. To foster a climate encouraging optimal patient participation a framework promoting an individualised approach is also recommended.

Paper 4

Inter-professional working to reduce cancer inequalities in lesbian and bisexual women with breast cancer

Background: Cancer inequalities are differences between individual's cancer experience or outcome which result from their demographic characteristics, including sexual orientation (APPGC, 2009). Current efforts to reduce inequalities focus on survivorship where social care can play a key role in supporting people living with and beyond cancer and in the delivery of personalised care. Lesbian and bisexual (LB) women are largely invisible in cancer services and their health behaviours are not widely understood.

Methods: This paper reports on the first UK study of lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of living with breast cancer. It contributes to the knowledge economies of three inter-professional 'communities of interest': cancer organisations; the LB voluntary sector; the NHS; in addition to LB women with breast cancer and their carers. They have been involved throughout the project in agenda-setting, recruitment, data analysis and dissemination.

Findings: The study reveals distinctive experiences of treatment and care: heterosexism in cancer services, interactions with professionals, coming out, accessing support and attitudes to breast reconstruction.

Implications: The next stage is to maximise the impact of the study for social care by embedding the findings in the organisational cultures and practices of social care organisations, influencing public policy and facilitating joint working. The expected outputs include a policy briefing and practice guidance for health and social care professionals. The project will contribute to the next steps for the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative which aim to develop the cancer health and social care workforce. The project will be of relevance to a cross-national constituency concerned to make services relevant and effective for hard to reach groups.

Campanini, Annamaria
Frost, Elizabeth
Hojer, Staffan

Title

“Fit for practice”: are European social work students properly prepared?

Abstract

This paper sets out to consider the tentative findings emerging from an in-progress comparative pilot study on the value given to their social work training by students and practitioners in Italy, Sweden and the UK.

The authors, all with considerable experience of teaching on social work programmes in their countries and on other programmes in a variety of European contexts, became conscious that, anecdotally, students across Europe voice some very similar and some very different views on how ready their courses made them feel to face the challenges of practice, and whether, after some experience of practice, this had turned out to be the case. As educationalists we were concerned to understand what we could learn from our students’ comparative views, and to eventually bring this to bear on our programmes in the contemporary climate of continuous evaluation of standards and quality improvement.

The research methodology agreed on was essentially qualitative, privileging the subjective understanding of the students of their own experience. Extended semi-structured interviews were decided on as the most useful tool for the exploring meaning in some depth. A longitudinal approach was utilised in interviewing students in the final section of their course, and after 1 year of practice.

For this pilot project a group of app. 6 students were identified in Milan, Gothenburg and Bristol, and each were interviewed by one of the authors from a different country, to minimise researcher pre-conception and also with a view to addressing the potential ethical issues and distortion related to being interviewed by one’s own lecturers. The students were interviewed in the summer of 2009, and the autumn of 2010 by which time they were practitioners with app 1 year’s experience.

The paper will briefly discuss the aims and methodology of the study, with some observations on the strengths and opportunities of comparative work. However its main aim is to critically discuss some of the findings and the potential contribution of this to improvements in the social work education of practitioners.*

The authors will provide a very brief overview of the findings so far, but then go on to focus on core themes that seem to be emerging strongly from the work: the expectations developed from within education of what it will be like to practice, and their uses and limitations; the sustainability of education and knowledge when the student becomes a practitioner and, connected to this, the ways in which specific elements of the students’ education (evaluation, ‘theory’ and personal growth and development) have been able to resource their practice.

The authors will conclude by offering some thoughts on whether these students saw themselves as ‘fit for practice’ and, if time permits, involve the audience in some discussion of how best such Pan-European knowledge might be utilised.

Campbell, Jim
Coulter, Stephen
Duffy, Joe
Pinkerton, John
Reilly, Isobel
Traynor, Ciaran

Title

“Rock the boat, don't tip the boat over”: an evaluation of an EU PEACE III project on preparing students to work with victims and survivors of political conflict in Northern Ireland

Abstract

There are many challenges involved in the teaching of contested and sensitive issues to social work students. This is particularly evident when discussing the impact of political conflict on social work education, policy and practice. This three part symposium presents the findings of an evaluation of a European Union funded project carried out in Queens University Belfast over three years. The project was informed and simulated by the reforms in social work education that occurred in Northern Ireland in the past few years. This has encouraged social work educators to develop curricula that more openly recognise how Northern Ireland's history of conflict has impacted on the lives of individuals, groups and communities. This in turn has presented opportunities for innovative methods of engagement in the broader context of service user involvement in social work education.

The symposium is organised in three parts, reflecting the structure of the educational delivery and the concurrent process of the evaluation. Part 1 presents the findings from surveys of four cohorts of BSW students (n=c200) across a four year period (2006-10). These include both groups of two year relevant graduate and post-A level three year students. Part 2 presents the findings from individual, semi-structured interviews with university staff and service users, who provided the training programme. This part of the symposium concludes with a presentation of findings from a survey of practice teachers (n=30) who provide supervision for some of these students during their learning opportunities.

Although some of the issues raised during the life of the project are peculiar to the conflict in Northern Ireland, the authors will conclude the symposium with a strong argument that some of the lessons learned from this evaluation are transferable to other contexts, particular to societies who need to deal with the legacies of political conflict, in which social work educators, service users and students can all play a role in conflict resolution and peace-building.

Part 1: The students' experience

In the first part of the symposium the findings from a survey of student views about their experiences of the teaching are presented. A survey questionnaire was applied to four cohorts of students resulting in around 200 returns, representing a response rate of about 60%. The instrument used likert type responses to evaluate student satisfaction with the teaching. Most students viewed the teaching as important and appealed for more time to develop a more adequate skills base in order to meet the needs of victims and survivors of the conflict. In addition, open questions were used to encourage students to explain how the Troubles had impacted upon them and their family and friends. Many took the opportunity to detail substantial concerns about traumatic incidents that they, their families and friends had experienced. The presentation concludes with a discussion of ways in which this type of educational process can be improved, including the need to find ways of mainstreaming the teaching, the management of risk and disclosure, and the development of more a more adequate skills based knowledge for practice this important area of social work education.

Part 2: The trainers' experience

This presentation will focus on Part 2 of the project evaluation that sought to examine the personal impact on the trainers of being involved in delivering the teaching programme. The university staff and service user colleagues who contributed to the teaching have all lived through the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and experienced the contentious, highly contested and violent social and political milieu that pertained in this society for more than three decades. In particular the service user trainers, as victims and survivors, have been profoundly affected by loss directly attributable to the conflict. Furthermore they bring to the teaching direct experiences of caring and supporting others who have been bereaved or traumatised through the violence, irrespective of religious, cultural or political belief. These invaluable experiences are brought to the classroom.

The presentation is based on an analysis of individual, semi-structured interviews (n=12) carried out with university staff and service user trainers. The organising themes include: the personal impact of re-telling one's story; judging the appropriate level of self disclosure, creating safety for students and trainers; concerns about the wide variation in student experience of the Troubles; and the potential for adverse reactions by individual students. The presentation discusses some of the ethical dilemmas uncovered in these processes in the context of Boler's 'pedagogy of discomfort' model of teaching. It concludes with an assertion that the opportunities and challenges associated with this type of service user involvement maybe be of relevance to social work educators and practitioners in other societies facing politic conflict and violence.

Part 3: The practice teachers' experience

Within Northern Ireland social work students must undertake two assessed practice learning totalling 185 days. The learning and assessment on these practice learning periods is undertaken by an accredited social work practice teacher. A key function of the practice teacher is to engage the student in a reflective learning process that, among other things, will explore the context of practice. In this, the final part of the symposium, the researchers sought to examine the views of practice teachers (n=30) on how, if in any way, the teaching had impacted upon the supervision of students. The survey instrument used likert type scales and open text questions to elicit practice teachers' views on the relevance of the project to student practice and how agencies and trainers could more openly engage with reflective learning processes that are challenged by experiences of the conflict, and fears of how they and their students may be treated in a still largely sectarian society in which denial, avoidance and minimisation of the significance of the conflict and sectarianism is pervasive.

Chen, Henglien
<p>Title</p> <p>Cross-national comparative methods in social care research: a qualitative approach to understanding long-term care of older people</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose</p> <p>Long-term care of older people has been compared intensively since the 1990s. Comparative studies have also started to take the East into account when addressing welfare system issues. The studies imply there was a growing interest in cross-national learning in the field of care for older people, as welfare systems were facing or preparing for the ageing of their population and looking abroad for policy and practice to adopt. However, many publications describe, discuss or analyze social policy instruments and practice developments; with little attempt to introduce central concepts or insufficient discussion about how these have been operationalized. As a result, it is difficult to draw comparative conclusions. Many researchers have adopted a quantitative approach and, while this has many advantages there are also limitations. For example, national and even international databases are not always strictly comparable. This paper, therefore, focuses on the application of cross-national research and on the benefits and challenges of using qualitative methods as an approach to cross-national research. The aim of such a research approach is to gain a salient international perspective and increase opportunities for mutual understanding on policy implementation and care practice.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>To discuss the practical implication of cross-national qualitative research, this paper draws on a recent study of long-term care of older people in England, the Netherlands and Taiwan. An identical qualitative cross-national research method was carried out by one researcher on three levels in each country: national (e.g. civil servants and national NGOs' senior officials), county (e.g. local administrators and service providers) and municipal (service users, assessors, formal carers and informal carers). A total of 176 participants were interviewed. In addition, photographs have been used to provide a more holistic impression of the experience of care.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>How to get information about the relative effects of different actions on actual welfare outcomes from different countries was crucial for the researcher if the research project is to be achieved. Some of the difficulties faced can be addressed by understanding the contexts in which comparisons were being made. Difficulties can also be avoided by careful and detailed planning. Empirical research conducted by 'one' researcher helped to maximize the consistency of data collection on a cross-national basis. Multiple organizing methods in the overall analysis assisted to obtain consistent and systematic results.</p> <p>Conclusions and implications</p> <p>The paper offers the researcher insight into practicing cross-national qualitative research in social care. The cross-national comparison is very demanding in terms of language skills, cultural understanding, finance and time. The assumption that standard ethical criteria can apply to all types of people is rather limited and limiting. More research is needed on ethical issues concerning a broader range of vulnerable older people such as those with multiple health difficulties and those who are carers. The ethical approval process varies across the countries studied and lead times are especially protracted in England. On the one hand the researcher should take this into account when planning their research time frame. On the other hand, there is an accordant need to improve the efficiency of the ethical approval process in England.</p>

Christie, Alastair
Title Social work in multicultural Ireland
Abstract From at least the 1840s to the 1990s, emigration was a domination feature of Irish Society. However, since the mid 1990s, Ireland has made the transition from being a country of emigration to one of net immigration. The 2006 Census estimated that 420,000 non-Irish nationals from 188 different countries were living in Ireland. The general increase in immigration into Ireland and the increase in immigrants from outside the EU and USA has led to Ireland having a more multi-cultural population. As a result social workers in Ireland provide services to an increasingly ethnically diverse population. They face particular challenges in working with specific groups such as separated children seeking asylum, but their work across a range of more general services in areas such as child welfare, probation and mental health services also involves more diverse service user groups. The paper discusses research which aims to identify how these changes have affected the professional practice of social workers and the services they provide. In this research project approximately 20 social workers will be interviewed. The interviewees will be drawn from a range of different nationalities and self-defined cultural backgrounds. The interviews will be based on the professional experiences of individual social workers and will be conducted on a one-on-one basis. The research specifically examines how racial meanings, which support and challenge dominant racial hierarchies, are reproduced through social work practices and policies.

Davidson, Gavin Campbell, Jim
Title Researching mental health law: the role of the approved social worker in Northern Ireland
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose</p> <p>It is currently planned to replace the current Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 with a new law, the Mental Capacity (Health, Welfare and Finance) Bill to be enacted in 2013. The new law will represent the first attempt in the world to replace mental health law with a non-discriminatory capacity-based legal framework which applies to everyone regardless of the cause/s for their impaired decision-making capacity. It is proposed to retain and enhance the role of the Approved Social Worker (ASW) under the new law but there has been limited recent research on this role in Northern Ireland. This study aimed to investigate practice by ASWs, obtain their views about the proposed changes to the legislative framework and so inform and influence the process of making the new law.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>The methodology combined a retrospective audit with a survey of views about proposed changes to the law. The audit aimed to examine the routine practice of ASWs in adult mental health services in one Health and Social Care Trust over a six month period. In the survey part of the study the ASWs were asked to consider the potential impact of four of the proposed changes to mental health legislation: the introduction of a capacity test; advance directives or crisis plans; the option of an alternative facility to the hospital; and Community Treatment Orders. During the audit period 27 ASWs completed 84 assessments and it was possible to collect data from 25/27 (93%) of the ASWs.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>The key findings highlighted a number of areas of current practice that may be improved. There were inconsistencies in how the assessments were recorded. More than half of the assessments were carried out in either a general or psychiatric hospital setting. Some issues were identified regarding inter-agency working. In about a quarter of the assessments the ASW reported having felt afraid or at risk. The proposals for changes in mental health legislation were largely supported by the ASWs but they tended to be concerned about how a capacity test would be used in the assessment process.</p> <p>Conclusions and implications</p> <p>These findings lead to a number of recommendations for current practice. In particular it is argued that a standard reporting procedure is needed for all ASW assessments, regardless of outcome and both in and out of hours' services. The paper will conclude with a discussion about how these issues about current practice, and the ASWs' views of the proposed changes, are being used to inform the ongoing policy making and legal processes in Northern Ireland. It is also argued that the study has also helped inform possible methods for researching the new law as and the impact of legal change on social work practice, and the lives of service users and carers.</p>

Degi, Csaba
Title
Social work and evidence-based cancer research in Romania: results of a multivariate analysis
Abstract
The relevancy of our survey should be addressed and evaluated starting from the fact that in Romania there are no relevant or scientific data about cancer diagnosis, cancer distress (depression and anxiety) and cancer-related quality of life, based on multivariate statistical analyses.
Objectives
To measure prevalence of cancer diagnosis non-disclosure, psychosocial distress, especially depression and anxiety symptoms, mental health disorders and low-level quality of life. Also our aim was to identify explanatory variables related to quality of life in cancer patients.
Methods
Our mixed sample includes 420 hospitalized adult oncology patients. Quality of life was measured by FACT-G 4.0, presence and severity of depressive symptoms by nine-item short version of the BDI and trait anxiety by STAI-T. Multivariate statistical analyses carried out: stepwise linear regression and path analysis (SEM).
Results
Our results show that in our sample 16.9% of cancer patients are not aware of their oncologic diagnosis, 47.5% are clinically depressed, 46.7% experience anxiety disorders and 28.1% report critically low quality of life. Our empirical model based on path analysis showed that quality of life in patients with malignant tumours is mainly and negatively defined by anxiety, vital exhaustion and illness intrusiveness.
Conclusion
Based on our research, we advocate for the development of new patient-focused psychosocial services in oncology in Romania. Social work can be one of the comprehensive support sources by providing psychosocial and practical support to cancer patients.

Desair, Kristof
Hermans, Koen

Title

Who is right? Clinical judgment versus actuarial assessment

Abstract

Evidence points out that actuarial risk assessment models to assess child abuse and neglect are more reliable and valid than consensus-based models and individual clinical judgment. However, the predictive capacity of any instrument or model remains limited. Nevertheless there are circumstances in which the use of a model improves the decision making in centres working with child abuse and neglect, namely when an actuarial model is combined with clinical judgment. A newly developed instrument for risk assessment, the Child Maltreatment Index, is presented. Data about interrater reliability are discussed, comparing the use of the instrument versus clinical judgment by practitioners in vertrouwenscentra in Flanders (Belgium). Using an index to classify children and their families clearly structures the decision making process and reduces the bias involved in clinical judgment. The experience (possibilities and caveats) of social workers using this instrument are discussed.

<p>Devaney, John Lazenbatt, Anne Gildea, Aideen</p>
<p>Title Older women's life long experience of domestic violence</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose The specific needs of older women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence is relatively unknown. Service providers and policy makers often assume that violence stops at age 55 and there is a noticeable lack of literature, research and guidelines on the issue. The greatest challenge for policy makers is that abuse remains hidden, with women remaining silent and finding it difficult to speak openly or seek help. This pilot study aims to address this gap by giving older women a 'voice' through applying a model of salutogenesis to their lived experience of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Methods Using snowball sampling this study used indepth semi-structured interviews with eighteen older women (age range 53-70yrs). The interviews were subject to thematic analysis using the theory of salutogenesis as an organising conceptual framework.</p> <p>Key findings The major findings highlight how older women's 'wellbeing' is weakened by living in a domestically abusive context. The required self-esteem and confidence that enables individuals to exercise control and make choices conducive to their wellbeing appeared to be different in the context of domestic violence compared to other contexts. Older women are less likely to seek help due to social expectations and a lack of specialist services for older victims, and that they are more likely to resort to misusing alcohol and prescription drugs in order to cope, with significant consequences for their mental and physical health. Psychological abuse had the strongest impact on their physical and mental health such as long-term depression and anxiety (94%), the use of psychoactive medication (100%), and the likelihood of becoming a heavy drinker and experiencing alcohol dependence (22%).</p> <p>Messages for policy, practice and future research directions are identified.</p>

Devaney, John
Pinkerton, John
Spratt, Trevor
Percy, Andrew

Title

Children with long term and complex needs: the feasibility of combining administrative datasets

Abstract

Background

Policy with respect to children and families in the United Kingdom is strongly influenced by the research based assumption that experience of long term and complex needs in childhood is predictive of poor social and economic outcomes in adulthood. In addition it is assumed that children who are the subject of care proceedings or who have had their names added to the child protection register are likely to come from such families and can provide an understanding of the wider population of children with long term and complex needs. Government wishes to target such families for early intervention and prevention. However there is currently no dedicated data source for the identification and profiling of families with long term and complex needs. A possible alternative to setting up such a data base is to combine existing administrative datasets.

Method

The potential benefits of linking and analysing administrative datasets to inform social policy research in relation to social work is significantly underdeveloped in the United Kingdom compared to other countries such as Norway and the United States of America.

In this paper the authors will report on linking administrative datasets by discussing research funded by the ESRC exploring the challenges and benefits from co-joining social services administrative data on looked after children and children on the child protection register with the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS). The NILS is one of three longitudinal surveys in the United Kingdom, complementing the surveys in Scotland and England/Wales. The NILS contains administrative and census data for 500,000 residents of Northern Ireland and is useful for longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of census and event data. It includes linked data from the 2001 Census on occupation and economic activity, housing, ethnicity, health, age, sex, marital status and education. This has been matched with demographic data derived from health registrations, event data on births, deaths, fertility, mortality, morbidity and migration, and geographical information such as property valuation and social security benefit take up.

Findings

Using the example of researching vulnerable and hard to reach families, the authors will discuss the potential for the secondary analysis of large datasets, and the ethical, technical and legal challenges in doing this. In doing so it is proposed that social policy research in relation to social work should be strengthened in this area.

Devaney, John Spratt, Trevor Davidson, Gavin
Title Families with multiple problems: challenges in identifying and providing services to those experiencing adversities across the life-course
Abstract <p>An emerging body of research indicates that exposure to multiple adverse childhood experiences (MACE) is associated with negative social, economic and health outcomes in adulthood (Spratt and Devaney, 2009). MACE tend to be both of a situational nature, such as growing up in a household with a parent who misuses substances, and trauma related, such as experiencing sexual or physical abuse (Anda et al., 2006). Whilst research indicates that approximately 2%-5% of UK families experience such multiple adversities (Oroyemi et al., 2009; Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008), we currently know little about: (a) the pathways from childhood experience to outcomes in adulthood; (b) the interaction of multiple adverse experiences in childhood; and (c) the critical turning points or processes leading to either positive or negative outcomes in adulthood (Davidson et al., in press). There is limited research that explores why some children, who grow up with similar patterns of multiple adverse experiences, appear to have better outcomes in later life (HM Treasury, 2007). These research questions raise important issues about how best to intervene to buttress resilience and ameliorate vulnerability in the pathways from childhood to later adult maturity. Knowing who are most likely to experience such risks would assist the identification of need and so inform the targeting and prioritisation of services.</p> <p>The work of our research group based at Queen's University Belfast has largely concentrated on identifying and locating such families with multiple problems (Spratt, 2009) and researching the readiness of social work agencies internationally to meet the challenges involved in recognising and providing services to such families (Spratt and Devaney, 2009).</p> <p>The aim of this workshop is to facilitate discussion about some key issues involved in researching multiple childhood adversities and the effects of these across the life course. The workshop has four main objectives. First, to present and discuss the theoretical constructs underlying MACE; second, with a starting point in the research linking childhood maltreatment and adult outcomes, to examine some of the research challenges involved in tracking outcomes for children experiencing multiple problems into adulthood. Third, to consider the restrictions placed on our thinking in relation to problems experienced across the life course by conceptually separating problems faced by children and by adults. Fourth; to explore some of the challenges involved in designing and delivering services to families with multiple problems. We have already made international links in our research and hope to broaden our project further as a result of relationships made in the course of this workshop.</p>

Dijkstra, Sietske
Dartel, Nicole van

Title

Hidden treasures: what good professionals do and what clients experience in dealing with domestic violence

Abstract

Background and purpose

The handling of domestic violence (DV) has changed the last decades from a subject in the margins into a dynamic field where many professional players need to cooperate. In this qualitative and innovative study in the Netherlands we tried to link what good and leading professionals do (and leave) with the experiences of clients, using the concept of tacit knowing to make implicit knowledge more explicit. We assumed the value of tacit knowing of professionals as a hidden treasure, contributing to the quality of the work. We wanted to find out how we could trace self-evident, unarticulated and implicit knowing. Our goal was to bring this vulnerable but important knowledge to surface, in order to make this type of knowing more explicit and transferable.

Method

We interviewed 15 lead professionals on DV from different agencies and settings as shelter work, the police, lecturers in vocational education and the care system by questioning their work in-depth by choosing themes they or the interviewers brought up. In this questioning dialogue, we invited the interviewees to give a detailed and concise description of what was really going on in their working field for the last decade and coming future. The interviews were transcribed literally and nine of them were analyzed in in-depth portraits. Besides we interviewed three adults, two females and one male, on their experiences with partner abuse.

Secondly, we searched the literature for tacit knowing in the social professions, linking it to more theoretical and conceptual discussions on practice wisdom and ways of bridging gaps between the scientific, professional knowledge and the knowledge coming from lived experience. In order to bridge the gaps we took the SECI-model of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as a starting point to look at modes to converse tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, linking this model to the analysis of interviews. A key idea of these authors is that some knowledge is tacit (i.e., internalized) and other is explicit, creating four different modes: socialization, internalization, externalization and combination.

Results

- Expert-practitioners described a changing view on DV, focusing more on relationships with partners, children and networks and more care before and after the stay in a shelter in floating services.
- Organizations became large scale with differentiated facilities, an increasing number of rules, interagency cooperation and bureaucracy, filling in forms.
- Experts referred to improvement and renewal in professional practice: coming up with the need of courage and perseverance, leadership and feedback, underlining the importance of mental flexibility and a focused mindset.

Conclusions and implications

Expert-practitioners are able to explicate implicit knowledge and putting it into a meaningful historical and professional framework so it can be transferred. The report of the research is being used by both professionals and in education for social work, appreciated for the fact that it is making valuable work more explicit. Further research is needed, both on the subject and refining

the methods getting tacit knowing more visible. Both from the interviews as from the studied literature it is challenging to further explore the SECI-model, especially looking more in detail on the axes, to find out what is going on in knowledge creating interactions between the four SECI-categories.

Dowling, Monica
Becirevic, Majda

Title

The rights of disabled children and their families in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria

Abstract

Throughout the communist era in Eastern Europe social problems were hidden, an approach that placed disabled children largely outside the public view. With the transition from communism in the early 90s and the more recent changes brought in by EU accession, heavy state protection, control and institutionalization of disabled children is being replaced by ideologies of children's rights, individual freedoms and the social inclusion agenda. Furthermore in 2006 with the adoption of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a strong message was relayed to governments that disability is not only a welfare, but also a human rights issue. For the first time through the adoption of this convention (article 23), the importance of support that needs to be provided to children with disabilities and their families is acknowledged.

In this paper we will examine if this policy rhetoric is reflected in practical outcomes that will support the fulfilment of rights for disabled children and their families.

Two recently completed research projects are the basis for this paper. The first is a PhD study 'Inclusion or Illusion? Policies and practices for children with disabilities and their families in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Bulgaria'. The second is a commissioned policy research project on the situation for disabled children and their families with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence. We recognize that the views of disabled children and their parents are rarely acknowledged in policy making in Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H) and Bulgaria, even though their voices are crucial in identifying what makes services effective and workable for them as opposed to what works for professionals. In this paper we will use data generated from insightful discussions (focus group and individual interviews) with families and with disabled children concerning how they experience the consequences of policy and practice.

In understanding the social exclusion of disabled children and their families we will explore conceptual and theoretical connectedness between the social model of disability, children's rights and the sociology of childhood. We argue that persistent constructions of disabled children as outside 'normal' childhood impacts on the implementation of the social inclusion agenda. This paper will show that professionals and policy makers in B&H and Bulgaria need to make conceptual shifts and critically reflect on their construction of disabled children and their families if they want to move from popular rhetoric towards demonstrating commitment to social inclusion and rights.

An important finding from these projects is the unrecognized positive examples of parents' activism and the successes of parents' associations that have the potential to improve the welfare of children with disabilities. These good practice examples are models for the future which can illustrate ways forward for families with disabled children in other countries.

We conclude the paper by examining to what extent the social inclusion strategies, favored by the European Union and international agencies lead to the fulfilment of the rights of disabled children's and their families. We ask the question are disabled children's rights being upheld and developed by welfare policies and practices concerned with inclusion?

Driessens, Kristel
<p>Title</p> <p>Transdisciplinarity in social work research: Collaborative research in social welfare organizations with the involvement of service users</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>In this paper we describe how the transdisciplinarity of the Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons et al; 1994) can be implemented in social work research. I will present the methodology used in an action-research about organizational conditions to implement strength based social work with clients in poverty in Flanders.</p> <p>We did the research in four 'good practices', different social work organizations (a public centre for social welfare, a voluntary organization, a family centre in a poor neighbourhood and a organization of child protection) who succeed in implementing 'strength based social work'. In each organisation a team of a researcher, a trainer and 4 coaches (people in poverty from a grass root organization) worked together with the staff and social workers of the organization to carry out the action-research. We report about the research process in the organization of child protection 'De Touter' (translated: 'The Swing').</p> <p>We found inspiration in the methodology of the 'Appreciative Inquiry' (Cooperrider et al. 2007). The research questions we started with: How does the organisation facilitates 'strength based social work in dialogue with clients'? What are topics you want to focus on in the research and in the training for the professionals to strengthen your organization? The coaches were involved in the whole research process: the selection of research topics, the data-gathering and – analyses. An example of the methodology and results: The coaches (people in poverty) selected the theme 'how to end a helping relationship'. They interviewed former clients who indicated that the ending of a helping-relationship should be a joint decision, it has to be a process (it takes time to say goodbye, not least to the children for whom the professional became a meaningful support). In a workshop the team of professionals did a brainstorm about what they could improve and which support they needed from the organization. After the research, the work in the organization goes on. The practitioners are more consciously dealing, reflect and dialogue on the ending of a helping relationship.</p> <p>This kind of social work research demands openness, dialogue, reciprocity and respect. Therefore we need research based practitioners and service users, practice based researchers, a learning organization and a facilitating management. Then it can lead to benefits for the all actors involved. The search for effective social work, giving words to practice, the development of reflection-instruments together with practitioners and service users can be very valuable for the organization. The service users and people in poverty involved in the project got more knowledge and understanding for the position of the social workers. And for science, we experienced the use of mixed methods; new perspectives were brought into the study by taking practice and the view of service users as input for the research.</p>

Dugdale, Daryl
Title Men, masculinities and messiness: making sense of the interview experience
Abstract My professional doctorate has the objective of investigating the experiences and motivations of fathers who are involved in the child protection process. I have chosen a qualitative case study approach (Yin 2009) using mixed methods with a particular focus on semi-structured interviews with fathers. I am at the beginning stages of my data collection. Drawing on the phenomenological theoretical position of Ferguson (2004) and his suggestion of the relevance of aesthetics and expressiveness coupled with the administrative framework, I have been struck by the messiness of the interview experience. The messiness relates to engagement with “protest masculinities” (Connell 1995), the process of undertaking and the product from the interviews. Through reflexivity I have begun to identify sensitive topics (Lee 1993) and a range of phenomena manifesting itself in the space between the participant father and myself as interviewer. 1. The first I call commitment of ambivalence- this refers to the fathers willingness to engage with the research project followed with decisions sometimes at late notice to change planned times and dates for meetings. This has been a multiple occurrence and has been common to all participants. Offers to terminate their engagement have met with uniformed rejection. 2. The second is the messiness of venue and time-acknowledging the complexity of the father`s lives, coupled with the expectations of bureaucracy, interviews have taken place in environments and circumstances that promote debate in relation to the expectation of class, methodological relevance and ethical appropriateness. There has also been an interesting issue of the relevance of time pressures on the fathers and how this manifests in their willingness to share their precious time. 3. The third is the request for advice from fathers as the interview is played out. There appears to be a tension from the participant`s perspective which I am describing as researcher versus consultant/support. This manifestation provides a range of layers to the participant/researcher dynamic. The potential for collusion based on gender versus the ethical appropriateness of answering a question about the bureaucratic process of children`s social care being just one example. 4. A fourth element I refer to as complex history summary. The histories of the participants involvement with children`s social care is often very complicated and there are challenges in gathering, making sense and utilising this information in a concentrated time to benefit the quality of the interview. The need to work this through in real time whilst fusing the responses to the questions presents a significant challenge. I aim to address the messiness of this method in the context of working with fathers with risk and so investigate its relationship to knowledge production, its quality and its use in policy and practice. My aim would be to present my experiences through a power point presentation and then to facilitate discussion.

Escalante Ruiz, Gracia
Barrero Buch, Tatiana
Iglesia Martínez, Marta de la
Arias Astray, Andrés

Title

Photovoice as a method for social care research and social work practice

Abstract

Images are an icon of contemporary societies; they are part of our everyday life, and are a key part of digital communications. Photovoice appears to be an innovative method for social intervention and research, as it is based on photography and video images for generating reflection on social issues within communities.

“Photovoice is a participatory action research method that employs photography and group dialogue as a means for marginalized individuals to deepen their understanding of a community issue or concern. The visual images and accompanying stories are the tools used to reach policy- and decision-makers. The aim of this research method is to improve conditions by making changes at the community level” (Palidroba, Krieg, Murdock and Havelock, 2009: 6).

Literature on Photovoice points its origins as an innovative approach to participatory action research in Michigan (USA) in the 1990s (Wang, 1999). The objective of this initiative was the empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly homeless people. Since then Photovoice has been used in different contexts and countries.

This approach to social action stands on the premise that involvement of directly affected population is crucial for finding deeply rooted solutions to social problems (Webb, 2004: 1).

Objectives

- 1) Introduce innovative approaches to involving service users in social work or social care research: present Photovoice as a participatory action research innovative strategy
- 2) Identify the strengths of photovoice as a method for social action
- 3) Promote reflection, critical analysis and group discussion on the different existing experiences on the use of Photovoice

Contents

- 1) Experiences of participatory action research
- 2) Empowerment: social change and social policy
- 3) Targeted community groups
- 4) bidirectional communication
- 5) Social care professional as facilitator
- 6) Previous experiences in the use of photovoice for social action
- 7) Critical perspectives and relationships between social work and social care research

Methodology

The proposed workshop will be based on group techniques for promoting the participation and discussion of the attendants.

Even-Zohar, Ahuva

Title

The contribution of an informal assistance program aimed at improving the situation of families with food insecurity

Abstract

Background

The study examined the contribution of assistance provided to families, who are known to have food insecurity, by employees and pensioners at an Israeli businesslike company. The project is operated in collaboration with the welfare departments and social workers identify families with children between the ages of one and 14. Each family receives a voucher from the company which enables them to purchase a monthly allotment of food items at the local branch of a supermarket chain.

Research questions

(1) Are there differences in the levels of food security between the families that receive assistance from the association versus families that have similar socio-demographic characteristics but do not receive assistance? (2) Are levels of food security different for children and adults? (3) Is there an improvement in the general situation of families that receive assistance from the program?

Method

The participants were selected by social workers from a purposive sample of families who are under the care of welfare departments. The participants were divided into two groups: the research group, which consisted of 56 families who receive assistance and the control group, which consisted of 47 families who do not receive assistance.

Instruments

(1) Food security questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on an 18-item instrument developed by Carlson, Andress, and Bickel (1999). (2) Program evaluation questionnaire. A general questionnaire administered only to the participants in the research group. The questionnaire consisted of informative questions and contained questions about the extent of improvement in the family's situation as a result of the assistance. (3) Socio-demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire contained items relating to the participants' marital status, ethnic origin, number of children, state of health, education, sources of income, and housing.

Results

Levels of food insecurity in the research group were found to be more severe than in the control group. The predictors of food insecurity were mother's state of health and number of children in the family. Moreover, adults experienced higher levels of food insecurity than did children, and consistent, long-term assistance contributed to improving the overall situation of the families.

Conclusions and implications

The program should focus on a certain number of families chosen by social workers at welfare departments, and that those families should be provided with assistance for an extended period of time until they have achieved better food security. Toward that end, it would be worthwhile to reconsider the criterion of the children's age, so that the assistance will not be discontinued when the children reach age 14.

Further research

To design a longitudinal study by selecting a group of 50 new families who begin to receive assistance from the company, and then examine the extent of their food insecurity before and after receiving ongoing assistance for six months and for a year.

Reference

Carlson, S., Andrews, M., & Bickel, G. (1999). Measuring food insecurity and hunger in the United States: Development of a national benchmark measure and prevalence estimates. *Journal of Nutrition*, 129, 510-516

Farmer, Elaine
Title
Returning abused and neglected children to their parents: issues and outcomes
Abstract
Background
Practitioners address difficult issues in deciding whether and when to return abused or neglected children from care to their parents, yet research evidence to assist them in making these decisions is thin.
Purpose of the study
This DfE-funded research investigated the patterns and outcomes of reunification, the factors associated with successful returns and children's and parents' experiences of reunification. The study employed a prospective design to examine reunification outcomes through a two-year follow-up of a consecutive sample of 180 children in care, aged 0-14, who were all returned home to parent/s during a one-year period. The sample was drawn from six local authorities and data collection was by means of an initial case file review, followed by interviews with a sub-sample of parents, children and social workers. The outcomes considered were reunification breakdown and the quality of the child's return. Multivariate analyses were used to uncover the key factors associated with successful and unsuccessful return outcomes.
Key findings
Assessment was linked to service provision and to return stability, but two fifths of the children returned to a parent without any in-depth assessment. Almost half of the children (46%) were abused or neglected during the return. Children of substance misusing parents were at high risk of being abused or neglected (78%); whilst a few (16%) children remained at home despite ongoing maltreatment. By the end of the two-year follow-up period, 47% of the returns had broken down and a third of the ongoing returns were of poor quality. Many children (62%) were then returned home again and half of these returns also failed.
Factors associated with return stability
Return stability was statistically associated with thorough assessment, conditions having been set for the parents, addressing the problems that had led to care, providing adequate preparation for the return and good monitoring. These factors were most in evidence when children returned on court orders. Parental ambivalence, social isolation or previous failed returns were related to return breakdown. Children over the age of 10 and those with previous difficult behaviour had more return disruptions. Outcomes varied widely by local authority.
Implications
Since the reunification of children on court orders had higher levels of assessment and service, there is a need for review of practice with children and young people in voluntary care. Case planning would benefit from specifying what needs to change, over what timescales, before return is possible and how this is to be supported and monitored, alongside the provision of tailored services. Where parents misuse alcohol or drugs there need to be clear expectations that parents will address their substance misuse before reunification. In addition, action needs to be taken when children's quality of life at home becomes unsatisfactory or they oscillate between home and care.

Faulkner, Alison
Title Changing our worlds: examples of user-controlled research in action
Abstract Alison Faulkner (independent service user researcher) + Lucy Simons (public involvement advisor, INVOLVE). This abstract proposes a workshop session, using a project that explored seven examples of user-controlled research as a starting point for a discussion of user-controlled research. The seven projects spanned a range of health, social care and disability fields, funded by INVOLVE (www.invo.org.uk). There will be a co-presenter from one of the seven research projects featured in the report. The initial presentation will outline the seven projects and how they were chosen, how they arose and how they were funded. The projects include research carried by people with learning difficulties, young people with experience of living in care, Deaf people with mental health needs, and lesbian, gay and bisexual people with disabilities. Common themes will be summarised – to include the value of user-controlled research across different communities; the role of discrimination both within and beyond the research; the motivation behind the research choices; and the way in which each project has had an impact for its community. The projects demonstrate what can be achieved by small local projects run by small groups or organisations of service users and disabled people. All were motivated by the desire for positive change: to improve the lives of service users, to improve services or influence policies that will affect the lives of service users. They highlight the potential of user-controlled research to raise awareness of the needs of groups and people often ignored or overlooked by mainstream society, creating opportunities to: describe and account for their lives, and to identify and explore particular needs not addressed by mainstream research. Following a short presentation (20-25 minutes), the presenters will open up discussion focusing on different aspects of research controlled by service users and disabled people. Issues will cover the challenges and the benefits; the impact of service user-controlled research; and the implications for social care practice and for social care research methods of this approach to research – as well as for service user and disabled people’s groups and organisations; for research funders and commissioners of services.. The paper fulfils the requirements of the conference A) Innovation in social work and social care research in that it presents a range of innovative approaches to involving service users in social care research: approaches that mean service users and disabled people taking control of the research and research process.

Fish, Sheila
Kindler, Heinz
Gerber, Christine
Akbar, Saskia
Velden, Thérèse van der
Vianen, René van

Title

Learning from child abuse tragedies? European perspectives on contexts, methods and findings of inquiries and case reviews

Abstract

Overall abstract

Across the different regions and countries of Europe, the tragic death of a child from abuse or neglect causes public and media outcry and heightens pressure on politicians to improve the quality of child protection practice. It is becoming increasingly common for a child's death of this kind to trigger an evaluation of child protection and related services. So it is important and timely to ask: what methods are being used to review professional practice in different countries and states? What findings are these methods providing and what lessons do they produce? How do we know they are the right lessons and how effective are the related recommendations at improving things? Moreover, aside from questions of methodology, what external factors influence responses to such tragedies? Who are the key stakeholders in these debates and how is the discourse being constituted? This symposium will tackle these and related questions, drawing on the different experiences of England, Germany and Holland. As such it will support the conference aims of developing ways in which social work research has beneficial consequences for service development, professionals and services users.

Finding out what happened in a particular case and interpreting that in a complex network of causal connections to get to an understanding of why it happened in the way it did, is a difficult analytic task. It is necessarily premised on assumptions about the nature of causality and how mistakes are produced. These assumptions have been most theorized in the engineering field and more recently in relation to patient safety in the health sector. It is only recently that the potential applicability to child welfare cases of the associated developments in accident/incident investigation methods and tools has begun to be explored. In England, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has conducted research and development work to adapt and test out a systems model for case reviews that suits the nature of multi-agency child protection work. This approach looks for causal explanations in all parts of the system. It does so by investigating the many factors that interact and influence an individual worker's decisions, actions and inactions. In Holland, the Dutch Safety Board has used instruments usually used in transport and aviation investigations, to re-analyse a series of child death cases. While in Germany there is a lively debate within and between states around the most effective and efficient way to learn from child abuse tragedies, including whether some form of inquiry should become mandatory, and if so what methods should be used. The German Youth Institute (DJI) has run a research programme to explore alternatives and facilitate the debate. These developments will be presented and discussed in this symposium.

These developments also speak to questions about what kinds of evidence we need to support policy making and practice in this field. Evidence based approaches are increasingly drawing not exclusively on randomised controlled trials of effectiveness but on a whole range of diverse types of evidence. Yet how can a 'practice led' view be routinely achieved, that sheds light on how policies, procedures or interventions are actually impacting on direct work with families, in real world settings where they interact with so many other variables? Could case reviews and

inquiries offer sources of practice-led evidence to complement evidence from more standard sources?

Paper 1

Title: Developing new case review methods for multi-agency child protection work: the results of English pilots

England has a long history of serious case reviews and public inquiries in to child abuse tragedies. Yet, to-date there has been little transparency about or attention to the methodologies used in their conduct. This is surprising given the widely held view that 'the potential learning opportunities provided by SCRs are not being fully realized either at a local or national level' (Sidebotham et al 2010 draft: 49). Key problems identified in the latest research include a) repeatedly identifying the same problems in practice raising queries about the usefulness of the learning gained about these issues and effectiveness of the linked recommendations for remedial action and b) the negative emotional impact of SCRs on practitioners of the process.

Against this background, a SCIE-led research and development project has focused on adapting accident investigation methods developed in engineering, for use in the review of multi-agency safeguarding and child protection work. The first tranche of three pilot case reviews using this adapted model have just been completed in the North West of England. Set up as in a collaborative, action-research project, continual feedback was gathered throughout the process, both from those senior managers trained and supported to conduct the case review, and those front-line workers and first line managers whose practice was being investigated. This paper will feature the results of that evaluation, including implications for how statutory guidance for SCRs might usefully be changed in the future.

Paper 2

Title: Experimenting with different methodological approaches and developing a "error management culture" in child protection: findings and experiences in Germany

During the last years the pressure on practitioners in Germany has grown enormously and it seems that decisions in child protection cases are at risk to focus more on the practitioner's safety than on the children and families need. At the same time there are many efforts to improve the child protection work by developing risk assessment tools, standardizes documentation forms or guidelines.

To substantiate the efforts of learning from mistakes in child protection the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in 2008 assigned the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH) to support the professional debate as well as different efforts to review professional practice. Part of the process has been a project working with practitioners in 42 cities all over Germany. The aim of this project was to get more information about the risk- and error management within the local child protection systems and at the same time to improve the practice of the local child protection system by involving practitioners from different disciplines, like child welfare, medical care, jurisdiction, school, as well as families. Another part of the process was to experiment with different methodological approaches to serious case reviews. Besides these efforts to accumulate practical knowledge there have also been a number of workshops joined by practitioners, supervisors, politicians and scientists to find out what the legal administrative requirements are to routinely conduct serious-case-reviews with the aim of improving practical work.

One main characteristics of the process was the basic decision to emphasize the need for

collaborative approaches in order to make a contribution to the development of a “error management culture” which facilitates talking about mistakes in every day work. Within this symposium the work in the field as well as the findings and the experiences will be presented. (296 word)

Paper 3

Title: Study from a safety perspective: 28 cases in the Netherlands

An extensive system of specialized professionals focuses on families in which child abuse occurs. However, the combined efforts of these professionals cannot prevent child death by abuse from occurring.

An established safety presumption is that human errors, that more often than not play a role in the occurrence of accidents, are caused or at least influenced by the environment in which people work and the way it is organized. It follows that processes should be designed so that the risk of human error and the effects thereof are minimized as far as possible. Human error in the perspective of the Dutch Safety Board is only symptomatic of inadequately designed situations and offers clues to the further improvement of the process.

The ability of the professionals involved to make an adequate decision, play a cardinal role in ensuring the safety of a child. Given the impact of a decision on the family and the safety of the child, it is important that the system supports the professional in the making of his decision as well as possible. The Dutch Safety Board looks at the way in which the child safety system works according to this principle.

For this study 28 cases of fatal child abuse were studied. For every case was inventorised what problems occurred in the dealing with (alleged) threats to child safety. The aggregated results were related to the framework of laws and guidelines and formal functions, powers and responsibilities in which professionals in the child safety system works were studied and related to the problems that were found in the cases. The question that was dealt with was ‘in what way are they supportive to the needs of the professional?’

In the presentation of the Dutch Safety Board the methods used and the findings of the study will be discussed.

Fisher, Mike Francis, Jennifer
Title Evidence standards in an age of austerity
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose Across the developed world, and particularly in Western European states, social care and social work services are facing an unprecedented period of austerity following the global banking crisis. Public leaders openly discuss disinvestment, and expenditure cuts of 20-40% over the period 2010-2014.</p> <p>Similar restrictions are likely to apply to research funding. Some countries (such as India and China) project increases in funding for research as they have been less affected by the global banking crisis. Others (such as the US) project increases specifically because research promotes economic growth. In Western Europe, however, reductions in research funding are projected.</p> <p>This brings increasing emphasis on the quality of research. Recently, a UK government minister proposed that only research that meets the highest standard of excellence should be funded. Fewer research projects of a higher standard is thus one response. This raises the question of what those excellence standards should be, and this paper will address this issue in relation to social work and social care.</p> <p>Main points The paper will identify projections on research funding and how they are likely to affect social work and social care. Particular attention will be paid to the way topics are redefined in subject terms as funding initiatives become visible, and how boundaries between health and social care become redefined.</p> <p>Standards initiatives from both health and social care will be discussed, drawing primarily on examples from the UK and the Nordic countries. The paper will explore the question of who defines standards, from what perspectives and with what consequences. The issue of evidential authority, and how research may be used to inform policy, will be a core theme, as will methods, including the use of rapid evidence approaches. The paper will also address why crucial questions of cost effectiveness and of economic evaluation more generally, have not so far been a core focus of research in social work and social care.</p> <p>The paper will address how research is valued and therefore how it makes an impact on effective social work and social care services, with particular attention to the future use of research by policymakers whose overriding perspective is value for money (in terms of both the research itself and the implications for services).</p> <p>Conclusions The paper will conclude by arguing for a much greater dialogue between the R&D community and research funders and users (including the general public). This dialogue should start from the question of what research standards should inform policy decisions about public services. Conclusions about the use of rapid evidence methods and economic evaluation will be presented in the context of the 'austerity age' faced by social work and social care services.</p>

Fleming, Jennie
<p>Title</p> <p>Lessons learnt from “The Standards We Expect” project: the contribution of service users and carers to interdisciplinary social work and social care research</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>‘The Standards We Expect’ was a national £0.5million, three year research and development project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation exploring personalisation and person-centred support, focusing particularly on service-user, practitioner and manager perspectives. The funder is committed to an ‘influencing strategy’ and the findings of this project are a key part of this and these will be published in early 2011 (Beresford et al forthcoming).</p> <p>This paper will focus on the process of the research and so contribute to the interdisciplinary social work and social care research of the research most particularly critically reviewing the contribution of service users and carers to interdisciplinary social work and social care research. The research was innovative as it has service user involvement built in at a number of different but significant levels throughout the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research team: consortium including service-users, current practitioners and academics, Shaping our Lives being the lead organisation. - Participants: a range of groups who use care services in the UK - people with learning difficulties, physical impairments, older people with dementia, people approaching end of life and disabled people including black and minority ethnic communities. - Bringing together the views and opinions of service users, practitioners and managers in a number of different ways. <p>Drawing on our research this paper will explore a number of tensions and challenges, including ethical issues, access, pace, choice of information collection methods, tokenism and power/control in knowledge production in research that is a partnership between service users, academics and practitioners. Some of these were resolved better than others and how we addressed them in the arenas where this partnership and collaboration took place will be discussed. Franklin (2009:14) writes that sometimes the benefits of partnership working are over-claimed and questions whether it is possible for everyone to contribute on equal terms and advocates recognition that equality is ‘probably not possible’. However, it would have been impossible to get such a range and depth of findings, without these layers of involvement, and we argue that it is essential to this sort of research.</p> <p>The key message of the paper is that service-user involvement and research alliances of service-users, practitioners and academics can make for better research. However, the consortium has differing views of how well the consortium responded to service-users’ perspectives/needs. The paper will consider the challenges and benefits of its approach, at all three levels and draw on evidence collected to share the lessons learnt and discuss their relevance to social work research and implications for social work practice.</p> <p>References</p> <p>Beresford P, Bewley C, Branfield, Croft S, Fleming J, Glynn M and Postle K (2011) Supporting People – towards a person-centred approach in social care Bristol: Polity Press</p> <p>Frankham J (2009) “Partnership research: a review of approaches and challenges in conducting research in partnership with service users” ESRC National Centre for Research Methods</p>

<p>Fletcher, Maxine Sangha, Jas</p>
<p>Title Cohort analysis: evaluating the role of service users and carers in the assessment of professional suitability in first year social work undergraduates</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The workshop aims to involve conference participants in an interactive exploration of the recent research work undertaken at Oxford Brookes University involving Service Users and Carers (to use our nomenclature, Voices of Experience), in the assessment of first year undergraduate social work students, in a simulated practice environment.</p> <p>The findings to be shared with the workshop participants, point to a statistically significant correlation between Voices of Experience reaction to early testing of student's suitability and ability, and student's final results upon graduating from the programme.</p> <p>When placed alongside other longitudinal measures, the Voices of Experience were consistently able to predict success or failure.</p> <p>The workshop participants will experience the approach taken to assessment, and have the opportunity to discuss with teaching staff and members of the Voices of Experience group; both the findings themselves, and the ongoing involvement of Service Users and Carers in the assessment of students.</p> <p>The methodology was mixed-methods, utilising a semi-structured assessment tool. The tool was located within a longitudinal cohort study, involving the use of the RICET (Reflective Ipsative Competency Evaluation Tool), to impose rigour and reliability upon ipsative measurements of competency-based outcomes. Loosely structured around Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning outcomes, a 5-point Lickert scale ranged from no competency to adequate competency, through to higher levels of skills. Used initially in Canada, it was modified to incorporate the National Occupational Standards (TOPPS, 2003) for the new qualifying degree in Social Work. The instrument is free, quick, user friendly and easily modified for web-based access. It can be used for evaluating any training programme which have clearly articulated competency based outcomes.</p> <p>The Voice of Experience component of the assessment process (which is the focus of our workshop), was a core aspect of the RICET, and was created to enhance the validity of the triangulation process and therefore the overall outcomes It was an integral component of the multiple measures, from different respondents (student, tutor(s), service users and carers, practice teachers, independent researcher), using multiple methods (academic and reflective papers, lab performances, practice performance, computer based exams, viva performance and dissertation writing) which were collected and collated for final analysis.</p> <p>Workshop participants will have the opportunity to explore the complexity, challenges and rewards of working collaboratively with Service Users and Carers, in order to meaningfully contribute to social work research, and the assessment of social work students at pre-qualifying level; and consider the transferability of these tools and experiences to other professional groups.</p> <p>Pedagogical Methods The workshop will be in three separate sections:</p>

1. An overview of the original cohort study and findings
2. An opportunity to view a video of the assessment process in action
3. An opportunity for discussion with teaching staff and Voices of Experience.

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London, Longman

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D.Phil, University of Oxford

<p>Floersch, Jerry Longhofer, Jeffrey</p>
<p>Title Knowledge-to-practice gaps in the psychotropic treatment of youth in foster care</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>In this presentation we address knowledge-to-practice gaps in the administration of psychiatric medication to youth in foster care settings. Knowledge-to-practice gaps exist because of different epistemological standpoints of the academic/research field, which typically valorizes controlled studies that seek overarching trends, and the day-to-day practice with foster youth and families, which consist of changing and fluid practice fields dominated by the idiosyncratic characteristics of clients, child welfare systems, and prescribers. To address gaps between psychotropic theory and practice in foster care settings, we propose arbitrage (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006), an interdisciplinary and interprofessional conceptual framework and process for the integration of competing and sometimes incommensurable knowledge and practice claims. Knowledge produced through this process is aimed at integrating the social care realities of psychotropic treatment. First, we describe the upswing in prescribing psychiatric medication to youth with mental illness diagnoses and review standard parameters for psychiatric practice. Second, we review the social science literature focused on the phenomenological experience of youth psychotropic treatment and use the established findings to identify knowledge-to-practice gaps in the application of parameters to paediatric populations, especially foster care youth. Third, we show how knowledge gaps result from varying epistemological positions of researchers, psychiatrists, and consumers (i.e., the medicated). For example, drug trial researchers typically seek and produce knowledge that is nomothetic: theories or patterns applied across classes of people with mental disorders. As such, the production of nomothetic pharmacological knowledge looks at the neurochemical qualities of many individuals, identifies commonalities, and produces a one-drug-fits-all. Prescribers, on the other hand, rarely treat individuals that fit the drug trial sample, which typically tries to delimit patient variance like comorbidity; the latter would confound the aim to find a drug for a specific DSM-IV mental disorder. Thus, unlike bench scientists, psychiatrist or prescriber knowledge must serve an idiographic purpose: the unique characteristics of the patient and social environment. Moreover, a third type of knowledge, client illness and treatment experience, further complicates medication theory-to-practice. Anthropological and phenomenological studies of illness and treatment have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of illness representation, or the symbolic construction (i.e., meaning making) of everyday illness experience. After all, medicine is metabolized, biochemically and psychologically, in the user's body. Therefore, as the end user of pharmacological knowledge (i.e., foster youth), medication's action on the medicated must be understood in the meaning-making contexts of foster care life, including monitoring 'side effects'. Moreover, in relation to child welfare settings, bench scientist and psychiatric knowledge is typically privileged and youth illness and treatment experience is rarely taken into account. Thus, in the medication of foster youth, research-to-practice gaps result from differences in the type of knowledge each stakeholder produces and practices. In the conclusion, we propose that an interprofessional process of arbitrage can provide policy and practice guidelines that engage the various epistemological positions that psychotropic treatment necessarily invokes.</p> <p>Van De Ven, A. H., & Johnson, P. E. (2006). Knowledge for theory and practice. <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 31(4), 802-21</p>

Foster, Victoria
Title Pantomime, politics and participatory research
Abstract <p>This is an oral paper presentation which draws on ESRC-funded research carried out with working-class women in the North West of England which looked at mothers' experiences of parenting in poverty and at the impact of the local Sure Start programme on local families. Sure Start is a government initiative which, for several years, has been directed at those families experiencing - or deemed to be at risk of - poverty and social exclusion with the aim of offering support, advice and interventions. The team of women recruited to the project were all mothers of children accessing Sure Start and they were involved in each stage of the research, from framing questions through to collecting and analysing data and disseminating the findings.</p> <p>As well as using traditional methods of data collection, such as a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews, the researchers employed a range of arts-based methods to collect and disseminate data. These included poetry-writing, short-film making and drama. This paper focuses on the drama group which was set up as part of this research and was led by local families who, whilst willing to engage in the theatrical project, were most familiar with the genre of pantomime and insistent that this be the approach taken here. Pantomime is a traditional British form of family entertainment and part of the popular culture; it typically involves a re-telling of a fairy tale and includes cross-dressing, double-entendre, dance and slapstick comedy routines.</p> <p>After gaining new skills and confidence through writing, rehearsing and performing a pantomime, the drama group went on to produce a short play, 'The Wizard of Us'. The play encapsulated many of the stories and experiences recounted by local families during the course of the research and which emerged through the thematic analysis undertaken by the research team. These included accounts of post-natal depression, low-self esteem and encounters with professionals. It re-tells these stories through the familiar characters of Dorothy, Scarecrow, Lion and Tinman (from L Frank Baum's 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' made famous by the 1939 MGM movie).</p> <p>The paper discusses the methodological and political rationale for employing drama in the research process and looks at how such an approach can work in practice. It questions the validity of the approach and the implications for policy and further research. Finally it highlights the benefits of engaging the local community in telling and performing stories about themselves.</p>

Freire, Isabel Abreu, Sonia Guadalupe
Title The daily life of families with adolescents and young adults with cognitive disability
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Having a child with cognitive disability affects family's daily life, having impact on its organization, structure and dynamics. Families struggle with difficulties all along life cycle and it has an impact in every fields of their life.</p> <p>The present study describes the characteristics, organization, social support and resilience of 15 families with at least an adolescent or young adult with intellectual disability attending a daycare occupational center.</p> <p>To evaluate the variables we used an inquiry about the way they organize their everyday life and their relationship with professional life, the "Instrumento de Análise da Rede Social Pessoal" (Guadalupe & Alarcão, in Guadalupe, 2009), which evaluates the family's social support network, and the "Escala dos Processos-Chave na Resiliência Familiar" (Souza, 2003, Portuguese version by Lourenço & Guadalupe, 2007, in Lourenço, 2009) allowed us to analyze family resilience.</p> <p>According to the results, the majority of families feel that having a child with cognitive disability determines the family's path, especially in the case of the mother, who plays a central part in childcare and daily home routines. We found restrictions in career, family finances and free time. Families find social support mostly on the extended family. Their social networks are small and cohesive.</p> <p>There are a few social services available for these families in the geographic area of this study. The most significant concern is related to their sons and daughters' future. Social work has to ensure skills development and to guarantee the rights of these individuals. Sharing experiences between families and experts, through different means, can enrich the developed work, as well as it can draw ways of producing knowledge in terms of the social intervention with persons with cognitive disability, finding new courses of action.</p>

Frost, Elizabeth
Title Why social work research needs the psychosocial
Abstract This paper sets out to argue that the new developments in psychosocial thought (see for example, Froggett (2002), Hoggett (2000) Cooper and Lousada(2005) are not just invaluable for understanding the context, dynamics and identities of the whole social work and social welfare 'world', but also immensely helpful for undertaking research into social work. It aims to briefly consider 'new' psychosocial theory, the relationship of this to social work, the use of a psychosocial paradigm in social research generally and then –the main focus of the paper- why psychosocial thinking is of importance in social work research. Initially the paper will consider the claim that there is indeed a body of 'new psychosocial' work accruing within the UK academy, particularly within sociology and social policy. It will briefly outline its tenets and consider some its range of applications. The paper will then turn its attention to look in slightly more depth at the relevance of this body of work to social work-theory, education and practices - drawing on work by the author in developing a theoretical position, (e.g. Frost, 2008) establishing a psychosocial curricula for social work students, and also utilising examples from the work of the 'Centre for Psycho-Social Studies' at UWE. The paper will then offer some discussion and critical analysis of the current utilisation of a psychosocial research paradigm within social research (Hollway and Jefferson (2000): Clark and Hoggett (2009). Two specific examples will be offered in more detail, as exemplars of some of the range of strengths of this approach: drawing particularly on examples from Walkerdine et al's longitudinal study of gender, class and identity (2001), and from Hoggett et al's psychosocial study of community involvement workers (2009). From this the author will develop some tentative ideas on how psychosocial thinking s can specifically inform research into social work and social welfare. The unique suitability of a psychosocial paradigm for interrogating the complex and often conflictual problematics within social work enquiry is argued. Drawing on the experience of conceptualising, developing and constructing a research bid into social workers' resilience, in which psychosocial thinking has informed every part of the process from identification of the research question, through to the research methodology itself, the author will offer some experientially grounded observations on the opportunities offered by immersion in this rich and complex position. Bibliography Clarke, S. and Hoggett, P. eds. (2009) Researching beneath the surface: psycho-social research methods in practice, London: Karnac Cooper, A and Lousada, J (2005) Borderline welfare: feeling and fear of feeling in modern welfare, London: Karnac Froggett, L (2002) Love, Hate and Welfare: Psychosocial Approaches to Policy and Practice. Oxford: Policy Press Frost, L. (2008) Why teach social work students psychosocial studies? Social Work Education, Vol. 27, No3, pps 243-261 Hoggett, P., Mayo, M. and Miller, C. (2009) The dilemmas of development work: ethical challenges in regeneration, Bristol: Policy Press Hoggett P. (2000) Emotional life and the politics of welfare, Basingstoke: Macmillan Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) Doing qualitative research differently : free association, narrative and the interview method, London: SAGE Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J (2001) Growing Up Girl: Psychosocial Explorations of Class and Gender, Palgrave/Macmillan, Basingstoke

Fyson, Rachel

Title

Choice, independence and vulnerability? Social workers' and adult safeguarding officers' views on the needs of adults with learning disabilities

Abstract

This paper will report the findings of a small-scale empirical study which explored how both social workers and adult safeguarding officers conceptualise the needs of adults with learning disabilities. The study focussed in particular on the tensions between promoting the Valuing People agenda of rights, choice, independence and inclusion for people with learning disabilities and an adult safeguarding agenda which presents the same individuals as 'vulnerable adults'. Participants were encouraged to consider how these tensions and contradictions are played out in the context of current moves towards implementing the personalisation agenda within adult social care.

Background and purpose

People with learning disabilities are an extremely heterogeneous group, ranging from those with 'mild' or 'borderline' learning disability who may need limited support with some aspects of life, through to people whose impairment is so profound that its impact is immediately palpable. The latter includes people who require support with many or most aspects of daily life – including eating and drinking, washing, dressing, communicating, continence, mobility, etc.; many may also experience additional handicapping conditions including physical and/or sensory impairments and epilepsy. People with learning disabilities are more likely to experience abuse than any other group of adult social care service users.

The personalisation agenda, however, largely overlooks matters of vulnerability. It also tends to ignore differences in the nature of needs across the learning disabled population, other than in simple terms of people needing different numbers of support hours each day. This study sought to (i) understand how both social workers and adult safeguarding officers construct notions of independence and vulnerability with regard to lives of adults with learning disabilities, and (ii) how any such conceptual differences translate into differences in professional decisions.

Methods

The study comprised of 12 in-depth, semi-structured interviews across six English local authorities. In each local authority one social worker from an adult learning disability team and one adult safeguarding officer was interviewed. In total, this generated around 18 hours of audio recordings. Interviews were transcribed in full and coded using Nvivo software prior to thematic analysis.

Results

At the time of abstract submission, the analysis is only partially complete, but amongst the emergent themes are: (i) tensions between independence and safeguarding; (ii) the particular vulnerabilities of people with 'mild' learning disabilities who receive limited support (by contrast, people who received higher levels of support were perceived as less vulnerable); (iii) loneliness as a social consequence of personalisation/individualisation of services; and (iv) the complexities of safeguarding within a context of service user 'choice'.

Conclusions and implication

A preliminary conclusion is that the prevailing hegemony amongst many policy makers, which promotes choice and independence as inevitably positive, is challenged by the experiences and

concerns of frontline professionals. There is a need for a more nuanced approach to the implementation of the personalisation agenda, and recognition of the diverse needs of people with learning disabilities.

Gethin-Jones, Stephen
Title
Outcomes and wellbeing
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This presentation reports on a study of outcome-focused care for older people in one English local authority. The aim of the research was to examine whether altering the delivery of care to an outcome-focused model would improve service delivery and save money to the organisation in the long-term. In order for this to be established a pilot study was devised. This was a longitudinal study over 18 months, utilising a mixed method design. The sample was of 40 service users aged 65 and over who all had critical and substantial care needs. Half of the sample of service users was receiving the new form of outcome-focused care and the other half were a comparison group who were receiving care packages according to the traditional form of delivery that could be characterised as a 'task-focused' model. The service users took part in two semi structured interviews over a six-month period. During these interviews the Measure Yourself Concerns and Wellbeing Questionnaire was administered (MYcaW). This questionnaire involves respondents identifying quality of life issues where they are seeking improvement and measures change over time in relation to these. To use MYcaW in a social care context is an innovative aspect of this study as it has previously been used only in mainstream and complementary medicine. In addition to this, focus groups and one-to-one interviews were conducted with social workers and senior managers in order to establish their views on the effectiveness of these two models of home care intervention. Finally, participant observation was conducted, to observe how home staff delivered the two models of care.</p> <p>The focus of this paper is to examine the impact of two models of home care delivery for older people, and how these two models impact on the older persons' self-reported well-being. The research established that there was a greater improvement in well-being in the group receiving outcome-focused care, when compared with the comparison group receiving the traditional task-focused model. Managers' and social workers' perceptions were also that outcome-focused care improved service users' sense of wellbeing, in comparison with those receiving task-focused care. The overall cost of the new style of intervention was 17% more expensive than the traditional task -focused model. The outcome-focused care model allowed for a meaningful relationship to be established between the homecare worker and the service user, whereas the opportunity for such relationship-building was limited in the traditional task-orientated model. Outcome-focused care did appear to be more effective at maintaining and improving the individuals' overall sense of well-being as opposed to the traditional model of homecare delivery. It appears it was the ability to form meaningful relationships with care givers that had the greatest impact on the well-being of the service users. The potential for further use of MYcaW, an innovative research tool in the context of social care, will be discussed in concluding the presentation.</p>

Gilligan, Philip
Furness, Sheila

Title

Research in action: applying the Furness/Gilligan framework to gather data and develop skills and understanding with regard to the potential significance of religion and belief in professional practice

Abstract

Note: The exact nature of the workshop will, of necessity, vary with the time allocated and the numbers attending. This abstract is based on the assumptions of one hour and 10 to 20 participants.

The workshop will focus on exploring whether and how the Furness/Gilligan Framework (Furness and Gilligan, 2010a; 2010b) can be used to concurrently gather data and develop the skills and understanding of social work practitioners and students with regard to the potential significance (positive and negative) of religion and belief in their professional practice.

After a brief introduction to the framework and outline of the workshop, participants will be asked to spend 10 minutes, in groups of three, discussing the question, "How significant are religion and belief?"

Following this, they will complete a written exercise seeking anonymous and anonymised information about:

- Their role and their experiences over the past 12 months of discussion of religion and belief in their work context.
- Their views on the appropriateness and need for these issues to be addressed.
- A specific piece of practice where 'religion' or other belief was or could have been a factor that needed taking into account.
- Whether and how the principles of the Furness/Gilligan framework (Furness and Gilligan, 2010a: 47-48) (For example:- "Practitioners need to be self-aware and reflexive about their own religious and spiritual beliefs ..." and "...need to recognise service-users' expertise about their own needs and beliefs ..."; "... need to actively seek-out relevant information and advice ..."; "Service users need opportunities to discuss their religious and spiritual beliefs and the strengths, difficulties and needs which arise from them.") were addressed.

Participants will then be asked to share:

1. Immediate views on the usefulness of answering questions based on these principles.
2. Views on the use of such exercises in gathering data and developing the skills and understanding of practitioners and students with regard to the potential significance (positive and negative) of religion and belief in their professional practice.

Finally the facilitators will offer input about their experiences of using the exercise. They will also provide more detailed written information and plan to use the workshop to recruit others to a network for researchers and practitioners interested in the study of religion and belief in professional practice.

References

Furness, S. and Gilligan, P. (2010a) Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making A Difference, Bristol: Policy Press

Furness, S. and Gilligan, P. (2010b) 'Social Work, Religion and Belief: Developing a Framework for Practice' (2010) British Journal of Social Work, doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcp159

Gomes, Teresa
Abreu, Sonia Guadalupe

Title
Interinstitutional network for the homeless in Coimbra (Portugal)

Abstract

Homelessness is a multidimensional and very complex social problem that persists on urban settings in the contemporary societies, meaning a permanent challenge for social work and social services.

The present study approaches the social intervention process with homeless in the city of Coimbra (Portugal), focusing the existing institutions. Its aim is to describe the secondary and formal social support network to the homeless population (functions, available services, institutional resources, strategies and social intervention methodologies) and to analyze the interinstitutional working process (intercommunication and common projects).

We had 8 institutions participating on the study with social workers answering to a questionnaire to characterize the institutions involved in homeless support and the interinstitutional relations network, based on a previous study from the national Social Protection Institute ("Homeless Study", ISS, 2005).

The main results are similar to the known reality about other cities of the country, in particular the lack of responses focused on social integration, the overlapped and disconnected services, and the resisting "assistencialist" approach. Although, the city of Coimbra gathers the means to achieve the purposes, if the resources were maximized and the interinstitutional coordination could be enhanced.

Guru, Surinder
Ramon, Shulamit
Nehami, Baum

Title

Researching a sensitive issue: promoting and carrying out research on social work in the context of political conflict

Abstract

The number of countries implicated in acute political conflict is constantly increasing, and social workers in each of these countries are involved in working with clients impacted by such conflicts, as well as being impacted themselves by this context.

However, only a few research projects on this issue in the context of social work has have been undertaken, most of which focus on the impact on clients and relatively few related to the impact on workers.

Research on the impact of political conflict, both at the acute stage and at the post-conflict stage, is developing at an increased pace in disciplines such as political sciences, peace studies, and sociology. However, while of relevance to social work research in this area conceptually and methodologically, the approach to research and the issues studied rarely cover the issues specific to social work. This therefore seems to be a case where research lags behind practice, and hence does not contribute significantly to much needed knowledge building, reflection on practice, and the development of relevant training and policy. We need therefore to ask what is preventing research in this area from being developed and from being undertaken.

The presenters have come to researching this issue from different conflict contexts (Israel and Palestine, UK, ex-Yugoslavia, Central Asia) and to an extent also with different disciplinary focus. Between them, they have empirically investigated impact on clients, social workers, social work students, and on citizens who are not clients of social care.

In addition to researching and publishing peer reviewed articles and the first international book on this issue, the presenters are also participating in an international educational project sponsored by the IASSW, aimed at establishing a curriculum on social work in the context of political conflict. In addition, each of them has personally experienced the impact of political conflict.

The proposed workshop will therefore attempt to look at the following:

1. Understanding the reasons/(making sense of the) for paucity of research on this theme.
2. Based on existing research, it will be considered what research can offer to policy and practice, to clients and social workers.
3. Critically reflecting on research methodology and methods of existing research in social work and in other disciplines concerned with the theme.
4. Examining ways of overcoming the reasons for paucity of research.

The workshop will be structured around three short presentations aimed to highlight the above issues within contextualised examples of research, followed by interactive learning methods of small group exercises focused on considering the key dilemmas faced by researchers of this highly sensitive issue.

Hall, Christopher
Saario, Sirpa

Title

Managing social work with information and communication technologies

Abstract

Over the last 20 years, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have had a profound effect on the practice and management of social work, as on all aspects of social life. They have provided new opportunities for the storage and exchange of information about service users, facilitating transfer between professionals and agencies. They promote standardized approaches to assessment, and enable managerial oversight of practice. Increasingly routine supervision and decision-making takes place online. Managers, local politicians, civil servants (and researchers) can in an incidence have access to data about what social workers are doing.

However all these potential benefits can have alternative and possibly unforeseen outcomes. There can be information overload as all aspects of service users' lives are recorded, stored and appear in other arenas, their 'digital personae' (Clarke 1994). The exchange of information becomes an act of performance, aiming to persuade screen readers of the veracity of the social workers' assessments. Social workers spend more time in front of computers and less time with service users. On occasion the computer becomes the 'third actor' in the social work encounter. Policy development and audit is based on what can be enumerated and measured, missing the essence of relational work.

This symposium looks at the management of, and the managing by, social workers of ICT in three countries (Finland, Sweden and the UK). Each paper draws on empirical research, in emergency social work (Finland), home help services for the elderly (Sweden), and children's services (Finland and the UK), concentrating in particular on how social workers engage with ICT as a part of their everyday work. The orientation is towards the distinction between and interplay of the 'social' and the 'technical'. Each study shows how social workers are required to translate the complexities of everyday social work into categories and classifications for a variety of ICT. In the process, reporting versions of the service user are constrained, by both the templates of the ICT and the social workers' inferences about the needs of various audiences. The social workers are however shown to be active in their negotiations with the technologies, forced to rely on 'workarounds' and improvisation to manage their working day.

All papers draw on ethnographic and discourse approaches to research, examining actual practices. The similarities of the themes of the papers across a wide range of social work settings and three countries is testament to the ubiquity of the electronic surveillance of professional practice, audit and new public management approaches across social services throughout Europe. At the same time, the opportunities to use ICT more appropriately and productively will be discussed.

In the symposium, discussion of similarities and differences will be encouraged, between ICT in different settings, both in the papers and with other participants, in order to promote a better understanding of how ICT can be of more benefit to service users and social workers.

Clarke, R (1994) 'The digital persona and its application to data surveillance' *The Information Society* 10(2) 1087-6537

1. The Use of Computer Systems as Part of the Emergency Social Work Interaction

In this paper, my aim is to explicate how the use of computer systems plays a part in the

encounters between emergency social workers and their clients and what are the consequences of computer use for the flow of interaction.

In the context of regional emergency social work services, the emergency social work agency and the regular social services work at different hours and at distance from each other. The emergency social workers are mandated to deal with severe and critical cases after office hours that normally fall under the mandate of the social services of those municipalities involved in the regional services. Consequently, the IT-based case recording and exchange of information and responsibilities between organisations and professionals assume an important role.

In the analysis, I focus on studying in more detail the situations related to checking, recording and transferring of information that involve the use of different computer systems (such as IT-based client information system and electronic forms). By analysing the video recorded office-based encounters between emergency social workers and their clients, I will demonstrate how the use of computer systems supports and on the other hand, how it interrupts the flow of interaction between the worker and the client. For example, how is the interaction maintained and the institutional tasks done while using the computer systems? How does the information in the computer systems become talked and used in the encounters? How trouble regarding the use of the computer arises and how it is solved? Considering that in the emergency duty, the emergency social workers have to work out the cases in acute situations, it is important to see how they manage with the use of computer systems as a part of their everyday work.

2. Shaping mind and action: on the materiality of ICTs in social work

This paper takes its point of departure in a sociocultural notion of mediation and communication in human activity (Wertsch, 2007; Vološinov, 1929/1973). It addresses the constitutive nature of language and artefacts as material-semiotic tools - in the social coordination of perspectives and action, meaning-making and gaps-bridging - i.e. in shaping mind and action in social work.

In ICT systems used for writing and documenting events and activities in work settings, categories for codifying the world are used as concrete co-ordinating devices. The peculiar force of such categories (as inherently political and consequential), becomes a prominent feature if taking seriously their constitutive and perspective setting features. When inscribed in material artefacts, such as classification systems, employees become visibly accountable to different stakeholders and orient to such concerns when going about their everyday work (Smith & Schryer, 2008).

These analytic issues are illustrated with examples from a Swedish study of a home-help service team (Hjalmarsson, 2009) where hand-held devices were introduced for reporting on time allocation and work conducted while visiting elderly people in their homes.

Hjalmarsson, M. (2009). *Lojalitet och motstånd - anställdas agerande i ett föränderligt hemtjänstarbete*. Gothenburg Studies in Educational Sciences no 285.

Smith, D., & Schryer, C. (2007). *On Documentary Society*. In C. Bazerman (Ed.), *Handbook of research on writing: History, Society, School, Individual, Text*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Inc.

Wertsch, J. V. (2007). *Mediation*. In H. Daniels, M. Cole & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 178-192). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vološinov, V. N. (1929/1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (Vol. te). New York, NY: Seminar Press.

3. Acquiring the skills of socio-technical sense-making: newly qualified social workers constructing children

This paper reports on a study that followed newly qualified social workers in initial assessment teams, with a specific focus on how they responded to and negotiated the 'social' and 'technical' aspects of their work. Informed by the principles of ethnographic research, the study sought to observe practice in situ, through non-participant observation and analysis of key documents and practice artefacts. The study examined how newly qualified workers were inducted into and became apprentices in a world of work that now requires significant interaction with electronic information, and that might be described as disembodied or disconnected from the 'real world' of children's lives. The study raised and sought to answer a number of key questions: How do newly qualified workers gain confidence in 'remote' representations of children and arrive at 'factual' accounts that enable effective case decision-making? How does trust (in information) work in this context?

Social work is an essentially interpretive endeavour – however, the digitisation of practice now significantly influences interpretation as information is presented/demanded in coded and other electronically prescribed formats. Here, we have examined how newly qualified workers respond to and act on electronic information- what further information is sought, in what form and from where? What value is attributed to different forms of information? Focusing on processes of 'translation' we report on the 'strategies' newly qualified workers developed in order to create the electronic record from face-to-face encounters.

A body of international research has claimed that professional sense-making in social work is now fundamentally shaped through new information and communication technologies, in keeping with a general international turn to the 'informational'. The purpose of this paper is to add to a growing knowledge base, focusing specifically on newly qualified workers.

4. Using Technology Ethnographically: Some Modest Possibilities

Papers in this symposium focus on the ethnographic and discourse analytic study of technologies in everyday social work practice. In this contribution we turn this on its head and describe the design of a technology to probe cultural and linguistic practises in social work.

As part of an ESRC funded study the authors developed a computer-based 'virtual' social work front-desk, populated with simulated cases based on ethnographic studies in five local authorities. The simulation guides subjects through a series of consecutive phases in each case. After making sense of the documentation in each phase, they are set a problem to solve, typically involving a decision about a case involving a degree of conflict between child welfare and available resources. They are asked to record their reasoning. Some of these scenarios embody errors, such as developments that were not accurately appraised, or reported by other professionals at the end of the foregoing phase. By asking users to comment on these errors, we are able to gauge characteristic patterns of moral reasoning, particularly attributions of blame and exoneration.

Laboratory experiments are associated with a positivist epistemology, but we have adapted these methods to incorporate an interpretive dimension, focusing on the accounts given by subjects. Whilst we must be cautious about grand claims to be rendering tacit cultures visible through a quasi-laboratory experiment, we present data to show that, by adding the qualitative dimension, we provided an arena in which different occupational cultures did appear to be 'speaking themselves'. If this is the case, this method may have potential utility in probing matters like differential thresholds for intervention between teams. Indeed we are currently

deploying the tool to this end in one of previous sites as part of a piece of work commissioned by them.

5. Crossing and Creating Boundaries: Relational and digital versions of the child in contrasting social work settings

Research on ICT in children's services shows that the utilization of technology may profoundly change the ways practitioners define children, their problems and how they orientate to each case. This paper draws on two studies investigating the implementation of new ICT in child health and social care agencies in the UK and Finland.

We demonstrate how, despite their different contexts and structures, practitioners describe their use in similar ways. The first system under study is the CAF, an electronic form used for standardized assessment in UK child welfare. The second system is a medical database called Bailey, used for recording case notes and assessments in a Finnish child psychiatry clinic. Both make use of what we term 'transprofessional electronic documents', templates that are completed by practitioners to be delivered across inter-professional networks. The CAF is exchanged between different agencies whilst Bailey within the clinic's multi-professional team. In the interview data, we focus on how practitioners describe electronic documents requiring a particular 'ICT-eligible style' of reporting.

The systems appear to produce compromised recording of certain practices (e.g. home visits), leading to more cautious and circumspect reporting. This seems to be due to practitioners being uncertain by whom (if anybody) and for what purpose the documents will be read. Even though the systems are designed to improve communication between professionals and agencies, they also establish a new boundary in the way practitioners view their work: they construct the relational 'real practice' (e.g. conducting a home visit) as separate from the ICT-reported version of practice (electronic reporting of the visit). In order to manage both, practitioners need to be capable of constantly moving between these two split 'worlds'.

Hardy, Mark
Title Exploring the potential of pragmatism as a philosophy of practice
Abstract <p>Discussion of the nature of social work as discipline or profession characteristically entails debate between competing paradigmatic positions. Advocates of each particular perspective, whether empiricist, interpretivist or realist, highlight the strengths of their favoured position and the weaknesses of competing perspectives. These reflect differences in underpinning ontological and epistemological presuppositions, which are often taken to render alternative perspectives incommensurate. Opposing approaches to practice tend to be seen as in some way insufficient as a basis for generating knowledge on which to base decisions and the actions that follow from these. This is either because the knowledge generated is insufficiently robust to merit generalisation or because it is too general to do justice to the unique circumstances which define the scenarios which social workers must intervene in. This distinction – between ‘scientific’ and ‘artistic’ approaches to understanding and undertaking social work - represents something of a ‘schism’ within social work, with the former routinely represented as contributing to tendencies towards overly bureaucratic and risk averse modes of practice, and the latter as a principled form of opposition to these.</p> <p>This paper draws on the findings of empirical research into practitioner experiences of involvement in risk assessment and risk management in three separate practice settings. It seeks to make sense of the fact that in these particular case studies, practice does not appear to be value driven, at least as this is commonly represented within social work discourse. Instead, decision making is grounded in pragmatic processes which in the main practitioners regard as neither oppressive nor threatening. This has significant implications for debates concerning practitioner judgement and the forms of knowledge which social workers make use of in their day-to-day practice. It also prompts me to explore the potential that the relatively neglected (at least in social work) philosophical school of pragmatism might hold as a basis for practice. I discuss what this approach entails, how it relates to alternative philosophies of practice, and how it might be applied, both in practice, as well as a means of generating knowledge for practice. I specify the benefits of conceiving of practice as pragmatic rather than value driven on the basis of a data driven critique of the primacy of traditional social work ethics to contemporary practice responsibilities. I conclude by advocating pragmatism as an approach to understanding and undertaking practice which, by focusing on how practitioners negotiate the ‘trade off’ between idealism and reality, but nevertheless in the process achieve positive outcomes, recognises the implications of the inherently political nature of practice and contributes to the achievement of objectives which, although reformulated, are in themselves ethical.</p>

Hayes, David
Title Using vignettes in social work research: positives, problems and potential
Abstract This paper will draw on the author's experience of using vignettes as part of a wider, mixed methods study of social work decision-making about initial referrals to children's social care. The purpose of the paper is to highlight, using examples from the authors experience, the strengths (positives) of using vignettes as a research tool, the limitations (problems) and how these might be addressed, and the potential of vignettes for social work research, particularly comparative research of an inter-disciplinary or international nature. Again, the author will draw on his own experience of involvement in an international, comparative study of social work decision-making using vignettes. The paper will address the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Defining vignettes;- Examples of the use of vignettes in social research generally and social work research in particular;- Using vignettes in a study of social work decision-making about initial referrals to children's social care (positives and problems encountered);- How to maximise the positives and reduce the problems associated with the use of vignettes in social work research. Conclusion The applicability of vignettes in social work research and their potential for comparative inter-disciplinary and international studies.

Hietamäki, Johanna
Mäntysaari, Mikko

Title

Finding the intervention theories in child welfare

Abstract

The purpose of the presentation is to discuss the problem of intervention theories in child welfare. Some critics claim that social work research is often under-theorized or even a-theoretical by its nature. For example, research-designs about child welfare services are often descriptive, and do not try to explain interventions in theoretical terms. In most of the child welfare interventions, theories are partly implicit, partly explicit, but testable coherent theories are missing. Still, the child welfare interventions are based on theoretical ideas about the goals of interventions and supposed mechanisms influencing the wellbeing of children. The most essential theoretical assumptions are related to the intervention methods and intended effects. Furthermore, the most central moderating factors need to be taken into consideration.

The development of program theories gained momentum when evaluation researchers met problems in so called 'black box' effectiveness research. Researchers following the realist evaluation tradition have tried to develop so-called 'white' box evaluation, where exposing the influencing mechanisms is essential task. An explicit intervention theory is a pre-condition for studying the effectiveness of interventions. Without an explicit intervention theory the researchers cannot show why an intervention is effective and what effects the intervention has and to whom. We are using the tools of program theory evaluation, realistic evaluation and logic modelling to find the foundations for intervention theories.

We will try to formulate a program theory of child welfare assessment intervention. The paper is based on a research project about the use of assessment of family situations in Finnish child welfare. The study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data.

<p>Höjer, Staffan Dellgran, Peter</p>
<p>Title The politics and reality of social work research: a content analysis of PhD theses in social work in Sweden</p>
<p>Abstract Not in every country in Europe it is feasible to get a PhD in social work. In Sweden this has been possible since 1980 after social work's integration within the university system, the installation of the first professor in social work, and the start of doctoral education. Now 30 years later it is time to describe and discuss the content of the PhD dissertations written since then, and to discuss the implications this research have had for social work. The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the content in all 253 Swedish PhD dissertations in social work from 1980-2009. Especially the topical content, research methods and theories used will be analysed. The first 89 dissertations (up to 1997) have been studied in all. After 1998 the abstracts of the dissertations have been studied. The results show a wide heterogeneity when it comes to the topical content, covering a broad range of sub-areas and research interests. Areas in social work practice are to different extent supported with research. Still qualitative research methods dominate social work research although studies grounded in quantitative methods are increasing over the last ten-year period. Over all we may talk about methodological pluralism. Very few dissertations carry out evaluations. When it comes to the theories used social work seem eclectic, however with a dominance of different theories stemming from sociology. The importance of PhD research for social work as a discipline and as practice is discussed.</p>

Holland, Sally
Title Trust in the community: the place of safeguarding services in neighbourhoods and communities
Abstract What role should statutory services play in local communities? The paper discusses this issue in two parts: knowing and being known. Firstly, how can statutory social workers come to know the localities where the children they are concerned with live? Children's services throughout the UK are organized around a fundamental interest in children's local environments. One third of the Assessment Triangle requires social workers to develop this understanding and how it impacts on risk and need. Can desk-bound social workers come to develop a deep understanding of their local neighbourhoods? Secondly, I consider the question: how are statutory safeguarding services known by local community members and semi-formal community groups? Drawing on data from an ethnographic community study of safeguarding in a low-income neighbourhood, the paper examines three 'spheres' of safeguarding: (i) the informal sphere of safeguarding between neighbours, within families and through informal community and social groups, (ii) the community sphere that includes neighbourhood-based community services for children and families and, (iii) the formal sphere of statutory children's services. The paper examines everyday tensions and positive relationships between these spheres and considers how trust can be built between children's services and families who are actual or potential users of such services.

Hollomotz, Andrea
Title Speak to me, not about me: enabling the participation of people with learning disabilities in qualitative interviews
Abstract 'If you are going to base your research on people like her, I won't believe a thing you say!' These are the words of the manager of a supported living service. She was concerned that the woman in question was labelled with a 'mental age of five' and thus an 'unreliable' respondent. Interviewing relies heavily on the cognition, recall, intellectual abilities and expressive language skills of respondents. For people with learning disabilities some or all of these skills differ from norms established in medical practice. Difficulties in interviewing this population are often viewed in the context of their 'deficit'. For that reason past research often sought the views of carers or more articulate disabled persons on behalf of an individual. However, such research provides more information about the experiences and subjectivity of the substitute persons than about the individuals concerned. For instance, in the above case study, the service user's description of her supported living service differed significantly from that of the manager. This presentation will show how the ability of people with learning disabilities to respond to questions can be optimised by making question format, style, language and content more accessible. Thus, it is shown how the interviewer may facilitate an effective dialogue by adapting to an individual's communication needs. An overview of the ways in which these challenges were addressed in a recent study is provided. In particular, the focus of this presentation will be on the use of concrete reference tools, namely pictures and vignettes, to enable respondent's memory, understanding and imagination. For instance, this study used pictures to accompany each question category and three risk perception vignettes. The vignettes were developed in partnership with a group of people with learning disabilities and featured a simple story line and eight accompanying photographs to illustrate the story. It will be shown that they returned surprisingly rich data.

Hood, Rick
Title The tail and the dog: the role of research in developing integrated children's services
Abstract Background and purpose Children's services in the UK have been reorganised in recent years with an emphasis on integration. New preventative services, such as children's centres and extended schools, have been established to improve outcomes for children through a multi-agency response to problems in early childhood. At the same time, adverse publicity about deaths from child abuse has put the onus on improving collaborative systems for safeguarding children. This paper presents a critical overview of how social care research has both shaped and been shaped by the integration agenda. It examines the ways in which government policy has made selective use of research findings in order to develop models of integrated working and establish an evidence base for them. The question arises as to whether certain aspects of the relationship between research, policy and practice may have contributed to what is now widely perceived to be a crisis in children's services and social work in particular.
Main points The paper will begin by outlining the policy background to integrated children's services and examining its links to contemporary trends in social care research, such as the refocusing debate of the late 1990s. The rationale for integrating services is discussed with reference to relevant empirical studies and the longstanding problems identified in the field of child protection. Recommendations of public inquiries into child deaths have given added impetus to policies driven ultimately by the ideology of social investment, further exacerbating a technocratic and managerial ethos within social services. This has been reflected in the increasing preoccupation with risk factors and outcomes in applied research. When it comes to collaboration in practice, some research has emphasised the dynamics of interpersonal relations and the importance of critical reflection for complex decision-making. However, current models of integrated working have tended to overlook these types of study, with ongoing adverse consequences for the children's workforce.
Conclusions and implications The paper draws two main conclusions. Firstly, while it is important to establish an evidence base for particular interventions and models of working, the preponderance of funding for this purpose runs the risk of turning researchers into an appendage of government policy. Secondly, it seems that a whole body of literature dealing with the experiences of frontline practitioners working with children and families has been consistently ignored by policy makers and planners in the pursuit of ever more technocratic systems of control. This may suggest that only by removing professionals from their current location within managerial bureaucracies and giving them more autonomy over their work will they be able to use research findings in their own interests and for the benefit of their clients.

Hüttemann, Matthias
Parpan-Blaser, Anne

Title

Innovation in social work as a research subject

Abstract

Innovation is a key concept in modern societies. In terms of the knowledge-based development and actualisation of methods, concepts, and modes of action, innovation has formed part of professional social work practice for a long time. To date, however, it remains unclear on which basis both innovation processes in social work and the increasing promotion of innovations in social work by private foundations and public institutions are shaped and assessed. Innovation in social work has so far received scant attention as an object of research and theory building. A genuine conception of innovation in social work, which takes into appropriate account the idiosyncrasies of the field, hitherto has been largely lacking.

This paper examines innovation in social work from two sides: on the one hand, it discusses the findings of existing innovation research in economics and in some fields of the social sciences (especially in non-profit organisations, person-related services, and public services; see, for instance, Hartley 2005; Jaskyte/Kisieliene 2006; McDonald 2007; Osborne 1998; Osborne/Brown 2005; Salamon/Hems/Chinnock 2000), and suggests why these findings cannot be transferred directly to innovations in social work. Comparing various disciplinary approaches, the paper outlines the reasons for further specifying innovation as an object of social work research. On the other hand, it explores which research concepts might be suited to researching innovation in social work. Kehrbaum (2009), for instance, has argued that homologies exist between key features of innovations (emergence of novelty; complexity of social reality; process character of innovation; practical relevance) and the research model of Grounded Theory (abduction logic of the encoding method; complexity of the transactional system; process character of encoding; rootedness in pragmatism). Other scholars have suggested adopting biographical research to determine the personal and social influences on innovations (Butzin/Widmaier 2008). The present authors have used a reconstructive approach to investigate innovation processes in funded projects claiming to be innovative. This paper discusses the various approaches, and focuses on whether innovation as a new object of social work research also requires an innovative methodological repertoire or whether it represents a rather unspecific subject in terms of methodology.

The findings of innovation research are also an important knowledge resource for initiating, designing, and steering innovation processes in social work practice. For instance, institutions funding innovations in the social sector have a demand for ways to operationalise innovations and for suitable innovation assessment processes. Innovation indicators such as patents or the market penetration of a product, which are widespread in technology and business, are evidently inadequate in social work. Future research faces a range of questions, including how reliably an innovative practice can be said to excel over an existing procedure.

Hyytinen, Riitta
Saurama, Erja
Pitkänen, Miia
Tukiala, Anna-Kaisa
Kääriäinen, Aino
Liikanen, Hanna
Kangas, Saija
Juvonen, Tarja
Hinkka, Terhi

Title

Creating social work practice research with practitioners, service users and students: social work practice research at Heikki Waris Institute, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

The idea of this symposium is to introduce our model of undertaking practice research in Heikki Waris Institute in collaboration between the University of Helsinki and the municipalities in the Metropolitan Area. The methods of knowledge production in social work and professional social work education are achieved by this collaboration. The purpose of Heikki Waris Institute is to improve the methods of helping people with multifaceted problems and develop more effective preventive approaches. This improving is based on practice research approaches. For us practice research means knowledge production arising from the social work practice. It exceeds the traditional distribution between theory and practice. We use the research methods of social sciences but the interest of knowledge and relevancy is on practice. One special important feature of practice research is the purpose of reassessing and developing the research methodology via multiagency and collective knowledge production. Multiagency in this context means that all those who are in some way entangled with the project are the carriers of knowledge.

In the symposium there will be four presentations which cover thoroughly the different aspects of the practice research in Heikki Waris Institute. We are aware of the question of rigorous research endeavour. Practice-based research is supposed to be influential to practice, but how can we be sure that it fulfils the criteria of the "real" research? This question will be handled in the presentation "Data gathering through practice research in professional work".

The model of practice research has been elaborated for ten years. During those years interesting questions concerning research partners has passed more and more to service users. Two of our presentations are dealing this question. One presentation ("Social workers as researchers in social services with adults") examines it from the viewpoint of social workers as co-researchers and one ("Service-users as co-researchers") from the perspective of young service users as experts and co-researchers.

The last presentation "Teaching of practice research and students' experiences in social work" describes how the practice research education is organized in the University and what are the outcomes of this new teaching module. The idea is that the students get capability to take advantage of research by learning by doing. The aim is in a way educate researcher-minded social workers.

This symposium is giving a general view of the concept of practice research in Heikki Waris Institute. It is based on the finish operational environment in which all the social workers are having a master degree and are educated to be researchers as well as practitioners.

James, Victoria
Capes, Tricia
Leggett, Gay

Title

A question of quality: using service user standards and experience to improve practice and recognising the part service user experience plays in decision making

Abstract

Each paper in this symposium is based on a distinct but linked project, which have been important in improving practice and governing how service user views and other evidence are used in reflective practice. It is important that other local authorities can learn from our experience. The first two papers define quality from the service users perspective the third acknowledges service user views on quality but recognises that quality is dependent on adherence to an array of practice guidelines, policies and mutual support.

The first project outlined in Abstract 1 set out to develop customer led standards. This was achieved using lean methodology techniques where service users were walked through business process charts and asked to think about the things that were important to them. The project generated 12 golden standards, 20 generic standards and 75 specific process standards.

Key messages

- The importance of service user led standards
- Getting service user investment

These standards were used to develop customer insight surveys (discussed in Abstract 2) which followed a service users journey through gaining support and services. A research tool that reflects the many diverse journeys and choices our customers make. The feedback collected feeds a database of evidence used for the evaluation of services, to inform policy and practice, and identify areas for further research.

Key messages

- Embracing personalisation through personalised customer insight
- Demonstrating the value to service users: outcomes and cost effectiveness
- Improving customer experience

The 3rd project outlined in appendix 3 talks about the baseline assessment that took place on social care governance processes. A key element of the assessment was to understand the extent that service user and carer feedback and involvement impacted on practice improvement.

Key messages

- The value placed on the views and experiences of the service user
- The importance of using customer feedback in meaningful ways

Abstract 1: Personalisation and customer led quality standards

Background and purpose

Quality is subjective and must be defined by the customer. During the transformation of services it was important to consult with customers on the new self directed support model and the quality of service and outcomes they expected. This offered a real opportunity for the creation of a unique set of quality indicators to measure the why? how well? and so what? alongside more traditional performance collections of how many? and how fast?.

Method

Eight workshops were run bringing together different perspectives of citizens of Essex, service users, third sector partners and employees. In all 50 people attended to first understand the new model of working and then to say what was most important in terms of the quality and performance they expected. The participants were guided through different processes at each workshop. The project generated 12 golden standards, 20 generic standards and 75 specific process standards. These far exceeded the standards identified by national regulators and in-house quality frameworks.

Outcomes

The workshops produced a set of customer led quality standards that:

- everyone is required to aspire to or exceed as delivering a high quality service according to legislation, good practice and standards is everybody's responsibility within Essex Adult Social Care
- are a fundamental corner stone of our social care governance system and the basis of quality assurance frameworks for both in-house and external services.

Abstract 2: Personalisation and customer insight in Essex

Background and purpose

Essex County Council (ECC) has been at the forefront of the transformation of adult services and as part of their ongoing commitment to personalisation, the customer insight programme has been transformed so that customers receive an annual customised survey reflecting the individual's journey. Primarily the purpose of the survey is to identify recommendations for service improvements across all adult social care operations/services based upon what our customers tell us.

Methods

Postal surveys were designed to reflect the many different pathways our customers take. Questions reflect the new self-directed support model, and the quality of services and outcomes our customers expect. The survey was piloted to a random sample of customers (n = 3036) and 1094 participated (a response rate of 36%). The pilot took place in the first half of 2010 and customers were given the option of a telephone survey. Analysis was carried out using SPSS to improve the survey and to provide known evidence requirements.

Results

Customers were positive about the personalisation of surveys. They felt it was important to ask about personal outcomes but these questions were easier to answer when they preceded questions about services. The quality of existing data impacts on the accuracy of surveys and degree to which they can be personalised. Surveys need to be proportionate to the level of ECC involvement.

Conclusions and implications

This work has produced a research tool that reflects the many diverse journeys and choices our customers make. The feedback collected feeds a database of evidence used for the evaluation of services, to inform policy and practice, and identify areas for further research. This is a cost effective programme that reduces the burden to customers and provides efficiency savings from re-usable, flexible evidence.

Abstract 3: Service user impact on practice improvement

Background

The findings from this Adult Social Care Governance Baseline Assessment reconceptualised an original workbook designed by SCIE with Social Care Services in Northern Ireland. The assessment focuses on safe and competent staff and services, effective evidence based practice and services and continuous improvement. A key element of the assessment was to understand the extent that service user and carer feedback and involvement impacted on practice improvement.

Method

Five electronic surveys using open ended questions were developed to gather a rich picture of the achievement of social care governance requirements. 63 employees participated providing a good spread across locality, team and function. Findings were evaluated against a model of social care governance constructed to fit with Essex ethos, accountabilities and structure.

Results

It is often assumed that what the organisation writes down, in terms of its mission, values, objectives and strategies, represents the culture of the organisation. The response from staff working at the coal face demonstrates that in some areas these are more the objectives of senior management rather than a reflection of what actually happens. Power structures, control systems and organisational structures are powerful influencers, but it is the behaviour of people on a day-to-day basis that defines what the culture of social care governance is. In this case strong evidence was found that staff valued the involvement of service users and carers in some elements of their practice and services more than others. Equal stature needs to be given to all if Essex is to demonstrate a robust and effective social care governance ethos. The further development of social care governance will enable service users to have a stronger influence on practice improvement.

Jivanjee, Pauline
<p>Title</p> <p>Improving transitions to adulthood for young people with mental health needs: youth experiences and recommendations</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose</p> <p>The transition to adulthood is fraught with challenges for many young people with disabilities, particularly those with serious mental health conditions (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009). Outcomes for these young people tend to be dismal, with low rates of high school completion and high rates of unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, involvement in delinquent activities, unplanned pregnancy, and homelessness (OECD, 2010; Gralinski-Baker, Hauser, Billings, & Allen, 2005; Vander Stoep, Davis, & Collins, 2000). While the prevalence of mental health disorders increases during the transition years, use of mental health services decreases, possibly related to fragmented services (Mallory, 1995) and youth perceptions of unresponsive services (Pottick, Bilder, Vander Stoep, Warner, & Alvarez, 2008).</p> <p>Study objectives</p> <p>This participatory interpretive research study was designed to gain understanding of the experiences and perceptions of young people aged 16-24 with serious mental health conditions in their transition to adulthood, with a focus on challenges and supports, and use of mental health and transition services. This presentation addresses the “youth study” which was part of a larger study that included parents’ perspectives.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>The project developers recruited three young people with experience using mental health services to work as co-researchers and provided training in conducting focus groups, research ethics, data analysis, and co-presenting findings. The research team conducted 12 focus groups with 59 youth and young adults aged 16-24 in two NW U.S. cities, with youth researchers facilitating the groups and project leaders assisting as note-takers. Questions focused on youth perceptions and experiences of community integration, including their use of mental health services, school/college, employment, and relationships in the transition years. Participants also completed a brief demographic survey. Focus groups were taped, transcribed, and analyzed with the assistance of N6 qualitative data management software (QSR International, 2002). All team members engaged in iterative processes of data analysis and negotiated coding decisions which resulted in an analytic framework of themes and categories of barriers and supports for successful transitions to adulthood across life domains and advice to service providers and other youth.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Findings provided rich descriptions of youth experiences across life domains, including their access to and use of services, and support from family, friends, peers, and allies. Participants reported challenges related to lack of understanding of their mental health needs, stigmatization, and the absence of helpful services. They also described experiences with supportive people who offered opportunities to pursue their goals. Young people offered advice to service providers and other young people. Participants who had become involved in youth leadership, advocacy, and providing support to other youth reported that these activities contributed to their well-being.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Mental health policies and practices may be improved with young people’s input about what is</p>

most helpful and their advice to service providers. Young people in this study recommended that mental health and transition services take account of their developmental needs and preferences and offer peer support. Further research will be needed to examine the outcomes of youth-led services.

<p>Jones, Ray Knapp, Martin Lupton, Carol Bolton, John</p>
<p>Title Research impacting on policy in the UK: issues and innovations</p>
<p>Abstract There is an increasing interest in the UK and elsewhere that research should have an impact. In this workshop there will initially be brief presentations and a chaired dialogue, followed by discussion with the audience, about promoting research to have a policy impact.</p> <p>The presenters have all held significant national research and policy roles for social work and social care in the UK: (i) Professor Martin Knapp, director of the UK School for Social Care Research, and with experience in commissioning research and in leading a major research centre; (ii) Dr. Carol Lupton, the lead commissioner of social work and social care research in the UK government's Department of Health, and formerly the director of a university research centre; and (iii) John Bolton, recently director of social care strategic finance within the Department of Health, and currently and formerly a local government director of social services and also formerly the director of the Audit Commission and Department of Health's Social Services Joint Review Team. The workshop will be chaired by Professor Ray Jones, research professor in social work at Kingston University and St. George's, University of London, and previously a local government director of social services, and a former chair and chief executive of several research dissemination and utilisation organisations.</p> <p>Issues to be explored during discussion in the workshop, using experiences and examples from the UK and elsewhere, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how research agendas are set and how research is commissioned and how to influence both; • how to conduct and report research to make it relevant to policy makers; • and how follow-through on research to promote its impact.

Juhila, Kirsi
Nijnatten, Carolus van
Hall, Christopher
Matarese, Maureen

Title

Researching social work Interaction

Abstract

During the last ten years there has been a growing interest in studying how everyday work is accomplished in naturally occurring talk and interaction in different social work settings, somewhat later than work in education, medicine and counselling. The methodological roots of this line of study lie mainly in ethnomethodology and discursive constructionism. In studying everyday practices, various research methods, like ethnography, discursive psychology, membership categorisation analysis and conversation analysis, are applied. Such approaches enable the complexities of everyday social work practices to be the focus of rigorous research, and give priority to the construction of social realities in everyday interaction. As examining social work practices as participants' phenomenon in situ, this approach offers an alternative to theory driven and evidence-based research as well as for qualitative research relying on content analysis.

The symposium aims to discuss, evaluate and develop this research approach. In every presentation the focus is on naturally occurring face-to-face interaction in social work, including professional-client conversations and conversations among professionals. The data used in presentations are audio or video recorded and turn-by-turn examination of the transcriptions. By using a selection of specific research analytical tools the presentations shed light on some core activities relevant in social work interaction. The analytical research tools are:

- **Accountability.** To coordinate professional as well as client roles and perspectives, actions and interventions need to be accounted for in and through conversation. Accounts of both conduct and reasoning have been found to be at the heart of institutional encounters, but what participants are considered to be accountable for differs in different institutional contexts and thus calls for empirical study of conversations in situ practices.
- **Identity categories.** Identity categories are flexible tools which the participants in professional – service user encounters employ in such a manner that makes sense and is relevant in a specific institutional context. Research shows how identities are displayed by the interactants themselves.
- **Boundary work.** Both professionals and clients negotiate their helping and receiving roles within the social work encounter. Research shows how boundaries between and within professionals with different expertise and lay persons (clients and their networks), and rights and responsibilities related to them are present and used by participants in encounters.
- **Resistance.** The aim is to analyse how opposition and disagreement related for instance to problem construction or institutional identities are displayed in various ways in interaction.
- **Handling sensitive topics.** Research concentrates on how difficult issues are raised by delicate interactional methods to maintain the helping relationship.
- **Advice giving.** Research focuses on the potential tension between the professional's advice and service user's acceptance or rejection. An important distinction is made between interaction concerned with 'troubles-telling' (focus is on clients' problems) and 'service encounters' (focus is on clients' service needs).

Abstracts of the symposium papers:

1. Accountable to whom? Institutional demands for documentation in social work
Linguistic interaction between professionals plays a substantial role in social work. One arena

for such interactions is case meetings, in which a group of professionals meet to discuss the situation of specific clients without the client being present and to make decisions on possible solutions for moving the cases forward. The focus of the paper is to contribute to the understanding of the nature of the means through which practical activity, such as case meetings, is achieved by social workers. How do social workers make decisions in the course of case meetings? How are these decisions presented and argued for? And to what extent does the institutional and political setup, which in this empirical case is social work with unemployed clients under the canopy of active labour market policy, permeate this particular practice in social work? The paper is based on a sequential and comparative analysis of transcripts of case discussions. The analysis draws inspiration from ethnomethodology. The empirical material stems from two Job Centres in Denmark in which a variety of qualitative material was gathered, including 15 observations of case meetings (between 3 and 9 case pr. meeting). The meetings lasted between half an hour and two hours, with an average of 10 minutes pr. case. The paper argues that in the institutional context of the Danish jobcentres accountability is increasingly directed at the employment system rather than the unemployed client.

2. Advice giving in social work encounters

Advice giving is a critical feature of social welfare encounters, as professionals provide service users with information and offer an opinion, implicitly or explicitly, about what action to take. Research has looked at how workers in social, health, housing and employment services provide advice. For some professionals, advice is an expectation of the service provision; they are called advisors. For others, like counsellors, direct advice is avoided and seen as 'anti-therapeutic', but still takes place. Social work encounters are likely to include both these tensions. There are dangers in advice-giving, both in the interaction and across the intervention. The advice might be seen as inappropriate or unwelcome and rejected. The service user may place responsibility on the professional and blame them if it proves unsuccessful. There are particular problems about moving between encounters that are characterised as 'troubles telling' or 'advice giving'. Research in discourse and conversation analysis has examined the interactional caveats in the way in which advice is offered and accepted or rejected. Advice might be provided with a range of provisos. The timing is critical since the professional needs to provide the advice when the service user is prepared to accept it. On occasion the professional draws on their professional authority. In general, professionals and service users are oriented to the acceptance of advice, and need to account for its rejection. This paper will outline the centrality of advice giving in social work encounters and suggest that research on this topic should form a key part of the application of discourse research methods to social work. It will draw on data from family support encounters. It is in the management of advice that one sees the situatedness of social work taking place in context.

3. Negotiating future identities in planning talk

Reaching progressive changes in clients' lives is a central principle of social work. Movement towards a greater maturity and responsibility is emphasized especially in work with adult clients. As Siv Fahlgren (2009, 211) puts it: "...social work seems to be carried out according to a time order that implicitly assumes improvement with/over time according to a linear progression". Another important principle in social work is client-centeredness meaning that clients' own expertise and interpretations should be prioritized. These two principles can be claimed to be present in planning talk between social workers and clients. Future plans are made for and with clients. In this presentation my focus is on planning talk in professional-client conversations in the context of mental health work among adult rehabilitees. I will analyse 1) how clients' future identities are categorized in the course of conversation, 2) how participants make sense of time and change when talking about future, 3) the presence of competing futures and future

identities, 4)the processes of privileging one future over alternative visions and 5)resistance towards some futures and identities. In examining my data I will use membership categorization analysis (especially "stage of life" membership categorization device) (Sacks 1992) and discursive psychology (especially constructions of time in identity categorization) (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998; Taylor & Wetherell 1999).

4. Handling sensitive topics

Having problems that need professional care may confront clients. The effort of social work to enhance clients' capacity to address their own needs may add to the sensitivity that goes with the helplessness experienced by clients. Clients, who are confronted with sensitive issues may suffer loss of face, and as a result, drop out. Several factors may enlarge the risk of drop out: the coercive character of the service, the pairing of honesty and optimism about outcomes, wanting professional expertise together with involvement in their decisions. Successful social work intervention depends on the professional's ability to deal with delicate issues. Delicacy is characteristic of social work, dealing with citizens who have to confront their inability to deal with their life situation and unable to solve the problems they are confronted with.

Nevertheless, classical social work research hardly addressed this type of problems. As delicacy is pre-eminently constructed in the actual relationship between professional and client, we need an interactional approach to study social workers' strategies to deal with delicate issues. In this contribution, we will investigate the interactional strategies of social workers in their effort to maintain helping relationships. Examples of child welfare interaction will be presented in which social workers and/or clients deal with sensitive issues by interactional strategies. Several mitigatory strategies to reduce unwelcome effects of a confrontation with sensitive issues will be discussed: hedging (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1997), meta-communication (Van Nijnatten, 2006), optimistic news after bad tidings (Leydon, 2008), and humour (Norrick & Spitz, 2008).

5. Causal accounting and boundary work as professionals' tools in making sense of double diagnosis

In Finland there is a political and professional objective to integrate mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation. It is emphasized that it is important to tackle with both diseases (mental health disorder and substance abuse) in a same helping institution. But how do mental health and substance abuse practitioners make sense of the phenomenon which has been increasingly started to define with a medical concept, double diagnosis? I answer to this question by examining the meeting talk among the professionals in the supported housing unit targeted for 'double diagnosed' clients. I will analyse such instances of data where both issues are talked into being. Two analytical concepts will be used: causal accounting (Bull & Shaw 1992) and boundary work (Allen 2001; Hall et al. 2010). Clients' alcohol use is explained for example by referring to mental health problems: drinking eases the symptoms. This kind of causal accounting appears especially when practitioners try to make sense of crisis situations. Causal accounting is also present when negotiating institutional and individual responsibilities (boundary work). Practitioners may argue for instance, that in some situations it is better for clients to be moved to psychiatric hospital care or to substance abuse treatment, or to take more individual responsibility in their lives. The ways how these tools are used are consequential for the lives of clients and for the division of labor between different service providers.

6. Linking interactional concepts in analysis of a complex empirical case of social work practice

The aim of this paper is to elaborate and discuss links between analytical concepts when describing negotiation in social worker client interaction as well as negotiation between professionals. The empirical case is a recorded meeting between three professionals, a

caseworker, a vocational counsellor, a job consultant, and a cash benefit recipient. It deals mainly with two issues. First, whether a practice period in a firm should be seen primarily as a step towards a flex-job, or as an assessment of the client's work ability (client and case worker versus the other professionals). Second, whether the client is suffering from specific shortcomings regarding his ability to remember working instructions, or whether communication problems at the work place are due to unwillingness to accept working instructions of the manager (client versus professionals). The process and proceeding of the talk is analysed, partly as professional-client-professional negotiation, partly as professional-professional negotiation (Firth 1995). The conceptual links to be applied, elaborated and discussed in the analyses can provisionally be illustrated as follows:

- Client troubles-talk (Jefferson & Lee 1992) -> professional resistance (Vehviläinen 1999) -> professional indifference and professional methods -> persuasive mechanisms (Suoninen & Jokinen 2005; Eskelinen, Olesen & Caswell 2008)
- Professionals' 'troubles talk' (definition of the client's situation) -> Client-resistance -> negotiation / voice -> break-down of negotiation / exit (Caswell, Olesen & Eskelinen, 2010)
- Construction and defence of activity type and line in professional dialogue (Sarangi 2000) -> definition of the (client's) situation / categorisation -> competing versions -> negotiation -> accountability, face and politeness (Brown & Levinson 1987) -> decision and justification (vs. break-down of negotiation) (Hall et al. 2006; Eskelinen, Olesen & Caswell 2008).

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<p>Karban, Kate Willcock, Kim Paley, Caroline</p>
<p>Title "Include me in": user involvement in evaluation</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This paper is based on the evaluation of a move from hostel accommodation to independent supported living for people with mental health difficulties or learning disabilities. This 3 year project involves a partnership between a local authority and a housing association with over 300 people moving into their own tenancies in newly-built flats. The accompanying evaluation study was designed on a model of user participation and action research. 10 user and carer researchers, a number of whom have themselves been involved in the move from hostel to independent living, have been recruited and are working with 'professional' researchers to examine both the process and the outcomes of the move.</p> <p>The evaluation study will be located within the conceptual framework of user participation in research which is often understood as a continuum ranging from user involvement research, collaborative research through to user (controlled) research. Whilst Turner and Beresford (2005) suggest user participation can be categorised as either managerialist /consumerist or democratic, the limitations of a hierarchy or continuum are also acknowledged and Beresford (2007) suggests that the real issue is the extent to which an emancipator or liberatory agenda is explicit.</p> <p>The presentation will address innovative ways of involving service users and carers. This will include acknowledging some of the challenges encountered in undertaking an evaluation study of this nature and exploring both the inherent limitations and the opportunities that have arisen in respect of user and carer involvement. The main points will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational constraints • Working with a diverse group of service users • Recruitment, training, support and retention of co-researchers • Issues of power and ownership <p>A key feature of this study has been the negotiation involved between a complex change project and a participatory evaluation design. Learning points from the work so far will also be considered in terms of their wider application in future evaluations of complex change projects involving multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>The presentation will be accompanied by brief extracts from a DVD filmed and edited by a service user to illustrate the process of the evaluation.</p> <p>References</p> <p>Beresford, P. (2007) User Involvement, Research and Health Inequalities: Developing New Directions. <i>Health and Social Care in the Community</i> (2007) 15 (4), 306–312</p> <p>Turner, M. & Beresford, P (2005) User Controlled Research Its Meanings and Potential. Final Report. <i>Shaping Our Lives and the Centre for Citizen Participation</i>, Brunel University</p>

Kavadias, Dimokritos
Dehertogh, Britt

Title

Social work and school drop-out: the key role of social work projects in educational contexts

Abstract

Background

Education is considered as a crucial resource in contemporary “knowledge societies”. There is however a tension within education. Children are selected according to -in theory- universal criteria, but these criteria are not socially unbiased. Social vulnerable children are more often filtered to vocational tracks and ultimately have a greater risk to drop out of school.

This phenomenon is getting more scientific attention but has also reached the policy agenda. In Flanders (Belgium) it has led to an exceeding number of coaching projects in order to keep socially disadvantaged children into the school system. Most of these projects are institutionally anchored in the social work sector. As to this date there is no general evaluation of these programs. The evidence is however growing that some models are better suited to fulfil the needs of the youngsters.

The current contribution will provide an overview of different projects in Flanders, in order to discern crucial factors. More specifically, we treat the question how the cooperation between social work and education influences the effectiveness of programs intended to counter the drop-out of social vulnerable youngsters.

Methodology

Firstly, we overview the literature on school drop out factors in Flanders and efforts and social work projects to retain students. Examples of projects that prevent final drop-out are inventoried from the mid nineties till present.

Secondly, two initiatives will be studied: youth coaches and the “schoolbridge” on their methods, characteristics and (perceived) effectiveness. Moreover, based on a survey on the leisure time of young people in Antwerp, school experiences of vulnerable young people were recorded. In the study the tension between government aided leisure activities for vulnerable youth and school activities were explored. Data was gathered through in depth interviews (n=32) and a representative survey of 10 to 16 year olds (n=960).

Conclusion

Measuring effects of social work retainment projects is difficult in the long term. Vulnerable youngsters are often very hard to track. A long term registration is crucial if we want to evaluate new projects.

Interim results also show that these projects are experienced in very different ways. Projects succeeding in bridging the gap between social work in the field of leisure and education, seem to have more impact. Vulnerable youngsters value their leisure time more (and time in school less) than other youngsters. This seems to indicate that the concept of community schools, with an intense collaboration between the school and the sector of social work in the surroundings of the school, might prevent school drop out. If social work organisations can be embraced as fully-fledged partners in the educational process, retainment will no longer be a separate field of work.

Kelly, Emma
<p>Title</p> <p>Findings and impact of primary research to establish the incidence of child trafficking within Wales</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This paper will explore the findings and impact of primary research to establish the incidence of child trafficking within Wales, which was commissioned by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. As the first study of its kind, the research received considerable media and political attention in Wales on publication.</p> <p>A grounded theory (Strauss 1997) approach was used to explore social workers and other professionals' encounters with separated children (children from abroad) who receive services in Wales. Of particular interest was the need to critically examine professionals' accounts as the majority did not conceptualize the experiences of these children as indicative of child trafficking (Beddoe 2007).</p> <p>32 children were identified as meeting the definitional criteria for trafficking with data on age, gender and experience of exploitation closely reflecting the national picture (Kapoor 2009). The research demonstrated that child trafficking was occurring in Wales, both in and outside of large cities and that a number of Children Services were responding in a haphazard way to potential victims of child trafficking.</p> <p>A number of recommendations were made by the participants during the research and these were turned into action points by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The remainder of the paper will explore the impact of these action points to date (18 months on), with a particular emphasis on why some action points have been implemented and not others. The immediate and longer term influences of the research will be considered in light of policy initiatives including those which directly relate to child trafficking and the broader child rights agenda in Wales epitomized by the Welsh Assembly Government 'Getting it Right' Action Plan (2009) and the Proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure (2010).</p>

Killick, Campbell
Taylor, Brian
Begley, Emer
Carter Anand, Janet
O'Brien, Marita

Title

Researchers rather than just researched: working in collaboration with older peer-researchers

Abstract

Involving older people in research is not a new phenomenon. Their views are often sought as service users, but they are rarely involved in the design, implementation or analysis of an investigation. The participation of peer researchers is shown to be particularly valuable when investigating sensitive issues or complex concepts. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the experience of older people as peer-researchers in researching their peer's perceptions of abuse.

Four older people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have been recruited as peer-researchers for a focus group study funded by CARDI* examining the conceptualisations of elder abuse among older people in communities across Ireland. They have undergone training and are working as active members of the research team through the various stages of design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination.

The evaluation of the participatory element of this study involved peer-researchers and professional researchers critically reflecting upon their experiences using journals and feedback sessions. The data gathering and analysis are expected to be complete by the date of the conference. The findings should give valuable insight to the experiences of older adults involved in formal research projects including the issues of training, capacity building, participation, confidence and influence.

The levels of participation will be described and benefits and issues discussed, including:

- recruitment, training and experiences of older people in research roles
- The practice of participation in research design and implementation
- impact on engagement and communication from the identified groups in data gathering,
- impact on researcher bias and
- the value of differing perspectives on literature review and analysis of data.

Koon-chui Law, Agnes
<p>Title</p> <p>Getting the message across to the frontline workers: evaluation on home care services for the elderly in mainland China</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Along with the aging trend in the urban society of mainland China, caring for the elderly has become an imminent issue for the government. The government is well aware of its responsibility of providing care for the elderly, especially those who are frail and without family support. At the same time, it is also the intention of the government to shift the responsibility of direct service delivery from the State to the NGO sector. In choosing home care as the primary service mode for the elderly in need, government is trying to identify, or to encourage the forming, of organizations in the community that are capable of taking up the task of service provision with the funding support from the government.</p> <p>Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong Province, has been tasked to experiment on the model of home care administered by NGOs. In order to assess the effectiveness and to develop future plan of service expansion, the researcher is commissioned to launch an evaluative study on home care service in Guangzhou.</p> <p>This paper is to report on the evaluation project on home care service in Guangzhou. The purpose of the project, as perceived by the government officials, is twofold. One is to assess the effectiveness of the existing operators of home care service. The other is to raise the awareness of front-line workers on the significance of service quality.</p> <p>The project is launched in the year of 2010. Evaluation forms were designed and introduced to the front-line workers. In the process, great resistance had been encountered and frequent interactions were conducted in order to modify the approach of evaluation and to explore ways of effective engagement with the frontline care workers. Discussions in the paper include factors affecting the service design of home care service, values and cultural differences among social workers, government officials, service operators, and frontline care workers, and the way forward of care provision for the elderly.</p>

Koskinen, Raija
Title Information technology change in a child protection unit
Abstract <p>Purpose of the research project was to catch a dense picture of a period of Information technology change in a child protection unit. Research was carried out in Helsinki City Social Services Department, in a small unit that provides social services for Swedish speaking minority in Helsinki.</p> <p>Research questions in this study concerned agency, how the change affected social workers and other actors and their agency. Furthermore, research interests considered even how the social work in child protection was practiced during the time of change. Roles of social worker and researcher were combined as action research functioned as a methodological frame for research. Data was assembled during a four months period 2008-2009 when the new client data system was taken in to use. Written data considering the change consists of decisions made on various organizational levels and information and instructions addressed to social workers. Data collected by participatory observation was transcribed. In the spirit of action research, data consists also of material produced when trying to manage the change, for example work processes described together with team members. More theorizing took place after the intensive field period.</p> <p>Changes in information technology used in client work affects the agency of social workers. Data systems influence the work processes. Social workers space of agency is also influenced by data system. The results implicate that it's worth considering client data system as an actor to fully understand its implications on social work. There is evidence of unintended consequences. Such consequences are detected when data system change crashes with several other changes, for example a high turnover of workers as in this study. Tension was observed especially between two actors. Client data system and social worker confronted each other in the fields of legislation, organization and social workers' basic task.</p> <p>Further research is needed in order to increase interdisciplinary understanding, specifically between information technology and social work / social sciences. The development and use of information technology in social work needs research that strives to clarify the core of social work on its own terms. This kind of research can be base for constructive initiative concerning information technology change.</p> <p>This research is my Masters' Theses in sociology and social work. During the time of intensive field period I practiced social work in the child protection unit that was also my study object. Since March 2010 I have been working as a researcher social worker at The Mathilda Wrede Institute (MWI).</p>

Krieg, Brigette
<p>Title</p> <p>Photovoice: using research to promote anti-oppressive practice and advance local knowledge of Indigenous women in Canada</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The potential of Photovoice to address issues of marginalization in Canada is just beginning to be realized. Using Photovoice to address the issues of marginalization will demonstrate local knowledge and abilities can affect necessary change at all levels. It emphasizes community involvement and ownership, where the end result of the process is not simply for knowledge generation, but also personal and community transformation. The theoretical foundation for Photovoice is echoed in the emancipatory research traditions that stress the inclusion of community voice in its decision-making process. What is more, the goal of Photovoice in placing local knowledge in the forefront of the process of action and critical reflection upholds the position that all voices in the community are important.</p> <p>Marginalization refers to “the context in which those who routinely experience inequality, injustice, and exploitation live their lives” (Brown & Strega, 2005, pg.6). Further, marginalization is indicative of not only experiences of injustice, inequality and exploitation but also lack of access to resources and power to create necessary change (Bishop, 2002). Examination of the issues related to marginalization requires the implementation of a research process that emphasizes community involvement and ownership, where the end result of the process is not simply knowledge generation but also to develop a community response to a community issue (Potts & Brown, 2004). Further, examination of these issues requires methods that remain faithful to anti-oppressive practice and respectful of marginalized populations and local knowledge.</p> <p>The use of Photovoice, a participatory action research method that enables local people to identify and assess the strengths and concerns of their community (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999) has emerged as a potential tool for advancing knowledge around marginalization. It is the purpose of this presentation to critically explore the potential of Photovoice in examining marginalization of Indigenous women and youth in Canada. Photovoice will be promoted as an appropriate tool for knowledge sharing based on both theoretical and methodological fit to anti-oppressive research, looking at both strengths and limitations of its process. Finally, Photovoice projects completed in Canada will be used to support the claims to strengths and limitations through lessons learned.</p>

<p>Kriz, Katrin Skivenes, Marit</p>
<p>Title Similar problem perceptions, different problem frames: how child protection caseworkers in England, Norway and the United States experience working with ethnic minority families</p>
<p>Abstract This paper analyzes how child protection caseworkers in England, Norway and the United States experience working with ethnic minority families. Building on and extending previous research on this question, which focuses on England and Norway (Križ and Skivenes 2009, 2010a, 2010b), this paper explores two questions: (1) What challenges do child protection case workers experience in their work with ethnic minority families? (2) How do the challenges perceived by caseworkers in England compare to those of workers in Norway and the United States? (3) What policy and practice lessons can we learn from caseworkers' problem perceptions? Drawing on in-depth semi-structured interviews with child protection case workers in England, Norway and the United States, we found that caseworkers in all three countries reported communication problems at two levels. First, caseworkers experienced communication problems when using interpreters. Second, caseworkers experienced communication problems as a result of ethnic minority families' approaches to child-rearing, and as a consequence of their lack of knowledge of the child protection and welfare systems. This paper shows that while workers' perceptions of the problems they experienced were similar across countries, the ways in which they interpreted perceived problems differed considerably. We discuss the major differences in "problem frames" across countries and analyze their relationship to caseworkers' training, practice approaches and child protection policy and law. We also discuss the implications of our findings for child protection case practice and policy.</p>

Laird, Siobhan Richardson, Emma
Title User and carer perspectives on the research process
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Since the 1990s an increasing number of Department of Health policy documents have emphasised the importance of user and carer involvement in Research and Development within the fields of health and social care beyond merely being the subjects of research. DoH (2005:para2.2.6) Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care, which applies to all research conducted in relation to the NHS, Children's Services and Adult Social Services requires that 'relevant service users and carers or their representative groups should be involved wherever possible in the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of research'. However, there is a paucity of studies exploring the perspectives of users and carers from ethnic minority communities regarding their involvement in research (Turner & Beresford, 2005).</p> <p>This research explores with physically disabled adult users and carers from ethnic minority communities the potential for and challenges of their involvement in the different stages of the research process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 adult users and 10 adult carers together with 4 focus groups comprising of 6 participants in each, two with users and two with carers. All participants were drawn from the Nottingham City Council area. The following research questions were explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are BME carer or user perspectives on research • What are the obstacles impeding BME carer or user involvement at different stages of the research process • How can we remove barriers and effectively engage BME carers and users at all stages of the research process? • What are the training needs of carers or users? • What are the time and cost implications of user and carer involvement at different stages in the research process for the user or carer and for the researchers? <p>Data analysis and display utilised the coding methods devised by Miles & Huberman (1994). Research participants expressed the need for research which: respected cultural norms; was anti-racist in conception and conduct; took account of benefit entitlements; and provided personal assistance or replacement care (in the case of carers) which fully met the needs and preferences of those involved at different stages in the research process. These findings oblige researchers to adopt user and carer centred approaches which enable those from ethnic minority backgrounds to maximise their involvement and hence contribution to interdisciplinary social work and social care research.</p> <p>Miles, M.B. & Humberman, A.M. (1994) <i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i> Thousand Oaks, C.A.:Sage Turner, M. & Beresford, P. (2005) <i>User Controlled Research: Its Meanings and Potential</i> London:Shaping Our Lives & Centre for Citizen Participation, Brunel University</p>

Lawrence, Julie
<p>Title</p> <p>Agreement or acquiescence? Issues of informed consent within research: working with vulnerable adults</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This presentation will raise awareness about the methodological issues and consider the statutory principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) when involved in the process of gaining informed consent from vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>I am currently undertaking a PhD by research. The overall aim of my research is to ascertain the value and role of social work within a multi-disciplinary learning disability team in England. As part of this research, I would like to include service users to gain their perspectives about the benefits (as perceived by them) or otherwise, of the services provided by a multi-disciplinary learning disability team, and the effects this has upon their lives. It is envisaged that a number of adults will be involved in the qualitative research project. It is expected that the participants will have a range of learning and communication disabilities.</p> <p>A discourse of participation and analysis</p> <p>The commitment to user participation was highlighted in the NHS Plan DoH (2000) and in the research governance framework for health and social care DoH (2005). It is enhanced by guidance materials from government supported bodies, such as INVOLVE (2010) – public participation specialists. However a number of challenges remain before it can be said that marginalised groups, such as people with learning disabilities, are included in the mainstream of research affecting their lives, (Gilbert, 2004). The challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes of professionals • The diversity and complexity of lay groups • Knowledge • Power relationships • Resources • Values <p>The academic literature carries a number of examples of research studies involving people with learning disabilities as participants (Walmsley, 2001). Moreover, Valuing People DoH, (2001b) insisted on participation in the policy implementation and evaluation process. Booth and Booth (1996) suggested that the guiding principle behind involving people with learning disabilities in the research process lies with the challenge posed by the inadequacy of method rather than being perceived as a problem of the individual.</p> <p>Ethical Issues of Informed Consent</p> <p>Obtaining consent to participate in research presents particular ethical challenges to researchers in the field of learning disability (Cameron and Murphy, 2006). A significant tension exists between ensuring that people with a learning disability understand the nature and implications of their involvement in research, and at the same time avoiding any coercion. There is also considerable debate about what informed consent actually means, and a concern that researchers either exclude people with a learning disability from research or include them without their consent. Some researchers engaged in work with people with learning disabilities (like myself) and others (McCarthy, 1998) reach different conclusions, and I believe that we must recognise that , although some people cannot give informed consent, efforts must still be made to develop ethical practice so that they are not entirely excluded from research.</p>

Therefore, the presentation will address the necessity to adhere to the statutory principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005), and also identify successful methodological approaches used within the field of learning disability to date, across a number of research initiatives in England.

Lazar, Florin
Title Cross-national research of social work policies: bringing the experts in
Abstract <p>When comparing social policies the primary sources of information are statistics, surveys or description of institutional design of various systems. Consultation of experts is rather limited to collect the data from their country of origin/interest. Most comparative research of social work is including cash benefits/transfers (Bradbury, 2004; Nelson, 2007) or services (Alber, 1995; Antonnen & Sipilä, 1996) but seldom a combination of the two (Jensen, 2008). In an analysis of cross-national comparison of social work Meeuwisse and Swärd (2007) identified three different types of comparative researches: social policy-oriented, profession-oriented and practice-oriented. The study aimed at evaluating social work policies from the perspective of experts involved at three levels (triangulation): in the design of policies (at ministry level), in the implementation (professional organisations of social workers) and research (universities).</p> <p>The research framework combined the three perspectives proposed by Meeuwisse and Swärd (2007) with the dimensions elaborated by Eardley et al. (1996a, 1996b) and Gough (2001) who analysed social assistance regimes in OECD countries. To the dimensions previously used (level of social assistance system, degree of targeting, degree of centralisation) other three were added to include the professional and the practice perspectives: social support for policies, user's involvement and experts' consultation when elaborating new social policies. The first five dimensions were evaluated for specific types of beneficiaries and services: elderly, people with disabilities, families and children, single-parent families, poor people and immigrants. The last dimension referred to the consultation of professional organisations and experts from universities/researchers in general. A standardised questionnaire was sent out by e-mail to experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain, Sweden and UK, each being requested to evaluate the policies from their own country.</p> <p>Results from 29 experts from 10 countries show a positive relation between the level of economic development and general level of social work, with variations for specific types of benefits and services; there are combinations between the degree of centralisation, public financing and state's involvement, high level of centralisation and state's involvement does not involve high public financing; there are regional variations of quality, accessibility and financing of services and benefits due to degree of centralisation or level of development; coverage of people in need appears higher in developed systems and low in rudimentary ones; social support for social assistance is higher in less developed systems; the degree of user's involvement is generally low, but little higher in developed systems; experts from professional organisations are consulted more than academics.</p> <p>Based on the results we can identify four types of social work 'regimes': a developed/comprehensive centralised one (Sweden, Luxembourg, Cyprus) a developed decentralised (Austria, Spain), a developed but restructuring one (UK) and a rudimentary/developing one (Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia and Romania). Further research may increase the number of experts and to include user's perspective on the social work policies and practice/implementation.</p> <p>The paper contributes to the aim of bringing innovation in social work research, through the involvement of social workers (as practitioners, researchers and policy-makers) not only as providers of data but as active subjects.</p>

Lazar, Florin Buzducea, Doru
Title When social programs are research-based: experiences from outreach programs for most-at-risk adolescents from Romania
<p data-bbox="165 351 284 383">Abstract</p> <p data-bbox="165 389 1455 1048">Romania is now a low prevalence country for HIV, but with a legacy of about 7,000 children nosocomially infected in the communist regime who survived for 20 years with HIV. Social work/outreach programs addressing hard-to-reach groups whose behaviours are criminalised such as commercial sex workers (CSW), injecting drug users (IDU) and men having sex with men (MSM) are implemented only by NGOs and financed by international donors (UNICEF, UNODC, GFATM). While the prevalence of HIV among these groups is still low the situation could change rapidly if harm reduction and outreach programs are not provided. In 2007-2008 a research of most-at-risk adolescents (MARA) for HIV was commissioned by UNICEF Romania to University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work with consultation from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The research was carried out to explore the access to harm reduction services and risk behaviours of female sex workers and injecting drug users aged under 25 years using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Based on these results seven NGO's in four cities (Bucharest, Timisoara, Iasi and Constanta) providing outreach services for marginalised groups have been financed by UNICEF to specifically target MARA. Other activities included advocacy, elaboration of working methodologies and a research of organisational capacity of the funded NGOs. After two years an evaluation of the programs implemented was carried out (July – September 2010).</p> <p data-bbox="165 1093 1436 1361">The evaluation was carried out against 6 indicators: relevance, efficacy, efficiency, impact, sustainability and replicability, both from the user's perspectives and organisation's perspective. The research used a qualitative approach and included in-depth interviews with 45 MARA clients (15 CSW, 20 IDU, 10 MSM) and 11 interviews with programme managers from each NGO in each location. Beside these data, other information was collected from organisations' reports, database of interventions, working methodology and other researches carried out during the projects.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1406 1436 1792">Outreach programs are considered by their MARA users as relevant, useful for them, helping them to stay healthy and to find support when needed. The organisations, with one exception implemented the programs without major difficulties, achieving their targets. Most of them considered the financing from UNICEF as only partially covering the costs for harm reduction services needed. While the beneficiaries want the programs to continue, the organisations find it difficult to continue on long term, due to lack of public funding of such programs. Only one organisation submitted an outreach program for contracting to local municipality and another one has a new project approved to be financed by European Social Fund. The projects are considered replicable with the condition of adequate funding. The way forward to ensure sustainability is within a public-private partnership.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1836 1436 1933">The research-basis of social programs for marginalised groups is not enough to ensure sustainability if not accompanied by advocacy activities for policy changes. However, research evidence and innovation in practice can document policy changes.</p>

Lazar, Florin
Title Researching the hard-to-reach in Romania: what social work research can learn from other disciplines
Abstract A social work student in Romania is taught basic social research methods e.g. measurement, sampling, survey design, questionnaire, observation, interviewing, etc. When after graduating he/she wants to do research of hard-to-reach groups such as injecting drug users, commercial sex workers or homeless people it realises that the 'traditional' research methods are not very helpful. The presentation is based on authors' experiences in researching injecting drug users, commercial sex workers and homeless people in Romania using new methods for a social work researcher such as: respondent-driven sampling, snowball sampling and capture-recapture method.

Lee, Jacqueline
Title Gender inclusivity and whole family approaches
Abstract In UK social policy the concepts of 'family' and 'parent' are used interchangeably although the two are clearly different (Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2008a). Similarly, the idea of 'parent' is used interchangeably with 'mother' thereby rendering gender invisible and resulting in the (over)scrutiny of mothering in relation to complex family issues (Daniel and Taylor, 2006). There is a shift in contemporary social policy requiring practitioners to 'Think Family' in order to address the needs of highly marginalised, socially excluded families with greatest needs and who are also perceived to be the location of greatest social problems (Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2007). The family is perceived to be the point of intervention for social ills and a whole family approach – one that builds on family strengths to promote family resilience and social capital – is deemed to be both more effective in preventing social problems and more sustainable in the longer term than multiple service interventions that focus practice either on the child or the adult (Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2008b). Research is needed to provide informed understanding of this shift in the focus of practice intervention from the individual to social roles and interrelationships within the family and the wider community. A key question being whether working within a whole family approach is more inclusive in relation to gender, and whether it can address the marginalisation of men in family life and service engagement, particularly where this relates to safeguarding children (Ashley et al., 2006).
Aim Generating an interest group for future collaboration.
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify any messages for policy and practice from current research activity in relation to gender and whole family approaches. • To identify similar policy and practice in relation to whole family approaches both across the UK and within Europe/Internationally. • To explore key issues within gender inclusivity and whole family approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the family defined within this context? - What is a whole family approach? - Impact of gender in relation to whole family approaches?
Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate an interest group for future collaboration • Identify current state of knowledge and research activity in terms of social care and social work research in relation to whole family approaches, and gender inclusivity within policy and practice across the UK and in Europe. • Identify implications for policy and practice.

Liu, Chu-Li
<p data-bbox="165 152 229 185">Title</p> <p data-bbox="165 192 1358 264">Positive reconstruction strategies adopted by natural disaster female survivors: the case of Taiwanese women</p>
<p data-bbox="165 271 284 304">Abstract</p> <p data-bbox="165 311 325 344">Background</p> <p data-bbox="165 351 1422 734">Natural disaster could happen to everyone. However, vulnerable people result in poorer recovery. People in poverty, women, the disabled, and the aged are often identified as disaster-vulnerable people due to lack of resources and power. Vulnerable people became even more vulnerable after disaster given that they have less resource to reconstruct their lives. Therefore vulnerable people needed more attention. A tragic earthquake, which was 7.2 on the scale, happened on Sept. 21, 1999 in Taiwan. Many survivors had become homeless and settled in refuges. By 2010, some female survivors had recovered from this tragic earthquake and reconstructed lives successfully. This study aimed to explore these female survivors' positive reconstruction strategies. It is anticipated to learn from their experiences and draw implication for social work practice.</p> <p data-bbox="165 779 347 813">Methodology</p> <p data-bbox="165 819 1401 1010">A grounded theory approach was adopted. In-depth interview was adopted to collect data. 16 Taiwanese females, who had survived from a major earthquake happened in 1999 and reconstructed lives successfully, aged 19 to 55 years old, were voluntarily interviewed. Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were adopted to analyze data. Peer debriefing and comparing to literature served the purpose of research result verification.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1055 264 1088">Results</p> <p data-bbox="165 1095 1422 1711">The results indicated that the regulations of mother role and spiritual beliefs from folklore embedded in Taiwanese culture served as positive reconstruction strategies adopted by all participants in this study. The gendered division of household work "men work outside and women work inside" which is a gendered housework division embedded in Taiwanese culture served as a major positive reconstruction strategy adopted by participants who have resources; whereas, female unique toughness and support from religion served as positive reconstruction strategies adopted by women who lacked resources. These positive reconstruction strategies embedded in Taiwanese culture and support from religions not only helped participants in this study reconstruct lives successfully but also served the purpose of protecting them from further psychological sufferings and recovered from it. Resilience refers to individual competence, individual characteristics, factors existing in environment, and interaction between individual characteristics/competence and factors existing environment (Ungar, 2008). Consistent with resilience, this study indicated that survivors' culture, including female gender role regulations, female gender characteristics, and spiritual beliefs from folklore are participants' resilience. In addition, socio-economic backgrounds of participants in this study contributed to reasons of adopting different strategies.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1756 549 1789">Conclusions and implications</p> <p data-bbox="165 1796 1385 1986">This study highlighted the importance of cultural knowledge in understanding and helping disaster female survivors adapting to natural disaster. This study also highlighted that female survivors' socio-economic background play an important role in adapting to natural disaster. Implications for disaster social work practice, social work education, and research are addressed.</p>

Reference

Ungar, M. (2008). 'Resilience across Cultures', *British Journal of Social Work*, 38:218-235

Logan, Janette
Cossar, Jeanette
Jones, Chris

Title

Negotiating the boundaries of kinship after adoption

Abstract

This symposium is concerned with the meaning and construction of adoptive kinship and the formation of identity within adoptive kinship networks. Adoption in both the UK and US was originally conceptualised as a socially and legally endorsed form of kinship equivalent to blood ties and involved the practices of family substitution and separation. Contemporary adoption bears little resemblance to this model of closed adoption and it is now recognised that, as a family form, adoption creates a 'dual connection' to both the adoptive family and birth family. The issue of adoptee – birth family contact has had a major impact on the changing face of adoption today and captures many of the implicit issues involved in the biological/social construction of family. New questions emerge such as, what counts as family and where are the boundaries? How is kinship formed and maintained? How do members of adoptive kinships attach meaning to their positions in these newly created kinships networks?

The three papers presented in this symposium address some of these questions. They consider aspects of kinship and identity formation from different perspectives and each use different methodological approaches.

Logan's paper is a theoretical analysis of the meaning and construction of kinship. Charting the developing and changing discourse in adoption policy and practice and drawing on literature from sociology and anthropology it considers how traditional and contemporary notions of kinship have developed. The changing face of adoption, particularly in terms of openness and contact calls for a re conceptualising of both adoption and kinship and adoption as a family form has much to offer new theories of kinship. It sets the scene for the next two papers, both of which are based on empirical studies.

Cossar's paper reports on the complexity of family structure and boundaries created by sibling contact after adoption. Qualitative interviews with adoptive parents and birth relatives explored the experiences of adopted children having face-face contact with one or more of their birth siblings. Issues were raised for birth and adoptive families about how family is defined and if and how sibling relationships should be recognised.

Jones's paper focuses on the social and cultural challenges presented to adoptive parents by the concept of 'dual connection'. Narrative analysis of interview data was used to explore the ways in which adoptive parents' encounters with outsiders support or negate dual connection, shape family identity and enable adoptive family members to assert the social legitimacy of adoptive kinship and developed a positive identity as a non- conventional family.

Loughran, Hilda
McCann, Mary Ellen

Title

Social work, service users and communities: developing participatory research methods

Abstract

This paper is informed by a number of current debates in social work. It takes cognisance of the theory / practice debate as propounded by Parton (2000), the service users' involvement discourse recently discussed in Mc Laughlin (2010) and the work of Fraser (2009) in highlighting the need for socially just and politically sensitive research. The paper will present a developing research methodology which builds on social work practice skills, addresses demands of research and privileges service user involvement.

The authors conducted a study on communities' experiences of drug issues. It was essential to access both service users and the extended communities within which service users live. To ensure that the various voices of service users and community members were included a sampling model was developed. This sampling matrix facilitated the identification of categories of participants to be included while at the same time imposing rigour in the sampling process. The matrix proved useful not only in the sampling process but also in the analysis as it provided a framework for contextualising the data gathered. Four levels of engagement were conceptualised incorporating service users, service providers and people in the community.

The research methodology employed fits with participatory qualitative research. It built on principles of inclusion, participation and empowerment embedded in social work and social care practice and contributes to the development of research methodologies that operationalise these principles while producing valid, meaningful and useful research outputs. This paper will present the levels of community engagement matrix and discuss the advantages and limitations of such a tool in social work research with service users.

Fraser, H. (2009). Trying to complete socially just, politically sensitive social work research, *Journal of Social Work*, 9:1:87-98

McLaughlin, H. (2010) Keeping service user involvement in research honest, *British Journal of Social Work*, 40:1591-1608

Parton, N. (2000) Some thoughts on the relationship between theory and practice in and for social work, *British Journal of Social Work*, 30:449-463

Luitgaarden, Guido van de
Title Knowledge and knowing in child protection practice
Abstract <p>This paper analyses the types of knowledge that are used by child protection workers when they construct service user identities and make decisions at the point of first referral. Conclusions are based on an extensive ethnographic study of three referrals and five queries for advice that were processed by a Belgian child protection agency. Data were gathered throughout a seven month period in which participant observation and interviews with agency workers took place. Sixty hours of conversation and interviews have been recorded, transcribed and subsequently analysed using the concept of 'translation' as it is used in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) studies and after-ANT studies (see Latour, 1987, 2005), in conjunction with Osmond's (2005) Knowledge Spectrum Framework.</p> <p>It is demonstrated that evidence-based and other so-called 'correspondence theory approaches' assume factors and signals to be 'known' or 'given' whereas they are usually not. Rather, 'facts' about children's circumstances are shown to be constructed as opposed to found.</p> <p>Three parallel processes of child protection work at the point of first referral are theorized: the ongoing collective performance of agency and worker roles, competencies and mandates; the continual attempt to get and keep those who have a private or professional stake in the child's life involved; and the process of identity construction that depends on the former two processes. Of the types of knowledge that were employed by child protection workers during these three stages, interactional-contextual knowledge of service users' lived experiences and organizational knowledge take a central role. It is argued that this so-called interactional-contextual knowledge is all-important and is likely to take precedence over formal, received knowledge. It is concluded that conventional norms of professionalism as employed in most other fields, as well as experimentalist evidence-based approaches to judgment and decision making, are not well suited for child protection work and social work in general.</p>

<p>Lundstrom, Tommy Sallnas, Marie</p>
<p>Title Sibling and parental contacts among children in Swedish out of home care: research and practice</p>
<p>Abstract Swedish child welfare is usually positioned within a family service approach. Great importance is placed on supportive services to families and on attaining parental agreement to measures and interventions. From an international perspective most placements are short term. An important idea in official ideology – clearly impacted by research – is that children in out of home care benefit from regular contacts with their families of origin. In line with this social services are responsible for giving children in care opportunities to maintain contacts.</p> <p>Studies have shown positive impact on looked after children’s well-being if they stay in contact with their biological family, but these results have been questioned, partly because of weak methodology. Other studies indicate that children in care often look forward to see family members and for these children contacts can be valuable. Contacts with siblings, however, have been paid much less attention than contacts with parents. All in all, the issue of contact between looked after children and their biological family is complex. The strong Swedish contact paradigm can be debated, but there is no evidence to say that contact may be damaging to the children.</p> <p>The study presented is based on data from highly structured interviews with 269 children (age 13-18), who had been in foster or residential care for at least six months. The purpose was to investigate children’s own views and observations on their contacts with siblings and parents. The children were sampled from three major counties in Sweden.</p> <p>Results show that about half of the children (55 %) saw their siblings once a month or more often. However, about a quarter of the children did not see their siblings more than once every sixth month and one out of ten did not see them at all. There was a strong correlation between frequency of contact and the children’s wish to meet their sibling more often. The more seldom they saw their siblings, the more dissatisfied they were.</p> <p>The rate of children having monthly or more frequent contacts with parents was also more than 50%, but even so a substantial number wanted to see their parents more often. One group of children might be characterized as “permanency placed”, since they had no contact what so ever with their birth parents and were satisfied with that. Overall, the children’s attitude to parental contacts seemed to be more ambivalent than it was in relation to siblings. One important implication of the study is that all children do not fit the strong research-based Swedish paradigm of parental contact. Our study also illustrate that the “parental-contact-paradigm” seems to have overshadowed the issue of sibling contacts in research and practice. The study indicates that there is a need for dialogue between research and practice about how the current state of knowledge can be interpreted. In this sense our paper will contribute to a discussion about how research in this field may impact social work targeting children in care, and also the risk of research and ideology covering over children’s needs.</p>

Marrable, Tish
Title Tensions, turmoil, and connections: conducting social work research through a lens of symbolic interactionism
Abstract Social work research takes place in a variety of contexts and surroundings, and can be difficult to define. A report for the Social Care Institute of Excellence titled 'The kinds and quality of social work research in UK universities' (SCIE report 16, Shaw and Norton 2007), suggested that while definition may be difficult, social work researchers shared a perception that it was important that their research was based in social work values, had some aim of social justice, and a methodology that was inclusive of the research participant. This paper will address the benefits and limitations of using a symbolic interactionist methodology to look at Children's Services from a social work perspective. It draws on my doctoral work on children with 'additional needs', which took as its starting place twelve children within secondary school and moved with the children into the targeted and specialist services aimed at helping the child seen as needing more significant levels of support. The research took an exploratory stance to establish the ways in which children were becoming identified as having additional needs, and whether it was primarily their need, or the needs of adults and institutions, that were being addressed. A further intention was to explore the ways that these findings could shape future practice with children and their families. While the Children Act 2004 placed a duty on the key agencies who work with children to 'take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when doing their jobs' (Every Child Matters: Changes for Children 2004:E1) within everyday practice, and the highly charged turmoil that often seemed to accompany a child seen as difficult or needy, this duty to every child can seem to be pushed to one side. The troublesome child and the quietly distressed child can both become further isolated and socially excluded. By investigating the tensions and connections between children, parents or carers and practitioners, this turmoil can be thrown into better light. Although symbolic interactionism originated in the social psychology of Herbert Blumer, it is an approach that has been widely used in sociology and other disciplines. Symbolic interactionism explores the ways in which people use a 'defining process' to create their understanding of social situations and act on these understandings (Blumer 1969:97-8). It considers not only the ways that two or more people create meanings together, but also how internal dialogue shapes our performance and actions, and because of this is useful in looking at the processes at deeper levels which underlie the definition of the child. The paper will look at the ways in which a symbolic interactionist approach allowed a detailed exploration of children's and adults' personal interactions, the tensions and connections between them, and in doing so helped to illuminate the processes of definition and construction of the child with additional needs.

McAuley, Colette
Rose, Wendy

Title

Researching child well-being: international developments and innovative approaches to the measurement of subjective well-being

Abstract

Child well-being, what contributes to it and how we measure it are questions exercising researchers across the world. This paper will begin with some discussion of the origin of the concept. Recent research with parents and young people about their understanding of well-being will then be explored and the important issues raised for policy and practice will be addressed. Measuring and comparing the well-being of children across nations has met with increasing interest. Child well-being indicators are an expanding international field which has made considerable advances over the past decade. The key theoretical influences on those developments will be considered. Subjective well-being and its measurement are the focus of most recent concern, stimulating a spate of new research. Innovative methods to measure subjective well-being have been developed and the pros and cons of these will be considered. Finally, we address the question of the extent to which the concept of child well-being and the available research contributes to our understanding of children's lives.

The presenters will draw upon the issues raised at the recent International Child Well-Being Research Symposium in Dublin as well as the presenters' latest publication *Child Well-Being: Understanding Children's Lives 2010*.

McLaughlin, Hugh
Carpenter, John

Title

Shaping the future for newly qualified children's social workers in England

Abstract

Background

Recruiting newly qualified social workers to work with children and families and then retaining them is a major challenge in many European countries and in the United States. A pilot Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) Programme was introduced in England in 2008. This recognises the critical importance of the first year in practice. It provides high quality reflective supervision; access to training and a protected workload. It aims to boost skills and confidence and increase job satisfaction and retention.

Methods

- Online surveys of participating social workers (n = 1000) and a contrast group (N = 100) with three repeated standardised measures of self-efficacy, role clarity, job satisfaction, stress and intention to leave plus open questions about their experiences of the programme.
- Case studies in 14 local authorities and voluntary organisations using focus groups and interviews with social workers, supervisors and managers.

Data analysis

Changes over time in the standardised measures were explored using paired sample t-tests and multivariate regression analyses employed to investigate the statistical predictors of key outcomes. Interviews were digitally recorded and analysed thematically.

Results - key findings from the first year:

- Fifty eight per cent of NQSWs were generally satisfied with support they were receiving from their employers but 42 per cent were dissatisfied. Complaints were not about the idea of the programme – that was generally supported – but about the poor organisation and delivery of the programme locally.
- Problems of implementation were associated mainly with the lack of interest and support from managers and supervisors and with difficulties in ensuring that NQSWs had time to undertake the programme.

However, there was evidence that the programme was meeting key objectives:

- NQSWs' self-efficacy had improved significantly in the key areas of children's social work, more so than in a 'contrast group' of social workers in non-participating authorities. Role clarity had also improved significantly.
- For over three-quarters of NQSWs, job satisfaction had started high and remained so in spite of an increase from 32% to 42% in the proportion reporting clinical levels of stress.
- High levels of stress were associated with low job satisfaction and 'intention to leave'. One in six NQSWs was "very likely" to leave within the next year, three-quarters for another job in children's social work.
- End of year employers' returns indicated that 15% had left.

Conclusions

This evaluation provides an insight into the implementation and initial outcomes of a major initiative to support NQSWs. Further implementation was to be informed by the pilot findings. However, during the first year the then government extended the programme to everyone. It is

hoped however, that the lessons learned from the evaluation will inform the development of the Assessed Year in Employment, recommended in proposed reforms to the profession.

McNeill, Ted Chapman, Lee Ann Jackson, Suzanne
Title Partnering with pro bono lawyers to promote social justice and health equity: systemic issue identification and program evaluation
Abstract <p>Promoting social justice is at the heart of social work values. The Family Legal Health Program is a unique partnership that brings pro bono lawyers and health care professionals together on behalf of low income children and their families to address legal obstacles associated with the social determinants of health that may limit their care and recovery. Located within the Social Work Department in a large paediatric tertiary care hospital, this innovative program was the first of its kind in Canada, and is the result of a dynamic partnership between the hospital, a community based legal advocacy organization and local law firms, with pilot funding from a law foundation. Goals of the program are threefold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide legal advice and services to low income children and their families who receive care at the hospital, including referral to pro bono lawyers in the community 2. To provide education to health care professionals to enable them to identify legal issues and to facilitate referrals to the program 3. To identify systemic issues and engage in a process of advocacy to bring about relevant policy and program changes eliminating obstacles to care and recovery <p>A two-fold program of research has been underway. The first, using a Delphi methodology, research has been undertaken to identify and catalogue systemic issues affecting the care of children at the hospital. Systemic barriers related to funding/costs, eligibility for programs and other procedural issues have been identified for targeted advocacy and efforts to engage in government relations. Results of this process will be shared, and they include contextual variables and issues associated with the social determinants of health.</p> <p>The second research initiative consists of a comprehensive evaluation of the program, employing survey methodologies to gather information from service recipients and health care providers. The results of this comprehensive evaluation will be highlighted with particular focus on emerging best practices and areas for targeted enhancement.</p>

Monnickendam, Menachem
Title Multi dimensional poverty assessment on the local level
Abstract <p>Care services provide a key means for facilitating life conditions of those who live in poverty and social exclusion. However there are wide discrepancies in their use. Research has revealed incongruence between different poverty measures when applied to the same population: people who are considered poor by externally applied poverty measures such as income, may or may not perceive themselves as poor. This study postulates that the term "poor" is too general for practical use by service providers, and that those considered poor by different measures will exhibit different patterns of service utilization, and desire different services. Its purpose is to assess the utility of a variety of subjective poverty and social exclusion measures in explaining differential utilization of community services.</p> <p>The issues to be addressed are: (1) the congruence between various subjective measures of poverty, i.e., self-perception of poverty, sufficiency of household income, and desired household income; (2) the congruence between poverty measures and measures of social exclusion, i.e., family and social network; (3) the relationship between measures of poverty and social exclusion, and service utilization, i.e., extent and pattern of use of available services such as: public community services, ad-hoc community support network, social support network, and public utilities; and desired services.</p> <p>A research questionnaire was distributed to a purposive sample (N=269) of households in a socially disadvantaged area in Israel. The research subjects were considered poor and socially excluded by third year - pre-graduation social work students participating in a course on poverty.</p> <p>Results show (1) incongruence between different types of poverty assessment and social exclusion, and (2) differences of the explanatory power of these measures in explaining service utilization and desired services. Results will be discussed in terms of the utility of different measures in representing poverty, and in terms of the contribution of community services to the well being of those utilizing them.</p>

<p>Murray, Cathy Ruch, Gillian</p>
<p>Title Researching practice-related preoccupations in child care social work: an innovative reflective approach</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This decade has seen substantial changes in the configuration of services for children and families in the UK. Most notably, following the Laming inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, the importance of professionals working together was once again highlighted as a major factor in protecting children. With the introduction of the Every Child Matters agenda and the passage of the 2004 Children Act, a fundamental reorganisation took place which resulted, inter alia, in the integration of Children's Services. While there has been considerable attention paid to the implementation of new policy initiatives and the implications of these changes for workforce training and development, less attention has been paid to how practitioners are experiencing these significant changes on the ground. The study aimed to fill this gap by identifying current practice-related preoccupations amongst child care social work practitioners in the context of Every Child Matters and the integration of Children's Services.</p> <p>An empirical study was conducted in 2009 using a qualitative approach and comprised monthly sessions over an eight month period with social workers from child care teams in one local authority who self selected to participate. The method adopted utilised a relationship-based model of reflection, which draws on current thinking in the fields of reflective practice and critical reflection. Following a structured reflective format, informed by psycho-analytic and systemic theoretical frameworks, at each session one participant brought an issue relating to their work with children and families which was currently preoccupying them. Two researchers attended the sessions and alternatively took on the role of facilitator and observer. The sessions were tape recorded and transcribed. Using an iterative process, the data were analysed thematically in NVivo.</p> <p>The challenging context in which practitioners operate and the difficulties which researchers encounter in recruiting practitioners to research projects are widely recognised. The paper will begin with a detailed account of the method employed, critically consider the potential of this research method, with its professional development dimension, to engage practitioners in research. It concludes that the method can offer direct benefits for their practice, whilst simultaneously contributing data to research that will enhance social work knowledge and practice. The evaluative comments of practitioners involved in the research suggest that this reciprocal practice-research relationship was recognised. The paper explores the potential of the professional development tool as a research method and highlights the synergies between practice and research, as well as their differences. Attention is paid to the distinctive features of reflective case discussions as a research method compared with conventional focus groups and the capacity of the method to generate thick description from data derived from both the content of the reflective discussions and process of the group interactions.</p>

Nagode, Mateja
Rafaelič, Andreja
Flaker, Vito

Title

Direct payments and personalized care: innovative social care research in Slovenia

Abstract

In 2003 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs commissioned a pilot project on Direct Payments in Slovenia. The aim of the experiment was to try out the individual and direct funding of services on 50 users and to use the results and effects of the experiment when enacting new laws and national programmes.

The experiment included 16 persons who needed long term care and were provided with individual and direct founding of services. A third of them were residents of the long-stay residential care facilities, others were living at home. The research frame enabled measuring the effects of direct payments and personalized care on the users, on their quality of life and on their living costs. The experiment lasted for 6 years and provided us with valuable research data and results that were gained by applying different qualitative (for example costs monitoring and evaluation) and quantitative methods (narrative plan, focus group with users, planners, coordinators). We composed a tool for accurate annotation of all relevant costs of users on a monthly basis that enabled monitoring and evaluation of the change in the cost expenditures over a period of time (at least one year), and were also the basis of the calculation of the amount of the payment. The other important method employed and developed for planning could be termed biographical and contextual (narrative plan). It is based on the person's narrative and can convey the person's situations accurately and with precision. With this method the personal service plan becomes an important document stating what is wanted on the one hand, and the means (services and funds) needed to achieve the goals on the other.

The experiment pointed out the many contradictions and ambiguities of social protection and LTC, which became evident during the implementation of the experiment (the problem of resettlement, the tendency to formalization, the users' trust and right of ownership, lack of community services and advocacy, etc.). At the conclusion of the Direct Funding pilot project we made suggestions on methods, processes and the organization of LTC.

Naughton-Doe, Ruth
Carpenter, John

Title

Rhetoric versus reality in social care innovation: the example of person-agency time banking

Abstract

Background

Time banks are promoted as a new and exciting way for people to come together to help others and help themselves at the same time by sharing their skills. Participants 'deposit' their time in the bank by giving practical help and support to others and are able to 'withdraw' their time when they need something done themselves. It is seen as an alternative, empowering form of social service within communities which can increase social capital and reduce social exclusion.

Recently a new 'person-agency' model has developed in which service users help an organisation to realise its goals and are rewarded with time credits which can be used to access leisure opportunities. The main aim is to encourage a cultural change within the agency so that staff see themselves as facilitators of 'co-produced' services as well as service providers and users participate actively.

This research investigated the implementation of person-agency time banking in a hostel for homeless people. The aim was to see whether the rhetoric matched the reality. The research questions were:

1. How was timebanking implemented?
2. Did it encourage participation?
3. Does it achieve co-production?

Methods

Ethnography carried out over a six month period utilising participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with staff and residents at the hostel. Data analysis was iterative. Field notes and interview transcripts were analysed thematically. Themes were examined in the light of theories of implementation (Matland , 1995) and institutions (Brodkin, 1990).

Results

The experimental nature of the project made the time bank susceptible to interpretation and vulnerable to contextual challenges. The institutional setting of the hostel and environmental barriers to implementation meant the time banking project was subsumed by the culture of the hostel. Time banking was incorporated into the institutional practices of both controlling and supporting residents and the intended values of increasing participation and facilitating co-production were lost. Ambiguities in the project's aims and methods of operation allowed for a translation of time banking into what was in effect a 'token economy' whereby residents were rewarded for engaging in normatively desirable behaviour. Co-production and increased participation were not very evident. Access to 'rewards' was difficult and also because residence in the hostel was fluid, many residents' time credits were not redeemed.

Conclusions

The rhetoric of innovation in social care does not necessarily match the reality. The findings have stimulated the agency to re-examine the model and the support which is necessary for its implementation. There is a danger that ideologically attractive innovations in social care are 'rolled out' indiscriminately. They must be subject to empirical investigation informed by

relevant theory.

Brodkin, (1990) Implementation as policy politics. New York: Greenwood Press

Matland, R. (1995) Synthesising the implementation literature: the ambiguity-conflict model.

Int. Rev. of Implementation Sciences, 75, 665-685

Neil, Elsbeth
Greenfields, Margaret
Cossar, Jeanette

Title

The benefits and challenges of involving service users in research: perspectives from three projects carried out in collaboration with gypsies and travellers, adoptive parents and birth relatives, children and young people in the child protection process

Abstract

The benefits and challenges of involving service users in research – perspectives from three projects carried out in collaboration with: Gypsies and Travellers; adoptive parents and birth relatives; children and young people in the child protection process.

There is an increasing focus on service user involvement in social work practice, service development, education, and research. The Department of Health's Research Governance Framework (DOH, 2000) says that 'participants or their representatives should be involved wherever possible in the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of research'. Various groups have been advocates for service user involvement in research (e.g. the Toronto group; INVOLVE; Shaping our Lives). A growing number of statutory and independent funders require a consideration of service user involvement in research in their funding proposals.

Ethical arguments can be made for increased service user participation in research. The Toronto Group (2005) argue that traditional research is characterised as rigorous and scientific, valuing neutrality and objectivity, generating reliable, replicable knowledge and maintaining a distance between researcher and researched. Researchers descend upon participants, producing reports which they do not see. Certain groups may be repeatedly investigated but see little concrete change resulting from research. The ethical dimension seems particularly salient to social work, a profession which stresses values such as respect for service users, promotion of their rights and choices, and working towards equality and social justice (Banks 2001).

Aside from these ethical arguments, service user involvement approaches may be adopted because of the potential benefits to the quality of the research. For example, the recruitment of participants may be improved; the design of studies may be made more relevant, ethically acceptable, and outcomes meaningful to service users may be included; and the understanding of the data may be enhanced through the use of the particular expertise of those with 'insider' knowledge (Involve, 2007). Service users working with researchers may also experience benefits such as the acquisition of skills and knowledge, making new friends and developing support networks, enjoying and feeling stimulated by the experience, and being financially rewarded (Involve, 2007).

The extent to which service users are involved in research can vary, and three levels of involvement have been identified: consultation, collaboration and user control (Involve 2003). Depending on exactly how service users are involved, practical challenges to participation may arise. Service users may lack training in formal research methods, funders may not be willing to fund additional costs, professionally paid researchers may occupy a powerful position vis-à-vis voluntary or low paid service users. Service user acceptance of payment may have complicated ramifications for their receipt of benefits. Service users may not see the relevance to them of taking part in research or be sceptical about researchers' commitment to change. Users' and researchers' motivations and aims may not coincide. Researchers, in their quest to recruit service users, may overestimate the potential of their research to bring about change. This symposium will include contributions from three researchers who have involved different groups of service users in their research in different ways. Each paper will explore the methods of service user

involvement used and the benefits and challenges encountered.

Paper 1 - Working with adoptive parents and birth relatives on two studies of adoption support

This presentation will discuss two linked research studies (investigating adoption support services) in which adoptive parents and birth relatives collaborated with researchers as consultants to the research process. The challenges encountered and methods used to overcome these, and the benefits derived from involving service users will be described. Independent feedback gathered from service users about their involvement will be reported.

One group of adoptive parents and two groups of birth relatives were recruited as consultants to the research process. The birth parents involved were from stigmatised and vulnerable groups, many having mental health problems and/or learning difficulties. These groups worked with the researchers over four years, being involved at four different stages:

1. Advising about recruiting methods, information leaflets, and interview schedules.
2. Assisting qualitative data analysis via a process of listening to and discussing interview material from audio recordings.
3. Adding ideas for service provision which were incorporated into the publications from the studies.
4. Contributing to the planning and delivery of the launch event, including the making of a DVD.

Key benefits following from service user involvement included effective recruitment and retention of 'hard to reach' participants; new insights into the analysis of data derived from the privileged perspective of service users; innovative suggestions for practice; and the high impact of the launch event. Feedback demonstrated that people found their involvement to be personally beneficial. Key challenges included enabling consultants to understand and define the nature of their role in the research, and helping people to manage the emotional impact of the work.

Key implications include:

- the importance of service user involvement being properly resourced
- the need for researchers to take some risks
- the value of working with practitioner colleagues to help manage the emotional impact of the work on vulnerable service users

Paper 2 - Involving peer researchers in research about young people's involvement in the child protection process

This paper explores the involvement of young people in a research project investigating children's participation in the child protection system.

The project consisted of two phases:

Phase one: interviews with individual young people carried out by an adult researcher

Phase two: peer-facilitated workshops run by young people working alongside adult researchers.

A consultation group of young people were involved throughout the project. These young people were drawn from an existing consultation and support group run for children in care and were involved at various stages of the research process.

1. Design of recruitment materials and interview schedules
2. Design of the workshops
3. Facilitation of the workshops

The central benefits and challenges of young people's involvement will be discussed. Benefits to the research included:

- Successful recruitment of participants
- Giving the research a logo which distinguished researchers from other professionals who might be visiting participants.
- Improving interview materials by encouraging the use of child friendly language
- Making sure that the activities planned in the workshop were appealing to participants
- Changing the power dynamics between researchers and participants
- Improved confidence and knowledge for young researchers
- Generating ideas for practice

Involving young researchers also posed challenges:

- Involving young researchers required time and funding. The project had a six month time scale which limited the involvement of young people in analysis and dissemination.
- Differences in knowledge meant that some activities were more adult-led than initially planned.
- Ensuring confidentiality during the workshop phase.
- Providing the right level of support to the young researchers to run group activities when some participants found being in a group difficult.

The presentation will conclude by evaluating service user involvement in this research project and will offer suggestions for researchers seeking to involve vulnerable young people in research.

Paper 3 - Partnership working in action: gypsies and travellers as peer researchers

The Cambridge' project was the first research programme undertaken in Britain which actively worked in partnership with Gypsies and Travellers to explore their own community needs.

Community involvement consisted of the following stages:

- Involvement in the development of a specialist questionnaire on community needs
- Training in the techniques of peer interviewing and facilitating group discussions.
- Administration of Questionnaires (quality controlled by academic partners) by trained community interviewers to 313 respondents
- Facilitation of specialist focus groups with youth and older people
- Agreeing/reviewing draft report
- Consultation with local authority and other statutory agencies per 'next steps' arising from the study
- Presentation of findings

Benefits which accrued from service user involvement included:

- Bridge-building between service providers and service user
- Reaching marginalised Gypsies and Travellers unknown to service providers
- ensuring that materials were appropriate to the cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- working with Gypsies and Travellers from across the diverse nomadic communities and of all ages/both genders
- participants were able to access training and learn transferable skills which have enhanced social and economic inclusion

Significant challenges included:

- balancing the needs of the study commissioners' and Government departments with the

cultural values, needs and approaches of Gypsies and Travellers

- the level of support needed by some interviewers in the initial phases
- Supporting interviewers who in some cases were functionally illiterate
- Convincing 'methodological sceptics' of the feasibility of the project

In conclusion, the presentation will explore suggestions for developing community trust and consider common pitfalls in working with 'hard to reach' communities who are often eager to have their voices heard but often approached in a manner which further marginalises their involvement in meaningful research.

Nissen, Maria Appel

Title

Reflection theory: a concept for developing knowledge based social work practice

Abstract

In welfare policy and social work practice in Denmark there is an increasing interest in the development and implementation of evidence based research and practice (Shaw & Bryderup 2008). This interest has a broader reference to social, economic and demographic changes within modern western welfare societies, to changes in relations between politics, welfare systems, and individualized citizens, and to changes in governmental strategies inspired by New Public Management as a political theory (Hagen 2006, Nissen 2011). These changes also refer to a fundamental problem of legitimating the use of (tax) resources, and meeting with an increased scepticism towards the quality and outcome of (social) welfare efforts. In social work practice this problem has lead to an increased demand for time consuming procedures of control and documentation, and the use of technologies which put the capacity to reflect over and develop the quality of social work under pressure.

This paper introduces the concept of reflection theory as an innovative concept for enhancing knowledge based social work practice (Hagen 2006, Nissen 2010). Reflection theory is a concept which involves a disciplined inquiry in both social work research and practice. As a concept for research inquiry it involves an abductive process of research aimed at developing theory about and for practice. In doing so, it draws on formal theoretical concepts which are open to empirical research in the informal theories of practice (Payne 2005); it develops qualitative knowledge about theories in practice as well as theory for practice in a constant dialogue between formal theoretical concepts and informal concepts of practice. This is a process of integrating theory and practice, and the purpose and potential outcome is the development of a reflection theory which can inform disciplined inquiry in practice.

In the first part of the paper I will describe the concept of reflection theory thoroughly as a form of knowledge, and as a concept with operative implications for research inquiry. In the second part of the paper I will describe the main elements of a specific reflection theory about and for social work practice. This reflection theory is developed on the basis of the research inquiry described above, and on the basis of qualitative research projects - all of them addressing directly or indirectly the following research question: What are the qualitative forms of knowledge in social work practice? (Nissen 2005a, 2005b, 2007, Nissen et al. 2008) I will also suggest how this reflection theory can lead to disciplined inquiry in practice revealing basic theories and concepts of practice. In the end of the paper I will discuss how this form of inquiry can influence the capacity to reflect upon and develop knowledge in practice as well as the quality, effect and legitimization of social work.

Nissen, Maria Appel (2010): *New Horizons in Social Work: A Reflection Theory*. Copenhagen: Academic Publisher (Published in Danish)

Nygren, Karina
Bergstrom, Erik
Janlert, Urban
Nygren, Lennart

Title

What happens with self-reported health among boys and girls in early adolescence? A developmental perspective on Swedish adolescent health

Abstract

Over the last decade, media and research in many western countries have reported on how the health of young people has worsened, especially with regards to their psychological health. There are clear gender differences within adolescent self-reported health, to girls' disadvantage. The study that we present in this paper explores self-reported health of 5060 adolescents from the northern part of Sweden. The analysis builds on a questionnaire covering the following life areas: social background; friends and family; health; life in school; tobacco, alcohol and drugs; violence/crime; leisure; and future. In this paper the aim is to analyze the development of adolescent health from grades 7 thru 9, a time in life when adolescents go through many changes, both personally and in relation to others. Both boys and girls in grade 9 report lower health than those in grade 7, and the difference between boys and girls increases when comparing grade 9 with grade 7. Also, there is a larger proportion of boys and girls who report that the relationship and communication with their parents is good in grade 7 than in grade 9. Girls experience higher demands from parents compared with boys regardless of what grade they are in. When it comes to norm-breaking behaviour such as truancy, bullying others, using alcohol, tobacco and narcotics, it is clear that those kinds of behaviours are more frequent among those in 9th grade compared with 7th grade. Our results show that adolescents who refrain from norm-breaking behaviour also report better health. The study gives particular attention to such social factors that have the potential of being affected by preventive social work efforts, such as life in school as well as relationships with parents and friends. It offers an interdisciplinary focus with a health and social work perspective, and this paper demonstrates how local health and welfare surveys in schools can be used to design targeted preventive social work interventions.

Oka, Tomofumi

Title

Action research for developing a worldview of self-help groups for the family survivors of suicide

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to discuss my action research on the development of a worldview of self-help groups for the family survivors of suicide. Social workers support self-help groups by serving as consultants, advocates, brokers, mediators, etc. However, they can play another important role that is often ignored: helping self-help groups develop their worldview.

A worldview of a self-help group is a set of beliefs, values, and teachings about how to help their members cope with and overcome difficult situations in their lives. Many researchers have studied the worldview of self-help groups, but very few have considered the role of social workers in helping these groups develop their worldview. This is probably because of the belief that with increasing professional involvement, the worldview of self-help groups tends to get integrated with professional frameworks and is no longer seen as unique to self-help groups.

Although many survey studies suggest that self-help groups welcome professional involvement, some groups do reject professional participation. In Japan, one such group is the self-help group for family survivors of suicide. While Japanese grief therapists stress the importance of recovering from grief, self-help groups reject the recovery-from-grief concept because in their opinion, the use of the phrase 'recovering from grief' makes it sound as though the people were sick.

As self-help groups for the family survivors of suicide in Japan conduct meetings without any professional guidance, some professionals consider them harmful to both the attendees and peer leaders. They feel very strongly about the risks of these meetings and have warned peer leaders to stop conducting them altogether.

It is for this reason that some peer leaders requested me to make their groups the subject of my research. Although they initially hoped that I would deny the validity of the recovery-from-grief concept, I did not accede to their request because it was not my area of expertise.

My solution was a postmodern one. I proposed to organise the members' voices to form a discourse or worldview. To this end, I conducted conversational interviews with the peer leaders and joined in their informal gatherings so that I could talk to family survivors. I condensed their sentiments into several statements, which I then examined.

Two statements were found to be representative of their voices. The first was 'The grief is ours.' This means that the family survivors of suicide have a better understanding of their grief than the professionals do because the grief is their own and not the professionals'. Therefore, the grief cannot be separated from them.

The second was 'Grieving is loving.' In poetic Japanese, 'grief' and 'love' are written with the same characters. Drawing on this literary fact, I coined the phrase 'grieving is living', an oxymoron. I believed that this would be an attractive part of their worldview, as it assured them that grieving was a normal process.

Östberg, Francesca

Title

Assessments and decisions: from report to intervention in child welfare

Abstract

The focus of this project is on social workers' role in assessing and making decisions in child welfare cases. The primary aim is to identify factors that influence decisions concerning reports assessed, investigated, dismissed or processed to intervention within child welfare agencies in Swedish municipalities. Social policy, professional and organisational factors are perspectives considered in the analysis.

All reports and requests for support for children and adolescents in the 0-19 age group were collected during two months in two local agencies, in 2003 (n= 260) and followed by interviews with social workers. Factors connected to social workers' assessments at different stages in the process were tested in regression models and grounds for their assessments explored.

Main results: two-thirds of reports are sorted out without investigation. One-fifth led to interventions. The highest probability for a report to be investigated was if it was assessed as acute, concerned abuse, came from a professional (not the police) concerned a girl and handled in the integrated agency. The most common problems, such as family conflicts and antisocial behaviour were investigated the least. A majority of the children came from underprivileged families, mainly poor single mothers.

The process draws the pattern of a heavily tapered funnel with few interventions at the end. Children are not in focus and the attitude is to keep them out of the system for their own good. Social policy and organisational factors restrict social workers' discretion. Contradictory demands are solved by a 'consensual ideology'. Parallel tracks appear on risks in a narrow perspective and on voluntary counselling mainly directed to mothers. This forms child welfare into a rejecting practice, where hard social conditions are individualized. Legislation gives municipalities considerable leeway to produce a variety of services and interventions, but practice works on the basis of another kind of rationality.

Paasio, Petteri
Rissanen, Sari
Heino, Taina
Hietamäki, Johanna
Kantola, Heli
Koivula, Anna-Kaarina
Kurtti, Aira
Kössi-Ahti, Jaana
Pajula, Maija-Liisa

Title

What to do with the old school? A way to integrate the most experienced practitioners in social work to research and learning: SosNet Finland, professional licentiate education

Abstract

Background

One basic question in social work and social care has been how to integrate research and practice. In Finland, the main strategy to this challenge has been to establish independent social work units into the Universities and give high level education to the students of social work. At present all new qualified social workers in Finland have research oriented Master's degree.

The use of research in practice does not happen only through basic education. One challenge is the Old School. How to make qualified social workers, with decades long practice experience and usually long carrier of supervision and management, more research oriented? SosNet Finland professional licentiate degree and education in social work is one possibility.

Description of the SosNet education

In Finland, professional licentiate degree in social work started in the year 2000. The licentiate degree comprises professional, scientifically oriented postgraduate education in a special field of social work. The aim of the degree is to strengthen the scientific foundation of professional practice and to promote professional skills that draw on a research-oriented approach to social work. The degree program can be completed in four years while working required qualifications being Master's degree and no less than two years of work experience in social work.

At the present following specialized areas for the professional licentiate degree in social work: 1) Social Work with Children and Young People, 2) Empowering Social Work, 3) Social Work in the Field of Marginalization, 4) Community Social Work and 5) Human Services.

Main outcomes in the evaluation of the SosNet

The data for evaluation research (Hietamäki & Kantola 2010) was partly collected by surveys of participates (N=175, response rate 75%). The survey of the participants showed that education has supported the careers of the participants not only in social work area, but also more broadly in social care sector. Also other main points are discussed.

Experience of the Old School participants

Specialization program for licentiate degree concerning human services started in 2008. In our presentation we as the participants of this ongoing program describe our experiences of doing research and the impact the research has had on our basic practice.

The main aim of the presentation is to highlight the possibilities in combining the social work practices and research in an innovative way. Special focus of the presentation is in creating ways for the Old School to participate in making research and practice more evidence-informed.

Conclusions

- When changing the practice towards more research utilizing orientation, you have to create participation for the Old School. For the most experienced workers immediate contact with research practice is a powerful change driver.
- Our experience can give some insight for all social service organizations including Finland where the status of professional licentiate degree in social work is still partly under discussion.
- SosNet Finland gives very strong evidence that collaboration between all Social Work University Unites (6 in Finland) can make the difference.

Pinto, Rogerio
Giménez Rodríguez, Silvia

Title

What makes or breaks social worker-researcher collaborations? A mixed-method analysis of providers' willingness to collaborate in HIV research

Abstract

Background and purpose

To bridge HIV research to practice, researchers and service providers engage in "research collaboration". In line with objectives of this conference, the main benefits of collaboration are provider-informed research and research that benefits service users. Provider-researcher collaboration has proven to be the most influential factor determining providers' use of research in practice. Still, collaboration between providers and researchers remains limited. This mixed-method study is the first funded by the National Institute of Mental health aimed specifically to identify modifiable factors that could facilitate the replication of productive collaborations across HIV research projects.

Methods

Guided by Community-Based Participatory Research, we conducted in-depth interviews with HIV service providers (n=20) and used the data to develop a survey including measures of "research collaboration" and factors influencing providers' willingness to collaborate in research. Surveyed providers (n=141) expressed opinions about researchers' availability, research benefits, agency preparedness for research, and willingness to collaborate. Twenty-five Community-Based Organizations were randomly selected, from which we recruited key informants for the qualitative phase and four to 12 providers per CBO for the quantitative phase.

Results

In-depth interviews revealed domains of influences on providers' willingness to engage in collaboration in HIV research. Variables representing these domains were subsequently used in a hierarchical regression. We found that researchers' availability ($p < .05$), research benefits ($p < .001$) and agency preparedness ($p < .05$) were related to providers' willingness to collaborate.

Conclusions and implications

This study took place in New York, U.S.; we plan to replicate it in Madrid, Spain, which has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the European Union. Knowledge shared between the U.S. and Spain will enhance capacity in the U.S. and the E.U. To engage providers, researchers worldwide will need to be socially and professionally available; future HIV research should benefit providers and consumers; and policy makers should help community settings develop human and financial resources in preparation for research.

Pösö, Tarja

Title

Revisiting the longitudinal study approach in social work

Abstract

The paper examines the longitudinal study approach in social work, its present emphasis, strengths and weaknesses based on a review of the literature. The paper is motivated by an on-going child welfare research project in which the implications of out-of-home placements are studied longitudinally by using both register and case-file based data and qualitative interviews by the service-users and social workers. The literature review, focusing especially on the existing longitudinal studies in child welfare, will be debated and reflected in relation with the challenges and experiences in that project.

The experiences so far suggest that the methodological and critical analysis of the longitudinal approach is rather limited from the point of view of social work research even though the importance of such studies has been highlighted in many contexts. Compared with the long-lasting interest in quantitative longitudinal analysis, the concepts, tools and practices to carry out qualitative longitudinal studies are far less discussed. Quantitative approaches – register-based studies in particular – tend to create settings in which life events/life courses/social characteristics are compared on the population level. This should be much more debated in social work research. On the other hand, the uniqueness of individual lives, typically pointed out by qualitative longitudinal studies, needs to be challenged as well.

The notions of temporality and the institutional nature of knowledge need to be explored further. The latter is especially important as the longitudinal studies on child welfare often take the institutional setting (e.g. child welfare/out-of-home placement) as a starting point even when the focus of the study is on service-users. It is, however, surprising how rarely social workers' case-work practices or social work agencies have been studied longitudinally.

As a whole, the paper aims to present some of the key themes of the longitudinal approach in social work found in literature, and to reflect them critically and practically. The paper suggests that such an analysis is needed especially now when the longitudinal studies are often used as material for assessing and evaluating the services.

Raeymaeckers, Peter
Dierckx, Danielle

Title

Examining the effectiveness of networks among human service organizations: what can we learn from organizational sociology?

Abstract

Since the 1970s, organizational sociology moved from studying organizations as bounded systems towards a focus on the organizational environment. The 'organizational environment' was conceptualized in a variety of ways, focusing on different aspect such as institutions (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983; Beckert, 2010), the organizational population (Hannah & Freeman, 1983) and networks (Levine & White, 1960; Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

In this presentation and paper the literature on organizational networks stands central. We show how empirical insights and theoretical models developed by authors focusing on organizational networks contribute to the understanding of networks among human service organizations. In the first section, we elaborate on organizational research focusing on organizational networks and collaboration. Further, we provide a critical overview of studies on human service networks. In the last section we conclude how the latter studies could benefit from insights provided by theoretical frameworks outlined in the first section.

According to Hasenfeld (1983) human service organizations provide the 'bridge' between the welfare state and the individual. Their main goal is to provide services to maintain and secure the well-being of clients. We follow Provan & Milward (2001) defining the networks between human service organizations as 'service delivery vehicles' providing value to a population confronted with varying needs, in ways that could not have been achieved by a single organization. Since the seminal work of Provan & Milward (1995) many studies analyzed the 'effectiveness' of service networks. More in specific, they studied the influence of network structure on the effectiveness of service networks (For an overview see: Provan et al 2007).

In our perspective, these studies neglect some crucial dimensions that influence the collaboration among organizations in a network. For example, organizational studies such as Levine & White (1960) and Litwak & Hilton (1962) emphasize concepts as exchange, conflict and coordination. In this line of reasoning, Metcalfe (1976) and Benson (1975) introduce the level of 'social integration' for the analysis of organizational networks. In their view social integration refers to the relations between actors in the network and how they act as a collective entity. Authors as Metcalfe (1976) and Benson (1975) stress that network integration depends on the degree of consensus between organizations in a network. Network consensus refers to an agreement on network ideology, a positive work evaluation, the way the network is coordinated and a consensus on organizational domains. An organizational domain refers to the goal of the organization and the activities it conducts to fulfil its goals. When organizational domains overlap in a network, feelings of competition may result in conflicts.

When applying these insights, we decide to include the perceptions of social workers into our analyses. More in specific we argue that the effectiveness of service networks is dependent on the perception of social workers on consensus and conflicts when collaborating with other organizations. Doing so, this research aims to improve knowledge and understanding of networks among human service organizations.

This paper is part of a PhD project on networks among human service organizations in Antwerp, Belgium. It is funded by the Research-Foundation Flanders (FWO-Vlaanderen, nr., G028910N).

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Ramon, Shulamit
Hantman, Shira
Fox, Joanna
Brandon, Toby
Anghel, Roxana
Gutman, Carolyn

Title

The application of participatory action research to facilitating the contribution of service users and carers in interdisciplinary and cross national research: a critical examination

Abstract

The symposium is aimed to critically look at the application of PAR to engaging service users in social care and health research. For this purpose, an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of applying this research framework will be presented, followed by three examples in which PAR is currently applied as the methodological framework of projects in which services users, and to a lesser extent carers, are engaged in research. The examples come from social work education and from mental health recovery oriented projects. While both areas are inherently multi- stakeholders, the latter are multi-disciplinary as well as multi-sectorial in including public and voluntary agencies. Social work education stakeholders include lecturers (a number of whom are researchers), fieldwork supervisors, service users as co-researchers and as trainers and students, and carers.

The attraction of applying a PAR framework relates to:

- its inherent participatory element, deemed of central importance when service users who have not been active partners until recently in research projects are to become co-researchers.
- the promise of action beyond reflection, aimed to change a given component into an improved one (e.g. improvement in ways of working with clients, in looking after one's wellbeing, acquiring research skills, relationships between the stakeholders).
- Retaining reflection and research rigour.

However, applying PAR in this context is likely to be problematic too, because the meaning of being participatory is given to a number of interpretations, as are the skills and tasks of becoming co-researchers, and ways of involving them. Being a fully fledged researcher who is also a service user is much less problematic, but leading a research project requires considerable strategic thinking and acting if the two identities are to be enacted simultaneously. Carers involvement in research is even less developed than that of service users, an issue that requires further examination. Furthermore, applying PAR in a multidisciplinary context brings additional obstacles and opportunities that have to be recognised, considered, and acted upon. Likewise, the use of PAR in a cross-national project adds a number of components to the complexity of this methodological framework, as well as advantages absent from other frameworks that will be highlighted in the presentation. This aspect relates also to the international relevance of enhancing untapped research capacities of citizens who are using social work services.

Both user and carer involvement in either education and/or research runs the risk of tokenism, and have developed mainly in English speaking countries, two important issues to be looked at in the symposium.

The examples provide a rich tapestry for analysis and reflection with which to tease out the usefulness and problematic aspects of PAR, as well as the continuous challenge due to the innovative nature of involving citizen service users and carers in research.

Abstract 1: Issues in involving service users as co-researchers of user involvement in social work education cross nationally

This presentation will focus on a collaborative project between two social work departments, one in the UK, the other in Israel, on developing the research capacity and engagement of citizens who are also service users of health and social care in researching the meaning and impact of user involvement on social work training. Empirically this has entailed preparing two groups of co-researchers and engaging them in finding out the views of third year undergraduate students on user involvement during the process of being trained to become social workers. Methodologically the project is a participatory action research, in which lecturers/researchers, citizen service users and students from the two countries are partners, albeit unequal ones.

The experience of the shared project, to run for two years (2009-2011), has raised a number of issues we wish to examine in our presentation, such as:

- Obstacles and opportunities in cross-cultural and cross national multi-stakeholder collaboration within the shared domain of social work education.
- identifying areas of equality and inequality between researchers and users co-researchers and ways of ensuring non-tokenistic, greater, equality.
- the use of concept mapping as an innovative method in the evaluation of both the meaning and the impact of user involvement in social work training.
- The contribution of this study to knowledge about expanding citizen service users involvement in social work research and education.

Abstract 2: An exploration of the role of service users in leading participatory research with carers : a critical examination

For a long time the chronicity model of mental health governed psychiatric care, a pessimistic belief about the long term outcomes of people with schizophrenia. Recovery is a new concept that underpins mental health policy and practice in the UK, developed in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. It posits that people with schizophrenia can live a fulfilling, satisfying, and productive life. Family carers have for a long time played a big role in the support of service users with schizophrenia, and have experienced the 'courtesy stigma' attributed to people experiencing this diagnosis. This original PhD project explores whether learning about the recovery approach changes the way carers look after themselves, the way they support the service user, and whether it improves both the outcomes for the carer and the service user. I show how learning about recovery values, where the trainers were a service user researcher and a carer, gives carers the tools to practise recovery in their caring role contributing to changes in service user and carer outcomes.

The project is led by a service user with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, supported by a steering group of service users, carers and professionals, underlined by a PAR (Participatory Action Research) methodology. The presentation will be focused on my identities as both a service user and a researcher, examining their contribution to this study, as well as on the role of the multi-stakeholder steering group.

Abstract 3: Applying a PAR approach to an NHS mental health funded project

This paper presents an evolving research project funded as part of the NHS Researching for Patient Benefit stream. The project application was awarded the prize for having the best service user involvement plan in April 2010 by the NIHR and the MHRN.

This involvement is embedded in each step of the project implementation. The project is aimed

to attempt to change the use of the Care Programme Approach as a largely administrative tool to one of supporting personal recovery. Researchers and service providers across a range of disciplines (inclusive of social work and social care) and sectors are also engaged in the project.

Organised as a participatory action research, the project has three phases: The first, a multi-stakeholders Delphi study aimed to develop an agreed view of what good recovery led care coordination actually is in practice, to inform the second phase. The second phase includes the training of mental health service users and carers as co researchers to record narratives of care coordination and recovery journeys. It is intended that the different sources of data will lead to developing a tool kit in the third phase, as well as to be used to improve recovery led care coordination both locally and nationally. A systematic evaluation is embedded in the project.

Our presentation will focus on:

- the expectations from this study by different stakeholders.
- the implementation of its methodological aspects.
- the gap between the rhetoric of user and carer involvement in NHS research and its reality, examining in particular the assumed risk to service users of being involved in this project as against the benefits of such a participation.

Richards, Sally
Title Fit for purpose? Reflections on the experience of developing a secondary analysis of a qualitative data set to investigate practitioners' understandings and knowledge of old age
Abstract The re-use of qualitative data with its multiple thematic and narrative layers has obvious appeal. The effort involved in data collection and transcription is only one reason for this. Another is that qualitative studies, however skilfully designed, may generate rich and interesting data that are discarded during analysis because their link to the research question seems tangential. Secondary analysis to answer a different research question designed to fit this data may offer a fruitful way forward, but this too presents challenges. An ongoing debate about the re-use of qualitative data highlights potential epistemological and ethical issues (Mason, 2007; Hammersley, 2010). This paper draws on an experience of re-using qualitative interview data to discuss some of these issues. The original study, investigating falls and older people, had invited 30 practitioners to reflect on a case vignette, as a way to explore their views about risk and prevention. The secondary analysis, by someone who had not been part of the original research team, used the data as a resource for exploring how different individuals may make sense of a single case and in particular, what this revealed about their understandings and knowledge of old age. The issues to be discussed will include: 1. The choice and development of a new research question – the problem of fit between data and question. 2. The development of an analytical framework to realise the potential of the data for generating interesting and credible findings, whilst addressing the problem of missing data. 3. The researchers' relationships with the data including the issue of awareness of context. 4. Ethical dilemmas in reusing (repurposing?) data. The paper will conclude that social work researchers should be willing to take up opportunities to reuse qualitative data but with an understanding of the potential pitfalls as well as the benefits. Hammersley, M. (2010) 'Can We Re-Use Qualitative Data Via Secondary Analysis? Notes on Some Terminological and Substantive Issues', Sociological Research Online, 15/1 < http://www.socresonline.org.uk/15/1/5.html > Mason, J. (2007) 'Re-Using' Qualitative Data: on the Merits of an Investigative Epistemology' Sociological Research Online, 12/3. Available at: < http://www.socresonline.org.uk /12/3/3.html >

Ridley, Julie
Wainwright, John

Title

Black families for black children? An evaluation of practice of ethnically matched adoptive placements in one organisation

Abstract

This paper will discuss the findings of a recent research study into ethnically matched adoptive placements of black and minority ethnic (BME) and dual heritage children. To date, research has rarely examined the process of matching BME children with BME parents, nor have the experiences and perspectives of BME adopters been given much research attention. The research field is dominated with the discourse concerning trans-racial adoption. A shortage of all BME adopters has been identified, in particular, those who are black, from dual heritage backgrounds and in a mixed relationship. Studies suggest that myths and stereotypes around adoption are still prevalent in BME communities, and that this may be one reason for the reticence of individuals to put themselves forward. However, studies have also shown that when adoption agencies deliver ethnically sensitive services that acknowledge and work with cultural differences, there are better outcomes in terms of the recruitment and support of BME adopters. This service evaluation, commissioned by a children's voluntary agency in England, used mixed methods to compare and contrast the practice and impact of recruiting BME adopters and of making ethnically matched placements through either a specialist and a mainstream adoption service within the same organisation. It set out to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the motivations and perspectives of adoption services staff, of BME adoptive parents and of social workers and managers who make referrals to these services, as well as statistical information about the ethnicities and other characteristics of children and adopters.

Some of the research questions asked included:

- What strategies are used by these services to recruit and support BME adopters, and how does this compare across the two approaches?
- Is the process of adoption different when the service is a specialist BME adoption agency?
- How effective are these adoption services in ensuring positive ethnic matches between children and adopters?
- How do these services ensure that children are at the heart of the adoption process?
- Are the motivations of individuals/families that come forward to become adopters with either a specialist or mainstream service the same or different?
- Why do local authority social workers choose to use either a specialist or mainstream service to find suitable adoptive placements for BME children?
- What are the implications of the findings for future practice?

Whilst it was evident that both services placed children at the centre of the adoption process and shared a similar ethos and rationale in terms of ethnically matched placements, the specialist service recruited more than four times the number of BME adopters over the same period and therefore was able to place a far higher number of BME children. A number of areas for improvement and/or reflection were highlighted including the importance of improving communication at all stages with prospective and existing adopters, the need for more targeted and systematic recruitment practices, and the issue of what is an appropriate name for a specialist service that fully reflects the complexity of ethnicity and dual heritage in modern Britain.

Robaeys, Bea van
<p>Title</p> <p>Combining constructionist and postmodern perspectives in social work research on intercultural social work practices</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>In this paper we illustrate the benefits of combining a 'constructionist' and 'postmodern' perspective when researching 'intercultural social work practices'. We can contribute to social change, by not focusing on the problematic concept of culture, but by broadening the perspective to other explanatory categories (like poverty and social exclusion).</p> <p>We will exemplify our approach by describing the results of a research project that focused on social work with people of foreign origin facing poverty. Research findings indicated that the risk to live in poverty is significantly higher for people with non-European origin. The combination of an increased cultural heterogeneity of the population and the impact of processes of social exclusion on the basis of this cultural diversity, is a big challenge for social work. In this study we examined how 'intercultural competent' practitioners deal with the reality of poverty of their clients of foreign origin in social work relationships.</p> <p>Two research questions were central. First: what are the interpreting frameworks, attitudes and social interventions, used by professionals in working with clients of a foreign origin in a poverty situation? Secondly: what are the views of the poor service users of foreign origin concerning good social work practices and qualitative helping relationships? We collected data through a qualitative survey: we interviewed twenty social workers from eight social welfare organisations in Antwerp and sixteen service users of foreign origin living in poverty. We used the method of qualitative coding to analyse the data.</p> <p>An important outcome of the study is that the 'experience of difference' called 'culture', influences the views of practitioners on the causes of poverty of their clients of a foreign origin. Professionals tend to see the 'culture' of the clients as the major cause of their poverty. We call this 'the cultural fault model'. By giving voice to the perspectives of service users and by presenting a more sophisticated model on the causes of poverty and social exclusion, we bring an alternative interpretation of the 'ethnic reality' of service users. In this way, we try to contribute to a reflective social work practice that can lead to better and more effective helping relations with people from foreign origin living in poverty.</p>

Saini, Michael
Title Innovations in the integration of qualitative synthesis within systematic reviews
Abstract <p>Qualitative synthesis within the family of systematic reviews meets an urgent need for social work research to find ways to appropriately use knowledge derived from qualitative studies to inform social work practice and policy. Despite the contingent nature of evidence gleaned from synthesis of qualitative studies and the current lack of consensus about the veracity of some of its aspects, systematic synthesis is an important technique and, used suitably, can deepen our understanding of the contextual dimensions of social work practice.</p> <p>Qualitative synthesis is included within the family of systematic reviews as both a unique method for answering research questions, as well a method that compliments and enhances other systematic review methods. The inclusion of qualitative synthesis within the family of systematic reviews helps to move qualitative synthesis out of the shadow of quantitative synthesis (i.e. meta-analysis), provides impetus to the creation of methods that are transparent, consistent and rigorous regardless of the systematic review method, and helps to distinguish qualitative synthesis from other types of narrative reviews.</p> <p>Systematic reviews are described as an overarching approach that includes reviews of evidence on a clearly formulated question using explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant primary research that includes a transparent and systematic process of extracting and analyzing data from studies. Systematic reviews are generally understood to include a detailed study protocol, a set of pre-formulated questions, comprehensive methods for searching and locating primary studies, a transparent method for appraising quality, and explicit procedures for synthesizing included studies</p> <p>This workshop will present a protocol for planning, developing and implementing qualitative synthesis within existing protocols and guidelines. The workshop will also cover a number of the methodological challenges, including: the philosophical tensions of including qualitative synthesis within the family of systematic reviews; the balance of comprehensive and iterative information retrieval strategies locate and screen qualitative research; the use of appraisal tools to assess quality of qualitative studies; the various approaches to synthesize qualitative studies, including interpretive, integrated and aggregative; and the tensions between the generalizability and transferability of findings that emerge from qualitative synthesis.</p> <p>The pedagogy will reflect the presenter's extensive experience in conducting systematic reviews and in the area of qualitative research within evidence-based practices. The workshop will elicit audience participation by discussing examples relevant to social work to illustrate these methods, and exploring the benefits, limitations and pitfalls of qualitative synthesis within existing systematic review protocols. This workshop will hopefully inspire others to consider questions relevant to social work to help build our collective understanding of the various ways that qualitative synthesis can help inform practice, research, and policy decisions.</p>

Sallnas, Marie
Wiklund, Stefan

Title
Children in care from a welfare perspective

Abstract

Research on children in out-of-home care is often conducted from a treatment perspective, emphasizing children's development and long-term adjustment. In this study we have another point of departure. In a study on living conditions among children in ongoing foster and residential care concepts from welfare theory and empirical research are applied. Research about access to welfare resources for different groups on one hand and research about children in care on the other hand, is often conducted within different disciplines and discursive fields. In this study we aim to link these fields together.

In welfare theory, a fundamental assumption is that access to resources is a necessary condition for individuals to accomplish life goals and enjoy good quality of life. Since several decades living conditions of the Swedish adult population have been assessed by recurrent national surveys. These measure recourses along several dimensions, including economic and material assets. Today, this way of assessing allocation of welfare resources is highly institutionalized in all the Scandinavian countries. The concept "living conditions" has been defined as "an individual's disposition of resources in terms of money, possessions, knowledge, somatic and psychological energy, social relationships, security etc, by which the individual can control his or her terms of life" (Johansson, 1970, 1979). In 2000, children were incorporated as separate respondents in the Swedish national welfare surveys. As children in care form only a small proportion of the child population in Sweden, these studies do not adequately convey the situation of separated children. This is unfortunate, especially in the light of theoretical development within childhood sociology, which stresses childhood as a life phase with its potential intrinsic value, regardless of long term outcomes. Acknowledging theoretical arguments within childhood sociology, a broader welfare perspective on looked after children is highly significant. Swedish as well as international research clearly shows an overrepresentation of children from disadvantaged socioeconomic position in the care population. By using concepts from welfare research we can assess to which extent society is able to compensate for this deprivation.

In the study we replicate national surveys of living conditions targeting youth, aged 13-18, (n=272) in foster and residential care and compare their access to welfare resources to those among children in the majority population. Results show that children in care in general have access to fewer resources than their peers in the welfare dimensions studied; for example economic assets, material goods, psychological wellbeing and admission to social support. This holds particularly for children in residential care, where the differences are substantial. The overall conclusion is that the care context tends to differentiate the extent to which society acts to compensate for the initial disadvantaged position from which children in care often originate. One implication of the study is that children's access to welfare resources constitutes an important criterion when assessing successful care and thus that a general welfare perspective can supplement and modulate the more traditional treatment perspective, which often is associated with research on children in care.

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Satka, Mirja
Title Early intervention: governing the social risks of Finnish children and youth in the culture of fear
Abstract Presently Western cultures seem to engage with various issues through a narrative of fear. Fear of crime and fears of growing underclass among others have motivated increasing individual prevention of social problems as early as possible, i.e. in childhood. Early Intervention refers to an idea and a method of governing younger generations' behavior and everyday life, whenever this life is considered risky by responsible adults. This paper analyses Early Intervention practices in Finnish social work with children and youth who have been caught either shoplifting or engaging in drinking. These practices are analyzed from the viewpoint of governing; Early Intervention is understood as one technique of normalization with a particular rationale for producing individuals who are able to regulate themselves, willing to work and consume as expected. The data consists of 8 qualitative theme interviews with social workers involved in children's risk evaluations, documenting their norm violations and giving them and their parents a good 'talking-to'. This data has been analyzed by applying Derek Layder's (1998) idea of adaptive theorizing; the key concepts include governing, risk, the production of subjects, subject positions, and fear. More particularly, this paper introduces one tool for normalization, the Ladder of Fear, frequently applied in Early Intervention social work in interaction with children and young people. Their professional aim, the interviewed social workers said, is to struggle towards a new culture in education in which both young generations and parents are willing to regulate themselves.

Scourfield, Jonathan
Briggs, Stephen
Pritchard, Colin
Stanley, Nicky

Title

Social work, research and suicide prevention

Abstract

Suicide has undoubtedly been neglected in social work research. Joe and Niedermeier's (2008) systematic search of academic journals over a 26-year period found few empirical studies on suicide by social work academics – these were only 0.006% of all papers published - and only 10 control-oriented studies of interventions. In practice, social workers do in fact encounter suicidal people in their everyday work and they routinely work with people who experience the kinds of challenging life events and chronic social problems that are associated with suicidal behaviour. In addition to this, some psycho-social interventions which fit very well within the social work role have been found to be effective in reducing suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts (Mann et al., 2005). The role of social work in suicide prevention is therefore an important issue which requires an evidence base.

This symposium aims to raise the profile of suicide as an issue within the social work research community and begin to consider what role social work might play in suicide prevention. The presentations are illustrative of a range of methodological approaches: quantitative (Pritchard), qualitative (Briggs and Stanley) and mixed methods (Scourfield). The presenters come from a range of different traditions within social work. Between them, their interests include psychiatric social work, psychoanalytically-informed practice, practice with a particular focus on gendered identities and the interface between child welfare and mental health services, all of which are highly relevant to suicide prevention. The first paper (Pritchard) will present some of the quantitative evidence on the extent and nature of the problem and introduce the symposium with an overview of how the social work role could contribute to suicide prevention. The second paper (Briggs) is an in-depth consideration of the therapeutic engagement of young people who are self-harming and suicidal. The third (Scourfield) presents an innovative methodological approach to suicide research and considers its implications for social work. The fourth paper (Stanley) uses a study of student suicide in the UK to explore directions for research into social work intervention with suicidal young people. Two of the papers focus on young people and the other two consider suicide across the life course.

Suicide: An area of social work neglect. Preparing for the coming suicide epidemic
Suicide and suicidal behaviour has been neglected by social work yet is it an area of fatal distress far greater than child-abuse-related deaths. There are 30,000+ suicides in the US annually, ten times the number of victims of '9/11' and the UK yearly toll still exceeds 4,000. Paradoxically, suicide and suicidal behaviour disproportionately effects many of social work's traditional client groups; the mentally ill, the homeless, the socially marginal, alcohol and substance abusers, neglected and abused children, offenders, children excluded from school and the unemployed. Suicide and suicidal behaviour create powerful psychosocial sequelae: consider the parents of an 18year old dying by his own hand; the 30 year old daughter hearing of her father's unexpected suicide!

There are problems of measuring suicide, complicated by religio-cultural factors and problems in ascertaining risk. Yet social work is especially well equipped to understand the interaction of the psycho-socio-economic issues surrounding suicide, which cross the psychiatric-psychosocial boundaries and impact upon the child protection-psychiatric interface. Social work has the

potential and the duty to contribute in seeking to reduce the suicide toll and its sequel, indeed, with the forthcoming recession we urgently need to prepare for the coming 'epidemic' of suicidal behaviour associated with the distress of unemployment and social exclusion.

Relating to suicidal behaviour and self-harm in adolescents

This paper discusses research applying a psychoanalytic framework to working with suicidal young people. Working with suicidal young people presents considerable emotional demands for professionals; practice frameworks that enable understanding of emotional and relational factors impacting on practice appear to have particular relevance to this work. The research aimed to explore and assess, firstly, qualities of relatedness of suicidal young people and, secondly, characteristics of emotional dynamics in the therapeutic relationship, and how these impacted on the course of therapeutic treatment.

Data were gathered from a clinical team working with young people. Detailed, descriptive accounts of therapeutic sessions were written by the therapists and discussed in a weekly clinical seminar. This data were qualitatively analysed through applying grounded theory. Further data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with young people, and self-report forms. These were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The paper will focus on discussion of key findings and linking these with the psychoanalytic framework; case examples/vignettes will provide illustrations:

1. Inner relatedness of suicidal young people is frequently characterised by violence, hostile conflict, rejection and cruelty; these qualities, relating to biographical experiences, impact powerfully on the therapeutic relationship, often through projective processes.
2. Two distinct groups of suicidal young people were identified on the basis of their attachment patterns and the therapists' emotional experiences. One group generates high levels of anxiety in the therapists, particularly around points of separation; another group underplays their involvement in suicidality; there is a risk this group will not be taken seriously.
3. A traumatic dimension was identified, in which the experience of suicidal conflict breached previous defences against anxiety intruded into the inner world. The provision of sufficient containment appeared to be the primary consideration in these cases.

The implications for practice and future research of these findings will be assessed.

Sociological autopsy: an integrated approach to suicide research

This paper's main aim is to argue the methodological case for a particular approach to researching suicide; an approach with strong potential for social work researchers, given its focus on both the individual and their social context. By way of illustrating the use of this research approach, the paper will also offer some brief examples of substantive findings which have particular relevance to social work. The first half of the paper will explain and justify the research approach. This is a qualitatively-driven mixed method and dual paradigm study of individual suicides. It is a sociological study which draws on the tradition of psychological autopsies of suicide; hence the term 'sociological autopsy'. The second half of the paper offers brief illustrative findings from a specific research project which employed the sociological autopsy approach (Shiner et al., 2009). This was a study of 100 suicide case files from a coroner's office in the UK. The findings with particular relevance to social work concern the complex nexus of challenging social circumstances in which people take their own lives. In the study in question these social factors include breakdown in intimate relationships, separation from children and involvement with the criminal justice system. In addition to these, there will be some consideration of gendered identities, which are strongly implicated in suicidal

behaviour. Patterns of suicide in these 100 cases can be seen to map on to conventional features of a socially structured life course, with young people in crisis, mid-life gendered patterns of work and family and older people in decline.

Using a study of student suicide to develop approaches to researching and preventing young suicide from a social work perspective

The limited UK research on the social work role in young suicide can be attributed in part to social work's neglect of adolescence but also to the extent to which the study and prevention of young suicide have been defined as psychiatry's territory. However, recent overviews of special case reviews (Brandon et al 2009) have included reviews on young suicide, thereby drawing it into the arena of safeguarding.

Much research on young suicide is quantitative, although numbers are invariably small, making it difficult to establish local trends. Qualitative research on young suicide has to contend with the fact that the informants with most to tell about suicide are invariably absent. However, a qualitative study of completed student suicide in the UK (Stanley et al 2009) adopted a number of approaches which offer a way forward in studying suicide in the context of social work.

These approaches included a focus on the young person in their own environment which addressed academic progress, student accommodation, friendship networks and their intimate relationships. The use of multiple informants involved interviews with friends, academic and student support staff as well as parents. The study was able to produce key findings concerning the significance of academic failure and periods of heightened vulnerability for suicide that can be harnessed to inform suicide prevention strategies. It also included consideration of the aftermath of suicide.

Social work intervention with adolescents is often restricted by a failure to see the young person beyond the confines of family relationships in their wider context of peer relations and community and education networks. Approaching the research and prevention of young suicide from this wider lens offers new research methodologies and has the capacity to generate new knowledge and strategies for intervention.

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Scourfield, Peter
<p>Title</p> <p>A case study of the statutory review system for older people in care homes in one local authority</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose</p> <p>This is a doctoral study which examines the system of statutory reviews for older people in care homes who are funded by the local authority. The research was prompted by the researcher's own personal and professional experiences of participating in such reviews. A key research question was to investigate the extent to which the older person themselves is able to participate meaningfully in their own review. Related to this is the question of how the reviewer uses their discretion to conduct the review in ways that might, for example, individualise and empower the older person or, alternatively, standardise and 'process' the older person. The study seeks to gather multiple stakeholder perspectives on both the purpose and value of such reviews.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>This is an in-depth qualitative case study using mixed methods: observation, interviews and documentary analysis. It is based on one local authority. Data were collected from the observation of a small number of reviews in different care homes, interviews with the different participants and the records of the reviews. The case study was extended to include interviews with local authority managers, care home managers, a care home inspector, relatives and older people involved in reviews. The data has been subjected to Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).</p> <p>Results</p> <p>As is common with this form of qualitative case study the findings vary depending on the perspective of those studied. For older people the review can be a bureaucratic process, an unwanted ordeal, an opportunity to talk about their experiences or an event that passes them by either because they are not involved or because lack of capacity impairs understanding. For relatives, it can be an opportunity to raise issues or an uncomfortable experience in which their older relative's various deficits are foregrounded and so on. For local authority staff it is often a question of meeting targets on numbers whilst gathering minimum information for performance reasons, although for some it serves an important safeguarding function. Care home managers regard the process of little use to them regarding the process as one whereby service commissioners check whether they are getting value for money.</p> <p>Conclusions and implications</p> <p>There are several implications for practice. These include the need for vulnerable older people in care homes to have access to advocacy for these types of situation. There are implications for how reviews are carried out and recorded which better enhance their use as a safeguarding. Despite the variable quality of review practices, there is also an issue that if such reviews do have any meaningful safeguarding/quality assurance function then what about the inequitable and unequal position of the growing number of self funding care home residents?</p>

Sen, Robin
Green-Lister, Pam

Title

Evaluating the use of a tool to assess child neglect: caregivers' perspectives

Abstract

While neglect has serious consequences for children, it has received relatively little attention in both practice and research (Horwath, 2005). The previous research there highlights concerns about practitioners' failure to engage meaningfully with parents and children (Horwath, 2005) and the lack of research focussing on the views of caregivers (Takara and Daniels, 2007).

The current study sought to evaluate the introduction of the Graded Care Profile (GCP) (Polnay and Srivastava, 2000) – an assessment tool previously used in England and Wales to assist in multi-professional assessment of neglect – within a Scottish local authority where 50% of Child Protection registrations are under the category of physical neglect. The local authority had gathered baseline data from practitioners, this was a small-scale follow on study, seeking to:

- Ascertain the views and experiences of caregivers who have used the GCP
- Gain further data from practitioners on use of the tool
- Evaluate how effective the tool was for identifying neglect; engaging caregivers; and supporting effective intervention

Methods

Data collection is almost complete. The study has consisted of (to date):

- Semi-structured interviews with caregivers (6)
- Observations of how the tool was being used with caregivers (3)
- Focus groups (2) with practitioners who had used the tool
- Semi-structured interviews (5) with practitioners who had used the tool with caregivers who participated in this stage of the study

Findings

The project is at the early stage of data analysis, it is envisaged this will be complete by December 2010. Preliminary findings provide insight into:

- Difficulties in collecting data from 'hard to reach' parents and how they were resolved
- Challenges in using the GCP: time factors; barriers to parents engaging with the tool due to the language used in it and disagreements with professionals about the quality of parenting
- Some clearly identified strengths of the GCP: as a vehicle for discussion about 'good enough parenting' in providing explicit clarity around the different areas of parenting.

Main outcomes

- There are challenges in gaining data from 'hard to reach' caregivers which need better exploration to support future research to more effectively include them
- To maximise the potential of the GCP requires clearer support and training for practitioners and the language of the GCP to be revised such that it is more meaningful to caregivers

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Shanks, Emelie
Title Management in social work: organization, leadership and change in professional bureaucracies
Abstract <p>Management in human service organizations, or more specifically social work management, is a complicated assignment which entails dealing with conflicting demands and expectations from the surrounding society. Despite the complexity that the role entails, there is only a modest amount of empirical research focusing on social work management. In Sweden such research is almost nonexistent. The international research is somewhat more extensive, but again, there appears to be no coherent research front in the area.</p> <p>This paper is based on a research project which focuses on the middle managers in social work who have everyday responsibility for child protection, social assistance and treatment of substance abusers in Swedish municipalities. The project has a broad empirical base including: (a) qualitative interviews with twenty-four middle managers in different managerial positions in six municipalities, (b) diaries on everyday activities kept by the interviewed managers, and (c) questionnaires distributed to 900 managers around Sweden. The analysis focuses on the conditions for management, its organizational base, and managers' strategies in relation to other levels within the organisation, to the environment and to innovation and change. Questions about professionalism versus managerialism will be raised, and to enhance the understanding of the material, organization theory (mainly a neo-institutional perspective) will be used.</p> <p>In short, the results show that lower levels of management have been delegated an increased responsibility for budgetary matters. The managers seem to feel that this change is a double-edged sword; it makes their role and responsibilities clearer, but at the same time it occupies a lot of their time, leaving them with less time for other tasks such as supervision of social workers. As a result, supervision now seems to be a concern only for frontline managers. Furthermore, the managers' workload appears to be heavy, and managers in frontline and second tier positions seem to feel that they lack time to reflect on possible improvements or even to form opinions on suggestions from higher levels of management. This is problematic from an organizational perspective if it means that initiatives more or less exclusively come from managers who are remote from practice. It also has implications for the extent to which social work research, which today often concerns so called evidence based interventions, is put into practice in the social services. If research only reaches higher levels of management, and lower levels lack time to familiarize themselves with the findings, what consequences does it have for the implementation of research which is relevant for practice? The possibility is raised that the goal of implementing research within the social services is largely a form of grandstanding.</p>

Sharland, Elaine
<p>Title</p> <p>The vices and virtues of “transgression”: building disciplinary and interdisciplinarity in social work and social care research</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Amidst well-trumpeted calls for a ‘step change’ in the quality and range of UK social work and social care research to improve the evidence base for policy and practice, have come contrasting claims for interdisciplinarity on the one hand and disciplinary on the other. For some, disciplinary has little purchase: academically we live in a ‘post disciplinary era’, and professionally the boundaries between social work, social care and related human services are increasingly diffuse. According to this argument, ‘transgression’ - in the literal sense of ‘moving across or beyond’ disciplinary boundaries - is the prerequisite for high quality, high impact research in the field. For others, disciplinary (along with professional) identities and integrity are held more dear. Discarding or diluting them amounts to ‘transgression’ in the idiomatic sense - an ‘act of wrongdoing or sin’. Few who hold to this view doubt that the intellectual and research contributions of many disciplines can and should combine to grow the best possible evidence base for social work and social care. But distinct disciplines bring with them their own histories and culture, their own distinctive priorities and approaches to understanding the worlds they inform. Without strong disciplines, the argument goes, and in particular without a strong social work discipline, claims for interdisciplinarity amount to rhetoric at best, intellectual colonisation at worst.</p> <p>This discussion draws on the research of the Strategic Adviser to the UK Economic and Social Research Council (2008-10), commissioned to develop recommendations for building academic research capacity in social work and social care. The paper examines how the challenges of research capacity development throw into sharp relief political, intellectual and professional tensions around disciplinary and interdisciplinarity, calling into question both the vices and the virtues of ‘transgression’. It explores how these tensions are embedded in the distinction between social work and social care research. The former is a recognised but emergent discipline, with distinctive focus on practice and ‘pockets of research excellence’, but in need of improvement in its social science research base, engagement with context, investment and critical mass. Social care is not a recognised discipline, but a research field (broadly equivalent to human services research elsewhere) to which a wide range of well established cognate disciplines might contribute their insights and rigour, with the potential to complement but also to occlude the focus on practice. Unpacking some of the distinct and different models of interdisciplinarity that might be brought to bear, this paper looks critically at the opportunities and threats that they present. In doing so, it suggests how research capacity development in social work and social care might best build on the virtues, not the vices, of transgression.</p>

Shaw, Ian
Title Evaluating in practice: doing qualitative social work
Abstract <p>This workshop will address four connected problems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A narrowness of conception of social work intervention possibilities, usually associated with a certain kind of interviewing that easily becomes routinized and formulaic. 2. An unhelpful – because again narrowly conceived – conception of the relationship between practice and research. 3. An unduly deferential conception of the relationship between social science and social work. 4. A constrained view of what is entailed in social work evaluation - typically a post hoc, evaluation-as-accountability model. <p>Five aspects need underlining. First, the workshop is about practice and not about research or evaluation. The case developed will be about evaluation as practice tasks just as much as assessment, planning, intervention and review are practice tasks. But second, this workshop departs radically from almost all mainstream views of social work, in that evaluation is not seen as a self-contained phase of practice but as a dimension of every phase. Third, the workshop is not about the specific application of research findings to practice but about the method of inquiry and evaluation. This is the difference between research as 'source' for practice and research as 'model' for practice. It is the second of these that is central to the workshop. Fourth, the workshop will work from the literature and practice of qualitative inquiry. Fifth, the workshop will not be used to advocate or describing a particular model of social work intervention. Evaluating in practice demands a set of commitments and skills of both facilitator and participants that I express as translation, counter-colonizing, interrupting and inhabiting.</p> <p>I will cover the participatory workshop elements through three exercises that represent the range of practice and thinking within evaluating in practice. Each exercise will illustrate the processes of 'translation', 'interrupting' and 'inhabiting' that lie at the core of evaluating in practice.</p> <p>(1) Arts-based; a narrative of pain and culture. A social worker draws on arts-based methods and comments that 'Each of the moments I describe in the narrative applies and reinforces relations of power'. Participants will consider how her article illustrates these 'everyday acts of power', and discuss how this example of a practitioner talking about her practice and using qualitative arts-based approaches, enables us to think critically about (our own and others') practice. In what ways does this have positive implications for practice?</p> <p>(2) Narrative. 'Bleak depression'. This exercise will start by recognizing that we cannot think of social worker narratives without first realizing that service users tell stories. Using an example from Riessman ('Rick'), a relatively simple translation for evaluating in practice can be achieved by asking what do we learn about mental illness – in particular 'bleak depression' – by fact that this is a narrative rather than conventional interview?</p> <p>(3) Ethnography. Systematic self observation. Following a briefing on the original ethnographic source, this exercise will take the form of planning to enable ourselves or perhaps students to work with service users to understand and learn about something that is a natural part of their everyday life.</p>

Shih, Yi-ting
Title "Oh I know it all!": who is the expert?
Abstract Background and purpose In the first few months as a social worker in Taiwan, I tried to 'help' the parents of blind children to organise their self- help organisation. After one year, I found myself learning a lot from the parents' incredible experiences and knowledge that is normally ignored. Therefore, my PhD project aims to explore mothers' experiences of raising their disabled child. Ten out of sixteen mothers in my sample unexpectedly had some experiences about disability as service providers for disabled people and their families. Although some research recruits one or two mothers with professional backgrounds in their sample, it seems no research focuses on mothers who are both professionals and mothers of disabled children. Hence, this paper will focus on the experiences of the ten mothers with professional backgrounds and demonstrate mothers' reflection after having their disabled child.
Methods Qualitative methods were chosen for this research. Sixteen mothers from the North East area of England have been recruited by using advertisements of network for disabled people and their families and the strategy of snow-balling. The data has been gathered by using semi-structured interactive interviews. Questions were constructed in advance and were used as a guide for interviews. All the data gathered from interviews has been transcribed. These sixteen mothers' children were all in school age from 4 to 19 years old. The children had a wide range of disability including cerebral palsy, visual impairment, Down's Symptoms, autism, Multiple disability, and ADHD.
Results Mothers with professional backgrounds reported that their professional backgrounds helped in various ways. However, all of these mothers disagreed that their professional backgrounds were enough to cope with the demands in caring their disabled child. When the boundaries between being a service provider and being a mother of a disabled child blurred, assumptions that were usually taken for granted as a professional were challenged. Mothers realised that they did not 'know it all' as a professional. They started to recognise the contexts other mothers and their child embedded and became less judgemental and more realistic towards their clients.
Conclusions and implications The changes of social positions enabled mothers to examine and understand things from different perspectives. They realise the limitation of their professional knowledge and acknowledge what they have learnt from being a mother of a disabled child. It also highlights the importance of acknowledging mothers' expertise. The more dialogue between professionals and mothers, the more we could understand disability and provide more suitable services for disabled children and their families.

Skivenes, Marit
<p>Title</p> <p>How child welfare workers in the U.S., England and Norway perceive the risk for children being raised by substance abusing parents</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This paper explores how a sample of 93 child welfare workers from two cities in Norway, one city in England and two counties in the U.S. perceive substance abuse amongst parents in the child welfare system. The ambition is, by identifying how workers categorize, perceive and classify issue of substance abuse, to obtain knowledge about communication and decision-making processes regarding children at risk. The underlying premise is that classifications influences decision-making (Fryer & Jackson 2007). The expectations are that the analysis will show that workers from different child welfare systems, welfare states and educational traditions have different perceptions about the issue of substance abuse and its impact. Substance abuse as an issue is chosen because this is a well know problem in the child welfare system, and hence an issue that most workers must address.</p> <p>This study, which was funded by the Norwegian Research Council, is based on in-depth interviews with 93 child welfare workers in Norway (two cities: Sand fjord and Stavanger, N=28), England (one city: Sheffield, N=25) and the U.S. (Contra Costa County and San Francisco in California, N=40) between January 2008 and June 2010. At the request of participants, most interviews took place in conference rooms at the local authorities. Interviews typically lasted for 1.5 hours, were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The child welfare workers we interviewed were experienced workers. In all three countries the sample is almost all female, and in both Norway and England the samples were almost all white and almost all ethnic majority. This paper is based on a few questions in an in-depth interview section about their reflections on substance abuse, i.e. their views on what characterizes a typical substance abuse case, what the risks are for a child being raised by parents abusing substances, what the challenges are working with substance abuse cases, and with whom they usually work with in these cases. We allowed study participants to follow their own train of thought, and only asked for explanations or examples when we needed clarification. The interviews yielded rich, in-depth information on child welfare workers' thoughts and experiences. The interviews are analysed in two stages; identifying common themes and patterns in each country, and then comparing the themes across countries.</p> <p>The analysis shows that the sample of workers from the three countries identifies many of the same risks for children being raised by parents abusing substances. However, the knowledge about substance abuse, the 'moral' condemnation, and the possible solutions to handle it, differ. The paper discusses possible reasons for these differences.</p>

Slater, Thomas
Title Evaluating the role of social workers in suicide prevention
Abstract <p>In the United Kingdom there were 5,706 suicides in 2008 (ONS 2008:1). Given that suicide was the largest single cause of deaths for males aged 15-34 in England and Wales in 2005 (ONS 2005:3) the need for effective interventions is paramount. Although the social causes of suicide are well known, the topic of the contribution of social work to suicide prevention has attracted little research (Joe and Niedermeier 2008). This is surprising given the prominent role given to social work in mental health legislation and policy, and the current drive to reduce suicides through national prevention strategies.</p> <p>This research project aims to partially fill that gap through a cross-sectional study focused on five key questions: (i) In what circumstances do suicidal people come into contact with social workers?; (ii) What roles are currently played by social workers in suicide prevention (and has the increase in multi-agency working blurred the roles of different professionals)?; (iii) What approaches to assessment and intervention are currently used by social workers in their work with suicidal people?; (iv) What sorts of social care provision are available to suicidal service users and what is the nature and frequency of their engagement with these services?; (v) How do suicidal people perceive the role of social workers in suicide prevention, particularly where the workers are located in multi-disciplinary teams?</p> <p>The proposed research will take the form of a cross-sectional study, utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods and forms of analysis, and is divided into three elements. First is a secondary analysis of data from relevant, existing surveys in the UK Data Archive. Second is a study of 40 case files from Community Mental Health Teams on a) adult services users who have killed themselves and b) current service users with suicidal behaviour/ideation. The third element will be comprised of 25 semi-structured interviews with social workers (with the majority being drawn from those who work in a mental health setting), service users who have experienced suicidal thoughts and/or attempts, and other professionals who work alongside social workers (e.g. psychiatrists and nurses). A thematic approach to data analysis will be employed.</p>
References <p>Office of National Statistics (2008), Leading causes of death in England and Wales – how should we group causes? Health Statistical Quarterly [Online] 28. Available at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/hcq/HSQ28_death.pdf [Accessed: 19/08/10]</p> <p>Office of National Statistics (2008), Suicides – UK Suicides increase in 2008 [Online]. Available at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1092 [Accessed: 20/08/10]</p> <p>Joe S and Niedermeier D (2008) Preventing suicide: A neglected social work research agenda. British Journal of Social Work, 38(5), pp 507-530</p>

Smith, Mary

Title

Family support and child protection: the impact of theory into practice

Abstract

Background

This paper is based on a small scale research study carried out in Ireland as part of an MA course. The research explored whether family support theoretical underpinnings and models of work can be applied to child protection social work practice. The setting for the study was a statutory social work department which processes child protection and welfare referrals. Findings from the study have previously been presented at a child protection conference in the UK and in a UK journal.

Methods

The researcher presented 'family support' concepts as an approach to seven social work practitioners who applied these, during the course of the study, to two specific high level child protection cases each. Predominantly qualitative research methods were employed in the study along with some quantitative data on attitudes and perspectives of the social workers through an anonymous questionnaire on attitudes to family support that was administered pre/post study. Qualitative interviews were undertaken at the end of the study to examine any impact of the ideas.

Results

The results of the study showed positive implications for the application of family support principles to social work practice. Despite reporting having inadequate resources/time, the majority of the practitioners were enthusiastic and motivated about the use of family support as an approach in child protection work. The majority held a retrospective view that the application of the principles had an overall positive impact on their work, encouraging a meaningful partnership with families. Application of the principles prompted self reflection with social workers questioning their practice. In particular, changes in attitude and language were noted in the questionnaires.

Several messages for social work practice can be drawn from the results of this study. Firstly, social work practitioners displayed a strong interest in a family support approach, reflecting current discourse in this area. The local agency context reflects the balance between child protection and family support services that is a feature of most modern social service providers and policy makers (Dolan, Canavan & Pinkerton, 2006).

Secondly, concrete application and implementation of family support practice principles in child protection social work was clearly demonstrated. In this way the research sought to reflect the current interest and debate in implementing a family support response particularly to higher end cases in child protection and welfare services (Gardner, 2006). Specifically, the research addressed the issue of developing meaningful partnerships with families in complex cases. Thirdly, application of the principles was viewed by practitioners as both a template for good practice and also as a reflective tool, with a general sense that applying the approach during the period of the study had strongly prompted self reflection on their practice.

Conclusions and implications

This small scale study demonstrated the applicability of a set of principles, contributing to effective and user-orientated social work practice. The impact of theoretical principles in practice in a frontline child protection service was evident in the results. This paper explores whether family support theoretical underpinnings and models of work can be applied to child protection

social work practice.

References

Dolan, P., Canavan, J., and Pinkerton, J., (2006). *Family Support as Reflective Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley

Gardner, R., (2006). *Safeguarding Children Through Supporting Families*. In Dolan, P., Canavan, J. and Pinkerton, J (Eds). *Family Support as Reflective Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley

Smith, Roger
Title The meaning and value of social work research
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Just as its parent profession has grappled with identity problems, so social work research has struggled to assert its distinctive qualities as an academic enterprise. Despite earlier work, a convincing case has not yet been made to enable it to claim authoritative status in its own right.</p> <p>Alternative trends can be identified as social work research has sought a niche. On one hand, it has been defined in pragmatic terms according to formal occupational definitions and the conventional terrain of social work practice. Here the focus has been on developing evidence about practice, but perhaps not so much 'with' or 'for' practice.</p> <p>On the other hand, strong arguments have been made for a 'committed' paradigm, drawing validation from its pursuit of service user interests. This is attractive because of the proximity between this position and social work's own anti-oppressive and progressive value base.</p> <p>This orientation to research activity is also attractive because it appears to offer a clear and value-infused basis for developing methodological strategies and practical frameworks to guide the implementation of our research designs.</p> <p>Despite the distinctive merits of alternative approaches, the search for common ground and a coherent rationale has not been resolved. For example, it is possible to make a case for social work research as a discrete and authoritative discipline, on the basis of its essential principles or values, but how far does this get us in asserting its merits in less favourable contexts, such as when submitting our knowledge claims to critical scrutiny. Is it enough to assert the moral worth of what we do, or is this merely a circular and self-serving argument which cannot withstand criticism 'from outside'?</p> <p>We almost certainly need to base our claims on more than this, but how? There have been previous attempts to make the case, and these have merit, certainly, but the project is unfinished. The aim of this paper is to build on these, and earlier work by the author (Smith, 2009), to suggest ways in which social work research can claim to be distinctive and authoritative. It may not hold these uniquely, but together, they offer a sense of identity and purpose. These conclusions, in turn, afford the basis for some suggestions about how to operationalise our core principles in ways which are methodologically coherent and justifiable.</p>

Spaneas, Stefanos
Title Misleading perceptions with ethnic minorities: the case of Pontiac Greeks in Cyprus
Abstract Immigration policy in Cyprus was largely formulated in the 1990s, to meet the labour shortages as a result of the growth in tourism. A large number of Pontiacs from the Caucasus region migrated to the Republic of Cyprus following the collapse of the Soviet Union, as they were granted Greek nationality and could enter the country without too many bureaucratic formalities. Today, the overall number of Pontiacs is estimated to a total of about 15,000, out which 10-12,000 are living in the Municipality of Paphos. This paper aims to highlight the important role of Racial Identity Development Models when practicing social work with ethnic minorities' drug addict users. In order to achieve this, the findings of a survey research are presented. Ethnic Pontiac Greeks (sample of 1065 adolescences and adults – around 10% of the research population) in Paphos, were questioned to describe their current living conditions, their relationships with the local society and their attitude towards drug addiction and alcohol abuse. A door-to-door survey on random sampling was conducted, in which respondents were interviewed in their homes. The group, although is residing to the specific area for about 20 years, still has not be integrated with the local society. Negative attitudes have been observed, due to a hypothetical increased level of alcohol and drugs' abuse. However, the analysis of data gathered articulated for a misleading perception, and highlighted a lack of multicultural understanding of both sides (minority group and inhabitants). A discussion takes place regarding the process of social work practice using the lens of Racial Identity Development Model and refers to any implications that could have for both Cypriot social workers and other social care disciplines, which face similar difficulties with other ethnic minorities. Finally, proposals for implementation of prevention programmes and interventions in the field of social policy and drug addiction are briefly presented. The present investigation could serve as a starting point to identify how social work practice needs to be adjusted to approach minorities, in particular to countries in which debates about nationality dominate public discourse.

Stanley, Nicky
Title Men's talk: tackling domestic violence
Abstract This research was commissioned to inform a social marketing initiative directed at male perpetrators of domestic violence in a city in North England where traditional conceptions of gender roles still prevail. Fifteen focus groups including 84 men were recruited with the aim of representing both those groups who were more likely to be perpetrators of domestic abuse and the wider male population. The groups generated qualitative data on men's definitions and understandings of domestic violence; their views of its impact on children and their perceptions of motivations for change. Men also identified those campaign messages that they considered would be effective in engaging men and the features of a service that would make it accessible and effective for the local male population. In common with the wider literature on men's help-seeking, men's capacity to seek help for abusive behaviour was depicted as restricted by masculine norms, anticipated stigma, feelings of vulnerability and the perceived consequences of disclosure. Men were described as failing to recognise their behaviour as abusive and as having limited awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others. However, messages conveying the impact of domestic abuse on children were judged to be effective in motivating change. Children carried a high emotional weight and men had a substantial interest in maintaining a positive image of themselves in their children's eyes. The research findings provided the basis of a public education campaign which aimed to change behaviour and attitudes in the target population and promoted men's use of a newly-established local service for male perpetrators. The service has been highly successful in attracting self-referrals and this project provides an example of how research evidence can contribute to the development of innovative and much-needed services.

Stevens, Irene
Hassett, Peter

Title

Non-linear perspectives of risk in social care: moving the focus from individual pathology to the complex human environment

Abstract

Risk assessment and risk management in social care are built upon two central theoretical constructs. The first of these is the individual pathology model. The second of these is the linear conception of risk and intervention. In its simplest form a linear approach states 'A + B + C = D'. In the linear approach, altering any of the input values will alter the output value by an equal amount. The notion has developed that if the practitioner assesses all aspects of the individual's functioning/pathology, and is able to limit and control the variables in their lives that are key to risk, then this will allow the risk to be managed adequately.

This typical social care understanding of risk presumes that by analysing what has happened in the past and identifying historical consequences, current or future risks can be predicted. If this is the case, why do the same problems come up time and again when things go wrong in practice? One example is child protection. A plethora of reports have made recommendations for improvements and developments, yet still we have tragedies which seem to repeat themselves. Whilst it is appropriate to learn from mistakes, it is clearly invalid to presume that if all the lessons from one case were applied in all other cases, people would stop or could be stopped from harming children. Yet this is what seems to be expected of practitioners, who have to follow more and more heavily procedural approaches to protecting children.

The Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care has built and teaches a model of risk that widens the theoretical approach. It largely removes the centrality of individual pathology from understanding risk, seeing it as only one factor in a dynamic and ever-changing set of social circumstances. Two areas of theoretical understanding are introduced, complexity and social geography. Complexity is truly interdisciplinary, having its roots in biology, mathematics and computer science. Social geography applies sociological principles to the human living environment, presenting people as only one part of the social dynamic. The use of both of these perspectives within the analysis of risk is innovative.

Applied to risk, complexity theory offers a theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of patterns from seemingly unrelated and chaotic events. An understanding of power laws and 'the edge of chaos' is helpful in demonstrating the shortcomings of linear pathology-based risk models. Social geography offers a view that social circumstances are of greater significance in risk than individual pathology. Place, space, nature, time and social diversity are the central tenets. Manipulating these variables is far more effective in managing risk than becoming obsessed with notions of likelihood and impact arising from social pathology.

These principles will be explained, exemplified and expanded during the presentation. Counter to what many social workers and social care practitioners have been trained to believe, individual pathology will be presented as being a far less significant determinant of risk than the social milieu.

Svanevie, Kajsa

Title

What sense does the continuous outcome of the great EBP-project make?

Abstract

As an innovation imported from the field of epidemiology to social work the idea of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is designed as a tool for problem solving. According to its theory of use EBP, as a motor of change, will bring a difference for policy, for practice and for service users. As a travelling idea EBP is though both complex and dynamic. It has not been adopted or implemented with simplicity anywhere spread. The idea has over time been formulated and reformulated. One question to be asked is whether the idea of EBP is actually leading to the radical change it is designed to accomplish. The aim of my study is to describe and analyse results of the ongoing effort to establish EBP in social work. This brings a methodological need to map and analytically make sense of the outcome of the EBP-project, as a planned paradigm shift, at given moments of time and at defined levels of analysis (contexts). The paper addresses how I have outlined a meta-theoretical ground with methodological implications to do this exercise, and how this has brought my study a research map. The meta-theoretical ground of the study is critical realistic which has two significant methodological consequences. First it brings a strong focus on the actor-structure-relationship in my understanding of the object to be studied, and in the empirical mapping of this object on different levels of analysis. Empirical manifestations of relevance to map are related to ideas of use of knowledge and of production of knowledge (i.e. the core elements of the concept of EBP). Actors on different analytical levels are seen to spread and translate these ideas (as an effective cause to the overall effect of the EBP-project). I though regard the overall result of the EBP-project as transformation or reproduction of cultural structures. Methodologically I am making a narrative synthesis of studies of the emergence of EBP, of expressed understandings of the concept of EBP, of studies of EBP-oriented organisations, of the EBP-debates, and of implementation efforts on both policy and practice levels – with an analytical focus on the relation between context-mechanism-outcome. Databases used for systematic search for empirical material in 2003, 2006 and 2009 are Academic Search Full TEXT Elite and Social Sciences Citation Index. I have also made search manually by references. Both secondary data (such as results of analyses of different aspects of the EBP-movement, as well as results from evaluations of EBP-implementation efforts) and primary data (such as debate articles, websites, reports) have been collected in order to continually 'fill gaps' in the research map. Second the critical realistic ground brings the study the task of explaining the empirical findings (that is the given outcome of the EBP-establishment). Methodologically this means that I use a battery of helping theory (primary neo-institutional theories) for analytical sense making (explanation) of the results, by revealing social mechanisms.

Taylor, Brian
Killick, Campbell
Bantry White, Eleanor

Title
Studying decision making in social work

Abstract

Overall Rationale

Decision making is of crucial importance to the social work profession. Lives and liberty depend on decisions undertaken in crises and high risk situations. We support clients in risk-taking decision making. Professional judgements have to be based explicitly on evidence and sound reasoning, utilising robust assessment tools and collaborative (and sometimes contested) decision making processes (Taylor, 2010). Decision making in complex situations of uncertainty, risk and contradiction is becoming an increasingly important aspect of professional practice. This is recognized in statements of occupational standards internationally and nationally, and in the UK post qualifying requirements. However the knowledge base to underpin the practice of decision making is limited. This symposium seeks to address the need for increased and improved knowledge from research to inform the development of social work professional judgement and decision making. This symposium is designed to bring together conference participants – particularly social work researchers - interested in studying social work decisions and professional judgement to:

- (1) consider the application of major theoretical approaches to decision research in social work;
 - (2) discuss the possible application of major models of decision making and data collection methods;
 - (3) learn about innovative methods of studying decision making;
 - (4) help to create a network of researchers interested in studying social work decision making;
- and
- (5) enhance the potential for international collaboration.

The first paper will outline the main approaches to studying decision making – including those that start from normative, descriptive and prescriptive perspectives. The second paper will outline key qualitative methods of gathering data on decision making and appraise the strengths and limitations of these. The third paper will outline and appraise a recent quantitative study of adult protection decision making using the innovative factorial survey method incorporating realistic decision-vignettes with randomized characteristics. The fourth paper will outline possible models of social work decision making that might be used as theoretical constructs for research. All presentations will be illustrated with practice examples from research on social work decision making and professional judgement.

Campbell Killick and I were the principal organisers of the conference: Decisions, Assessment, Risk & Evidence in Social Work in June 2010, in Templepatrick, Northern Ireland (www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/spri/dare/). This brought together 70 researchers, educators, managers and senior professionals from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We have some understanding of the state of play of decision research in social work to bring forward to a symposium in a European arena and on which to build. Two presenters have completed PhDs, and the third is near to completing hers, all on aspects of decision making and risk in social work.

The immediate aim is to create an informal network of researchers interested in this topic, thereby enhancing the potential for international collaboration. The overall aim is to inform improvements in professional judgement and decision making for the ultimate benefit of clients

and families.

Reference

Taylor BJ (2010) Professional Decision Making in Social Work, Exeter: Learning Matters Post Qualifying Social Work Series

Paper 1: Normative, descriptive and prescriptive approaches to studying decision making

Many factors must be considered in social work decisions: systems, legislation and case law, policy, procedures, standards, principles, professional guidance, opinions of other professions, client choice, family views, voluntary and statutory resources, and professional knowledge based on research, theory and varieties of learning from experience including inquiries, audits and risk and quality governance systems... Probabilities, values, choices, law, knowledge and skills have to be combined in a complex dynamic interplay in making decisions. Evidence must be incorporated into practice judgements to inform safeguarding decisions, the selection of objectives for social work intervention, the choice of practice method, and advice to clients and families to inform their decision making. (Taylor, 2010, p154).

There are three main theoretical approaches to understanding individual decision-making that have evolved over decades of research on decision making, primarily within psychology. These will be outlined in this paper to give a framework for considering types of social work judgements.

1. Normative decision study focuses on how rational human beings ought to make decisions by weighing (valuing) the options and selecting that with most value. This approach will be discussed in relation such decisions as care planning.
2. Descriptive decision study will be illustrated with examples of heuristics and biases within professional judgement. Generally study within this school of thought has not progressed to creating a model. However more recently the naturalistic decision making school of thought has created the envisioning the future model.
3. Prescriptive decision study (aiming to improve decision making even if we do not use a specified rational model) will be considered in terms of the development of assessment tools and decision support systems.

Reference

Taylor BJ (2010) Professional Decision Making in Social Work, Exeter: Learning Matters Post Qualifying Social Work Series

Paper 2: The use of qualitative approaches to studying decision-making

This paper will consider the usefulness of a range of qualitative approaches to the study of decision-making in social work. A qualitative lens can shed light on how social workers make sense of their practice; it can explore the role of values, belief systems, formal knowledge and informal experience in shaping the constructs that inform decisions. Qualitative approaches can examine the immediate practice environment and the broader socio-political context that influence decision-making processes and outcomes. They can examine social interaction as a forum for contest over rights, responsibilities and interests.

This paper assesses the strengths and limitations of key qualitative approaches to understanding decision-making and will examine the challenges associated with these approaches. Specific attention will be paid to four qualitative methods of data collection.

The discussion will begin with the in-depth interview, the hallmark of qualitative research. Can the interview provide a forum for in-depth understanding of social meaning and action? Or as we re-story our actions, do we 'sanitise' them to conform to bureaucratic accountability?

Secondly the utility of the focus group will be examined. Can it shed light on the constructive role of social interaction or are results inherently limited by social desirability amongst participants?

Contemporaneous diaries and similar reflective tools will be considered. They provide a means of 'understanding-in-action' but do not benefit from the insights of hindsight.

Finally, the tools of conversation analysis will be considered. Can conversation analysis uncover the broader frames of reference which shape social meaning and action? Or is it vulnerable to a top-down analysis of the local deduced from grand theory?

Paper 3: Using the factorial survey method with randomized vignettes to study decision making in adult protection

Background

This paper illustrates the use of the factorial survey to study decision making in adult protection.

Method

A systematic review and a panel of expert practitioners were used to identify the case and service factors that influence professional recognition and reporting of elder abuse. Key factors were incorporated into vignettes with randomised levels of each. A random set of vignettes and additional questions on decision making were given to each respondent. For each vignette respondents rated three dependent variables using ten point scales:

- respondents' perception of whether it was abuse (0 = Not abuse to 9 = Abuse),
- likelihood of reporting for investigation (0 = Not Likely to 9 = Likely) and
- confidence in the decision made (0 = Not Confident to 9 = Very Confident).

Data were collected from 190 practitioners providing community support to older people across Northern Ireland. This gave 2261 vignettes used as the unit of analysis. The independent variables (case and service factors) that significantly influenced the dependent variables (decisions and decisional confidence) were identified using regression analysis. ANOVAs were conducted to investigate the relationship between factors and each dependent variable.

Results

Seventeen percent of the variance in identification of abuse was explained by vignette variables, and fourteen percent of the variance in reporting. Recognition and reporting were influenced by case factors specific to the abuse event (frequency, type, victim wishes) but contextual case factors (age, gender, condition) did not have significant influence. While there was consistency in recognition and referring in extreme cases, there was wide disparity in more ambiguous vignettes.

Conclusions

Vignettes containing a wide range of randomized factors provided a rigorous design with high validity. The factorial survey proved an innovative method for studying the effect of case factors on professional judgements.

References

Killick, JC (2008) Factors Influencing Judgments of Social Care Professionals on Adult Protection

Referrals. Thesis (PhD). Coleraine, Northern Ireland: University of Ulster
Taylor BJ (2006) 'Factorial surveys: Using vignettes to study professional judgement', *British Journal of Social Work*, 36(7), 1187-1207

Paper 4: Models to inform research on decision making in social work

The three broad approaches to decision theory discussed in Paper One provide a useful starting point, and the previous two papers give ideas on relevant research methods. However detailed modelling is required to inform research on decision making in social work.

Firstly we need a conceptualization of group decision making processes (both with clients and with other professionals), described in the literature as game theory. This considers the interactions between players in the decision making as they act (speak) in response to the actions (words) of others. We need to consider how we construct professional arguments for decisions involving others, such as in court reports. Analysing this type of decision might use some framework or model of ethical analysis (Duffy et al, 2006).

Secondly we need to consider the time dimension of decision making, such as the pathways of children in state care. This might be modelled using stochastic processes or Monte Carlo modelling.

Thirdly the general approaches to studying individual decision making in Paper One need to be teased out to create useful frameworks for research.

- Subjective expected utility theory (normative approach) might be useful in studying how social workers assign values and perceived probabilities to alternative courses of action or how they support clients and families to do so.
- A satisficing model could be used to study how social workers in emergency or crisis situations make 'good enough' decisions on information limited due to time and resource pressures.
- Recognition-primed decision making provides a framework to consider how social workers learn from experience and acquire wisdom in making judgements.

These models will be discussed in terms of their potential to provide a framework for the development of research on social work decision making so as to support practice developments.

Reference

Duffy J, Taylor BJ & McCall S (2006) 'Human rights and decision making in child protection through explicit argumentation', *Child Care in Practice*, 12(2), 81-95

Taylor, Imogen
Marrable, Tish

Title

Engaging people with communication difficulties in social care research: learning from researching adults with autistic spectrum conditions

Abstract

This paper explores innovative research strategies designed to reach adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) for a study of 'Access to social care for adults with ASC'. A national study, undertaken over 8 months in 2009-10, was part of a Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) project sponsored by the Department of Health. The aim was to inform government strategy and address how far services support or hinder people with ASCs to live independently and to what extent they are denied mainstream social care provision.

The challenge for the research team was to avoid replicating the experience people with ASCs so often have of being invisible and excluded, 'My autism is invisible - if I were in a wheelchair no-one would be asking me to take the stairs! They can see the problem.'

The condition is often misunderstood by a range of professionals and it is important researchers do not replicate this, 'I never really meet anyone who properly understands my condition, and I can't help feeling they don't understand how much this affects me...I feel I fall through the gaps of most services'.

People with ASCs often have specific communication issues, and as a result they are excluded from services, 'It's like getting door after door slammed in my face or hitting a brick wall with my cry of help falling on deaf ears. (It's like) being passed from pillar to post, gaining a diagnosis then being abandoned'.

In consultation with a Steering Group established by the National Autistic Society (NAS), which included people with ASCs, the research team was developed to include members with experience of working with autism.

Sequential building-block strategies were implemented, designed with people with ASCs in mind:

- On-line surveys were hosted by NAS and other ASC specific sources, designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data and enable participants to choose which questions they answered.
- Survey follow up: because of in-depth responses to the online survey, only a proportion of respondents who offered to take part in this stage were contacted. This was largely via email although a telephone option was offered.
- Consultation groups: An NAS staff member sought views from two consultation groups of people with ASCs for whom communication was more difficult. A variety of communication techniques were used in these responses.
- Face to face interviews were set up in three areas which fulfilled research criteria of regional spread, rural/urban balance, and general/specialist services. The aim was to provide a further insight into the data.

In a context of reducing resources, and researching hard to reach groups can be time and resource intensive. This presentation will explore transferable learning from this study and in particular: meeting ethical standards; the role of subject specific national networks; the significance of service user expertise on the Steering Group; the importance of researchers with subject expertise; and the value of a range of communication strategies.

Uggerhøj, Lars
Title Practice research: connecting people
Abstract <p>Throughout the last ten to fifteen years social work practice has been subject to increasing pressure to demonstrate its ability to achieve outcomes required by public policy makers. As part of this process social work practice has to engage with issues around advancing knowledge-based learning processes build on both traditional top-down knowledge-production and bottom-up knowledge-production.</p> <p>These pressures and processes have produced a need to establish a close collaboration with education and research based perspectives and – as a part of this collaboration – to give rise to approaches seeking to combine research methodology, field research and practical experience. This development has not only turned out to become a challenge for practice but also for research - both in developing the methodology, in defining the focus of the research and in finding the right scientific position of this specific approach.</p> <p>The paper presentation will argue that practice research is connected to both “the science of the concrete” – a field of research oriented towards subjects, dialogue and context – and to “mode 2 knowledge production” – an application-oriented research where frameworks and findings are discussed by a number of partners.</p> <p>Although practice research has been discussed and practiced for some years it is still not clear what it is. In the paper presentation practice research will be discussed and defined into two approaches: practice research – collaboration between practice and research – and practitioner research – processes controlled and accomplished by practitioners. On the basis of these definitions practice research will be connected to both definitions and to more traditional research in social work through a new model.</p> <p>Practice research is not only practice or only research it is both. One of the reasons for this is that practice research is framed by a number of stakeholders: social workers, service users, administrators, management, organisations, politicians and researchers. Accordingly, practice research necessarily collaborative, must involve a meeting point for different views, interests and needs, where complexity and dilemmas are inherent. Instead of attempting to balance or reconcile these differences, it is important to respect the differences if collaboration is to be established. The strength of both practice and research in practice research is to address these difficult challenges. The danger for both fields is to avoid and reject them. It is through respecting the differences and accepting them as a part of the process – not only in the beginning but all way through – that practice research is developed and can be able to connect the different stakeholders. And from this position make a difference for service users.</p>

<p>Vanhove, Tim</p>
<p>Title</p> <p>Helping limits: multidisciplinary decision making in home care in Flanders</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>In the last decades, home care has been a growing social welfare sector in Flanders. With that growth came significant changes: the increasing acknowledgment of the right to stay at home as an individual choice of the client system, a growing number of clients with serious special needs but without a strong supporting family system, and societal pressure on prolonged home care as a social security cutback. These changes raise important questions: What are the limits of home care? What is the responsibility of the professionals?</p> <p>In Flanders, when the care becomes difficult, multidisciplinary teams (family doctor, social worker, head social worker, nurse, head nurse, personal care assistant, family or informal carer and client) discuss the home care case. Our study focuses on the way these teams deal with the issue of imposing limits to home care situations.</p> <p>Research</p> <p>The quantitative research design consisted of a logistical regression analyses on 100 Flemish home care case files. These cases are situations where care became difficult according to a professional. The question was whether the used standardised tests (Weckx, BEL-picture, BEL-data scales) support or contradict the decisions of the multidisciplinary teams and/or the view of the professionals and client system. The results show that the decision to terminate a home care situation is best predicted by the opinion of the volunteer carer. His or her judgement that the situation is too difficult, increases the chances of ending home care by 9,4 times. On the other hand, we find the standardised scales to show little predictive power.</p> <p>In the qualitative research design, we conducted observations of 3 multidisciplinary home care case consultations, 4 interviews with home care workers (a social worker, a nurse and two personal caregivers) and one group interview with 6 home care experts (a family doctor, two head social workers, a head nurse and a experienced family carer). All observations and interviews where taped, transcribed and analysed with NVivo and Kwalitan. The results show a lack of influence of the professionals on this decision making process. Caregivers are found to show a taboo on the subject of limits: discussing limits seems impossible in these formal settings. The apparent need to maintain team consensus and loyalty to the client dominates the multidisciplinary case consultation. An inclination to micromanage the home care situation into small practical aspects emerges. The participation of the client, family and volunteer aid to the multidisciplinary consultation is not contested by the professionals but nevertheless strengthens the fear of the caregivers to speak their mind. The family doctor seems to hold the power to set limits but refrains from doing so.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>In order to tackle the difficulty of discussing limits in home care situations, a new method of multidisciplinary team discussion in home care was developed. This method is currently in use by the largest home care organisations in Flanders.</p>

Vlaeminck, Hilde
Vanhove, Tim

Title

(Mis)leading chatphenomena: the empirical gap of chat help practitioners in social work

Abstract

Several organisations in Flanders that have experience with online primary care counselling, lack a theoretically and empirically founded view on chat interventions. Generally, they simply transfer the knowledge on telephone counselling to the area of chat help. Because these organisations presume online counselling is merely a different medium, online practitioners are provided only with technical guidelines. Most of the international research on online help is limited to therapeutic online counselling, showing a lack of knowledge on front line ('once only') chat care. In order to develop trustworthy knowledge about the specificity of online help in primary care, we examined the existing practise and tacit knowledge from different points of view.

Method

7 chat help organisations, united in the Flemish organisation 'Online Help Exchange Platform', were researched. Some of those organisations provide help on specialised topics (suicide, homosexuality, abuse) or for target groups (youth), others offer a general service. Some organisations use professional chat repliers, other use trained volunteers.

The aim of the quantitative research was to gain insight into the perspective of chat users. Between February 15th and May 7th 2008, chat users participated with an online questionnaire right after their chat. 33% or 416 chat users expressed their expectations and evaluated the quality of the chat service. Their background was questioned also. SPSS was used to analyse this data.

The qualitative part of the research design focuses on the experiences of chat repliers and their supervisors. The practical knowledge and needs of chat repliers were gathered in three ways: by 7 in-depth interviews with social workers as well as with volunteers, by 3 observations of supervision sessions with chat repliers, and by analysing 64 chat transcripts. 7 chat transcripts were analysed more thoroughly with a semiotic and narrative focus. In order to get an insight in the management policy, we brought together 6 supervisors in a focus group. The qualitative data were analysed by means of NVivo.

Results

Chat is not just a new medium. It differs distinctly from face-to-face or telephone counselling. It implies a new way of looking at helping others. Chat repliers tend to use their traditional expertise, but at the same time acknowledge that this is not enough. The developing chat medium induces chat users and repliers to develop a specific chat language with specific chat signs and linguistics (such as emoticons, capital letters, blanks) and chat rhythm instruments (such as the speed, the number of words).

But the chat medium also raises new questions and paradoxes. For example, it seems impersonal but it allows for very vulnerable and intimate outpourings. A paradox of nearness through distance.

Implications

A number of supporting methods were developed for online helpers (such as a chat atlas or ch@tlas, training programs for workers and students, and a checklist for managers) which are used throughout Flanders.

Wallander, Lisa
Title Measuring social workers judgements: why and how to use the factorial survey approach in the study of professional judgements
Abstract The factorial survey approach, which was first introduced in the social sciences around the beginning of the 1980s, constitutes an advanced method for measuring human judgements of social objects. At the general level, this quasi-experimental approach involves presenting respondents with fictive descriptions of social objects (vignettes), in which selected characteristics describing the objects to be judged are simultaneously manipulated. The aim of this article is to present a conceptual and an analytical framework for factorial survey studies of professional judgements in social work. In the first part of the paper, I develop and discuss the proposition that this approach may be used in order to study the knowledge assumptions that practitioners explicitly and tacitly use as a basis for their professional judgements about the diagnosis and treatment of clients. Second, assuming that the approach may be used differently by researchers interested in basic research and by those whose primary interest is in professional development at the micro level, I outline two systematic strategies for modelling social workers' judgements. The first of these two modelling strategies proceeds from the possibilities afforded by multilevel regression analysis. Examples of previous studies are used in order to link the potential results of each strategy to the conceptual framework described.

Walsh, Trish
<p>Title</p> <p>From knowledge generation to generations of knowledge: tracking the development of solution-focused practice models</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of the paper is to explore the concept of 'generations of knowledge' whereby useful practice theories/models only emerge after a process of diffusion and transformation leading to new model development and subsequent refinement. While the diffusion of new ideas occur more speedily in modern times via new technologies, the process of useful model development still needs to follow a lengthy cycle. It appears that the process of developing locally relevant, useful knowledge takes place spatially and temporally and often in changing policy contexts. It cannot be rushed.</p> <p>This paper is based partly on a doctoral study utilizing a qualitative case-study methodology which analyzed how new ideas were introduced to, and diffused in, social work practice settings (taking the example of the introduction of solution-focused therapy (SFT) to Irish social workers in the 1990's) and partly on subsequent near-practice research with groups of practitioners, literature reviews of international developments and research studies in solution-based approaches.</p> <p>Main points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The original clinical model of SFT (de Shazer et al, 1986) has so far evolved through three generations of theory-building. 2. In the first generation, social workers in public services were poorly served due to the minimalist nature of the initial theory and the focus on clinic-based practice. SFT in its initial conception was deceptively simple and minimized the skill required to interweave it with statutory obligations. 3. In the second generation, forms of solution-focused practice were developed which addressed more specifically the social work ethos, sometimes integrating it with other social constructionist models, such as narrative therapy (Parton & O'Byrne, 2001). 4. In the third generation, applied practice models are emerging which address the specific contours of practice across different settings taking account of changing expectations regarding public accountability and ethical practice (Walsh, 2010). <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The process of knowledge utilization in social work is a process of social construction and interpretation involving both individual and collective meaning-making. The generation of useful practice models is therefore a process whereby pure or original theories undergo local transformations to suit local conditions. 'Knowledge use generates new knowledge, and the process of diffusion, which is itself a process of transformation, begins again' (Martinez-Brawley, 1995: 677).</p> <p>References</p> <p>de Shazer S., Berg I.K., Lipchik E., Nunnally E., Molnar A., Gingerich W. and Weiner- Davis M. (1986) Brief Therapy: Focused Solution Development. <i>Family Process</i>, vol. 25, pp. 207-221</p> <p>Martinez-Brawley, E. (1995) Knowledge diffusion and transfer of technology: Conceptual premises and concrete steps for human services innovators. <i>Social Work</i>, vol 40 (5) 670 – 683</p> <p>Parton, N. & O'Byrne, R. (2000) <i>Constructive Social Work: towards a new practice</i>. London: McMillan</p> <p>Walsh, T. (2010) <i>The solution-focused helper: ethics and practice in health and social care</i>. Maidenhead: Open University Press</p>

Warden, Rosalind
Title
An ethnography of Islamic social work: early findings from the field
Abstract
<p>Themes of religion and spirituality are being increasingly explored within contemporary social work literature, as a continuation of earlier drives towards anti-discriminatory practice which were centred upon ethnicity and race. Despite emerging initiatives, the dominant discourse of spirituality within these texts can be critiqued as having limited relevance to social work with Muslim service users, in part because it is overly individualistic. The 2001 census highlighted that Muslims are statistically the most disadvantaged faith group in Britain, with significant levels of unemployment and a high dependency on social housing. In the light of pressing social need and the challenge of a monotheistic world view for secular liberal social work, there is a need to consider how social welfare provision for British Muslim communities can be enhanced through dialogue with Muslim service users and Muslim organisations.</p> <p>This research project is a micro-ethnographic case study of a Muslim welfare organisation which has been explicitly set up on Islamic principles. It seeks to understand how Islamic identity is used as a resource by the agency in providing services sensitive to the needs and beliefs of the local Muslim community, complementing statutory service provision. The research project involves both a qualitative exploration of the Islamic model upon which the services are based and a quantitative client satisfaction survey. This paper will discuss the emerging findings from the qualitative element of the research, reporting on fieldwork involving interviews and participant observation with the staff of the organisation. The qualitative research seeks to explore the role of religion within services such as Islamic counselling, chaplaincy, mediation and advocacy, and to understand their origins and authority within traditional Islamic sources. The findings will explore the nature of the various Islamic models underpinning each service and their relationship to secular statutory models. Additionally, the paper will report reflexively on the fieldworker's experiences of researching the organisation as an 'outsider' and will highlight how such a challenge impacted upon the research process.</p> <p>The research aims to understand how religion, specifically Islamic identity, may be used as a resource within a social work context in providing relevant and effective services to minority faith communities. It is hoped that such a study will continue to raise awareness of the needs of Muslim service users and will provide practical guidance for working with these communities within a social work context.</p>

Warner, Jo
Talbot, Dawn
Bennison, Gerry

Title

Affective community space and the management of everyday risk

Abstract

Background and objectives

This paper draws on findings from a study that was conducted in a café in a deprived area of England in 2009 by a social work researcher and two mental health service user researchers. The service user researchers were regular users of the café and had noted that the café went well beyond its 'effective', business function of providing refreshment in a sociable atmosphere. It performed other important functions for its customers, particularly older people, people with mental health needs and people with learning disabilities.

Our objective in conducting the research was to identify the characteristics of the affective role that the cafe served for its customers, the motivations of the owner in providing this care, and also to define criteria that would help us to identify other such places. The paper will offer important insights into the informal forms of care and support that people who are marginalised and socially excluded depend upon. It will also consider how the role of 'affective community places' might be protected and harnessed in other ways.

Methods

The research comprised a two-stage qualitative case-study design, with ethnographic elements followed by semi-structured interviews. So, we first observed the life of the cafe as customers and then, with the consent of the owner, we conducted semi-structured interviews with sixteen customers and with the owner herself. We obtained ethics approval from the University Ethics Committee and received funding for transcribing costs. The interview transcripts were coded and key themes and patterns in the data were identified.

Findings

The café was experienced by respondents as a 'home from home' and as an extended family. Beyond meeting their nutritional needs, it offered a place to just 'be', unconditionally, for as long a period of time each day as desired. The values that were evident reflected those associated with social care/work practice, such as unconditional regard. The café also served to contain and manage risk in subtle but powerful ways. It provided a 'safe space' in which 'everyday risks' such as stigma and discrimination were managed through co-operation, friendship and social ordering among key actors. Specific 'risk events' were also managed effectively. As such, the café can be seen as an affective community space or, more simply, a 'café that cares'.

Conclusions and implications

This research makes visible a valuable form of 'community care' which has hitherto been neglected and which has been largely ignored except by those who use it. The research helps to identify ways in which such resources might be protected, and their role better understood and harnessed, for example by formal caring services.

Webber, Martin
<p>Title</p> <p>From ethnography to randomised controlled trial: an innovative approach to developing complex interventions in social care</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background</p> <p>A history of scepticism towards the scientific method has contributed towards a lack of development in the evidence base for mental health social work in stark contrast to medicine and psychology. Also, social work and social care interventions are rarely amenable to randomised controlled trials (RCTs), the 'gold standard' in an evidence-based hierarchy of evidence. Clinical guidelines have consequently become skewed towards psychological therapies and drug treatments, and contain very few social interventions. Social work and social care practice in UK mental health services is in danger of becoming marginalised to process-dominated and statutory roles, whilst health clinicians deliver interventions recommended by clinical guidelines.</p> <p>Guidelines on developing and evaluating complex interventions highlight the importance of identifying appropriate underlying theory and of modelling processes and outcomes. This is rarely achieved in the development of social interventions, which are usually pragmatic solutions to practical problems. This paper will discuss an innovative and thorough approach to developing a social intervention which we aim to ultimately evaluate in an RCT.</p> <p>Innovation in intervention invention</p> <p>This paper will discuss the methodology of, and report on progress on, an NIHR-School for Social Care Research funded project to develop an intervention to help people recovering from psychosis to generate and mobilise social capital. The intervention development is grounded in social capital theory (Lin, 2001) and evidence (Webber et al., 2010) which indicates that people can derive benefits from the social resources that they can access through their social networks.</p> <p>The two-year Connecting People study uses combinative ethnographic methods to observe practice in mental health services, housing support services and innovative voluntary sector projects where workers have the opportunity to enhance individuals' access to social capital. We aim to relate the practice we observe to social capital theory in order to explore the extent to which it conforms with, or deviates from, the reality of mental health social care. We aim to develop our social intervention from the ethnography and the transmogrification of social capital theory that it may involve. The intervention will be refined in a Delphi Consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that it is feasible in practice and faithful to social capital theory.</p> <p>A further methodological innovation involves collaboration with the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences in Kerala, India, through which we aim to conduct a parallel study using the same methodology. As mental health social work practice in India is very different to in the UK, the resulting intervention is likely to be very different. However, the shared journey of the parallel studies will reveal the extent to which this rigorous method of intervention development is portable across contrasting practice contexts.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The synergy of using ethnography within the context of existing theory is a novel approach to developing complex interventions in social care. This method allows us to embed apparent good practice within the intervention; account for different practice contexts; and ensure its</p>

feasibility in practice, thus facilitating its eventual smooth implementation. Assuming, that is, that it works.

References

Lin, N. (2001) *Social Capital. A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Webber, M., Huxley, P. & Harris, T. (2010) Social capital and the course of depression: Six-month prospective cohort study. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, doi:10.1016/j.jad.2010.08.005

Webber, Martin
Title Access to social capital and the course of depression: a prospective study
Abstract <p>Depression is a significant social and economic problem. Social factors such as poverty and unemployment, interpersonal difficulties, poor housing conditions and the absence of positive events are related to lower rates of recovery. Social capital, defined as resources embedded in social networks, may also be related to recovery. However, social capital research methodologies are in their infancy and little evidence of positive associations currently exists. This study extends our knowledge by validating a measure of individual social capital and testing the hypothesis that people with depression with access to more social capital will improve more over six months than those with less.</p> <p>A prevalent cohort of people with depression was recruited from primary care (n=173) and followed up for 6 months (follow-up rate = 91.3%). Depression was measured using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression (HAD) scale alongside a large number of potential covariates. Multivariate analysis of covariance found that a univariate association between improvement in HAD scores and access to expert advice became non-significant. Baseline HAD scores, emotional support and level of education were predictors of change in depression scores in the multivariate model. When change in subjective quality of life was used as the outcome, a different model emerged in which an interaction of access to social capital and attachment style was significantly related to change in quality of life alongside multiple covariates. This study suggests that social work practice focused on enhancing relationship security may enable people with depression to access their social capital and improve their quality of life. This poster will illustrate how primary research can help social work practice become more effective in working with people with depression.</p>

Wiklund, Stefan Stranz, Hugo
Title Conditional and sustaining risk factors of long-term social assistance reciprocity among lone mothers: the case of Sweden
Abstract <p>Poverty among lone mothers in affluent countries is much more common in comparison to other household compositions. In international research, the Swedish welfare model is often considered advantageous in preventing poverty within this group, but lone mothers have for several decades been vastly overrepresented among households upholding social assistance, i.e. a strongly selective scheme in stark contrast to the universal approach in the general Swedish welfare system. Social assistance is a general, means-tested cash benefit eligible for people below a specified minimum income standard which in Sweden is administrated within the personal social services. Such framing entails that the demand side of social assistance is heavily contextualized within an individual/familial dysfunction sphere jointly with substance abuse treatment and child protection services. Thus, addressing individual problems – often of a psychosocial nature – is tightly knitted to social assistance administration.</p> <p>The study aims to explore and analyze factors associated with long-term (≥ 10 months/year) social assistance reciprocity within the group. There is no established theoretical model with ambition to explain what causes and sustains reciprocity. Korpi (1971), however, has made a distinction between fundamental and triggering factors, but the model is only adequate for analyzing initial stages of reciprocity. By making a distinction between conditional (principally invariable) and sustaining (potentially manipulated) factors, we have elaborated the model and made it applicable for analyzing long-term reciprocity.</p> <p>The study is based on data from a cross-sectional and randomly selected sample ($n=875$) of lone mothers receiving means-tested social assistance during 2007 in the three major cities of Sweden. Data was collected by way of a large-scale implementation and a circumstantial questionnaire, covering detailed information on client level, was handed to the case manager who served as the informant. The data collection strategy had several advantages. Firstly, we were able to collect information not available in local or national registers. Secondly, case managers were able to give highly valid information due to their extensive face-to-face interaction with clients. Response rate was about 98 per cent. The main mode of analysis in this study is hierarchic logistic regression with models separating conditional and sustaining factors.</p> <p>Results show that conditional factors (e.g. ethnicity) alone show low explanatory value for long-term reciprocity within the group. It is, however, important to remember that lone motherhood represents a conditional factor per se. When adding sustaining factors, the predictive value for long-term reciprocity increases substantially. Among sustaining factors, however, only factors connected to the structural level (labour market and welfare programs) are significant. Sustaining factors within the individual realm (psychosocial conditions and health impairments), however, does not have any predictive value. Thus, even though the Swedish social assistance scheme is oriented towards addressing social problems within the individual realm, long-term reciprocity among lone mothers is strongly associated to the structural level.</p> <p>Korpi, W. (1971) <i>Fattigdom i välfärden. Om människor med socialhjälp</i> [Poverty in the welfare state. On social assistance recipients]. Stockholm: Tiden</p>

Wilson, George Kelly, Berni
Title Enhancing social work students' learning experience and readiness to undertake practice
Abstract <p>Ensuring students are adequately prepared to undertake practice is a topic of national and international interest in social work education. This workshop presentation reports on Higher Education Academy (SWAP) funded research into student perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning approaches commonly utilized in social work education. The study developed previous research undertaken with social work students at Queens University, Belfast which was aimed at exploring the interrelationship between academic and practice learning (Wilson & Kelly, 2010).</p> <p>The main aim of the current research, which was completed in June 2009, was to identify ways in which academic teaching, practice learning and support might be improved in order to enhance student experience of the learning process. The project also explored the relationship between demographic factors, including gender, age, disability, previous qualifications and student learning outcomes.</p> <p>The workshop will report on key messages from the research relevant to the future development of social work education in the UK in the light of the Social Work Taskforce recommendations. The workshop will also consider the relevance of the findings from the research to the development of social work education internationally.</p>

Wulf-Andersen, Trine
Title Young people's participation: challenging the knowledge production of research(ers)
Abstract <p>The paper presents methodological reflections of an ongoing research project. The project involves youth who have experienced problems with drug abuse, sexual abuse, and self harm/suicide attempts, many of whom are also categorized with diagnoses like ADHD, bulimia, depression etc.</p> <p>Through life story interviews, I investigate the young people's subjective perspectives on their lives and the contexts, persons, and episodes they find to be of importance - including experiences with and meanings ascribed to different welfare programs and professionals.</p> <p>A main objective and experiment of this project is the participation of young people in the research process – involving young people not only as informants in interviews, but also as participants in defining research questions and design, in interpreting material produced through the interviews, and in discussing how and where reflections and conclusions from the research should be communicated.</p> <p>Doing this kind of participatory research has a long history in disciplines like anthropology and pedagogy. But in fields like psychiatry, psychology, and social work that often construe the young people as 'patients' (pathological) or 'clients' (disabled) this tradition is often unfamiliar. An interesting feature of the present project is that it is conducted as part of an interdisciplinary research setup comprising research projects rooted in very different epistemological, methodological and theoretical traditions. In this context, a participatory design with focus on the young people as 'subjects' (learning) has the potential of turning discussions in new directions, critically challenging dominant frameworks and dynamics of the production of knowledge on social welfare – in research as well as in social work and everyday life.</p>

<p>Young, Alys Hunt, Ros Oram, Rosemary</p>
<p>Title Integrated children's services, social care and deaf children</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Background and purpose The UK has a long tradition of specialist social work services for deaf children and d/Deaf adults. Typically these have been cradle to grave provision. Around 1 per 1000 children is born with permanent degree of deafness. 1 in 7 adults have a hearing loss. Nearly 100,000 people in the UK are British Sign Language users. In England the reorganisation of social work services into Adult and Children's services created a problem for the organisation and provision of specialist deaf services. The integration of education and social care services created new questions about the delivery of social care services for deaf children and their families in a context where traditionally teachers of the deaf had lead professional status. This study set out to discover how these fundamental structural changes in services delivery affected the provision of specialist social care services for deaf children and their families.</p> <p>Research aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of the move towards integrated children's service arrangements on how social care services for deaf children and their families are organised and delivered? • To what extent do new arrangements within integrated services frameworks create opportunities for and/or threats to identifying, assessing and meeting social care need effectively? <p>Phase one consisted of in-depth case studies (including documentary analysis and interview) of 5 local authorities, based on a judgement sample. Phase two used the data to construct a survey questionnaire completed by a further 52 local authorities in 'live' telephone interviews.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Although the study highlighted some pockets of good practice, overall the findings demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor integrated children's services arrangements in respect of deaf children and their families • a lack of specific attention to deaf children and families' social care rights and needs • poor recognition of need and provision of assessment • severely limited ability to work preventatively within a broad understanding of safeguarding • ambiguous pathways of service provision • responsiveness only in situations of acute need, (the escalation of which may have been preventable) • lack of focus on the psycho-social developmental, linguistic and cultural challenges of the full diversity of deaf children. <p>Conclusion and implications</p> <p>The study attracted widespread media attention and was featured on BBC national radio and television achieving an estimated audience of impact of 35 million people. The Department of Health commissioned from the report authors a new framework for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in respect of deaf children, Ofsted have scheduled a national review of deaf children's social care. This study was funded by the National Deaf Children's Society who continue to work in partnership with the research team as the study's impact on policy and practice develops further.</p>

BACK COVER

Aerial drawing of St Catherine's College

(Aerial drawing of college.jpg)