Letter from the Chair

WELCOME TO ISSUE ONE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE & PEACE SectionConnection.

This issue of our newsletter brings new features: an electronic format and resource Web sites. The new electronic format supports NASW’s GREEN initiative to be more environmentally responsible. The resource Web sites are provided by our section’s committee members and have been recommended for their relevance and usefulness for social workers in our practice specialty. If you have relevant Web sites you would like to recommend, please email them to me at manulty@juno.com.

Since our last publication, human rights and social justice issues have gained a greater focus in the international community through disasters and through civilian uprisings in Egypt and Libya. I am reminded of those courageous individuals in this country who also protested tyranny: those who organized and fought in the American Revolution, paving the way for those who protested the societal injustices of the 19th century. They in turn left a legacy for us, the social workers of the 21st century, that allows us to freely pursue our careers and to publish a newsletter such as this one.

In this issue, we have several articles on diverse topics. One article seeks to enlighten the profession regarding asylum seekers, those people leaving oppressive situations and attempting to enter our country for protection. Whether working on the macro or micro level, social workers can benefit when aware of the impact of the law on the immigration process. Another article points out the need for more attention from the profession on issues of personal safety while we practice in offices or in the field. Many of us are working in settings where we are exposed to clients who have a potential for violence. A third article addresses a study on the outcome of a project involving an effort to engage fathers of children in the child welfare system who are often unwillingly estranged or inadvertently overlooked by busy caseworkers.

As always, we thank those who have submitted articles and Web sites. The section committee encourages all of you to write and/or recruit articles from colleagues that carry important messages or opinions designed to broaden the awareness of social workers about social justice and/or peace issues. We appreciate all requests for publication from social workers. We carefully consider each submission from a broad range of settings and from varying levels of experience—from students to Pioneers. Some articles may be useful to more than one specialty practice section. When in doubt, don’t hang on to that idea. Instead, consider writing down your thoughts and submitting your idea or article to us. We also welcome any ideas to enhance our newsletter.

Please let us know what you are thinking and keep us up-to-date on your social work world.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Nulty, LCSW
Chair, Social and Economic Justice & Peace Specialty Practice Section
As the United States continues its heated political debate regarding current immigration policy, a group of immigrants are usually neither included nor mentioned in the discussion: asylum seekers. This article will explore current policies affecting asylum seekers and special needs of this population and offer practical information for social workers.

Asylum seekers must meet the definition of refugee, which is stipulated in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as follows:

An alien...who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of origin because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. (Jefferys, 2007, p. 1)

Whereas refugees apply for their status from abroad, usually from a refugee camp, and receive an invitation to come to the United States for safe haven, asylum seekers have been unable to get to a camp for a variety of reasons and come directly to the United States, therefore completing their application within U.S. borders.

There are two types of asylum applications: affirmative and defensive (Wasem, 2005). An asylum seeker who enters the United States with proper documentation (i.e., a tourist visa or a student visa) is given one year to complete an affirmative asylum application. An asylum seeker who misses the one-year deadline is no longer eligible for asylum and becomes deportable.

In contrast, a defensive asylum seeker is someone who arrives at the U.S. border without proper documentation. The immigration officer at the port of entry completes a “credible fear” interview to discern whether the individual has a valid claim for asylum. If the individual proves to the officer that he or she is afraid to go home due to fear of persecution, “the individual is immediately hand-cuffed, shackled and brought to an immigration detention center where he or she will be held until asylum is
The mandatory and indefinite detention of asylum seekers began with the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. Since this time, the practice of immigrant detention has been privatized and become a for-profit business, and this business is booming (Welch, 2004). The IIRIRA also put in place what is known as “expedited removal”: Asylum seekers who do not pass the credible fear interview at the port of entry are immediately deported and never enter the country (Barnet, 2002; Welch, 2004). While this practice is in compliance with international law, which states that a country cannot deport a known asylum seeker who has entered the country, it also does not allow us to know the true number of asylum seekers who are deported to their deaths, as they are the uncountable, and what happens to them after deportation is not recorded.

Immigration detention of asylum seekers is not a new phenomenon in the United States; historically, it had been used for no longer than 48 hours to verify that applicants had valid claims for asylum and were given permission to apply. Asylum seekers would then be released into the community, with employment authorization, so they could begin their lives and continue the application process, which can take several years. The IIRIRA changed all that, by denying work authorization until asylum is granted and by increasing the amount of time that an asylum seeker spends in detention by years, until the asylum has been granted (Jou & Lazzaro, 2009; Welch, 2004).

For social workers working with asylum seekers, it is important not only to understand the political asylum process but also to understand how the process can impact the client’s mental health. With the backlog in immigration application processing, which has been growing steadily since 2001, asylum seekers are consistently experiencing delays in their applications and in their court dates. “Many clients experience an increased level of fear, anxiety, and depression as the court date approaches...Each time a court date is delayed, the client may become even more nervous” (Jou & Lazzaro, 2009, p. 342).

For defensive asylum seekers, the impact is even greater. Many have been tortured in their home countries by law enforcement officers, prison guards, or military personnel (Jou & Lazzaro, 2009). They are often placed in similar surroundings where their original torture took place, and live in a state of re-traumatization on a daily basis.

Social workers need to be aware of the importance of the engagement process with asylum seekers. It may take a longer time to build trust. Because asylum seekers were persecuted by people in authority in their home countries, they do not tend to trust U.S. systems, or workers, easily. Social workers also need to be knowledgeable of trauma and posttraumatic stress in working with asylum seekers.

No conversation about asylum seekers is complete without mentioning the importance of collaboration with other professionals and para-professionals, such as lawyers, case managers, volunteers, and interpreters. As social workers, we are not equipped to handle the legal questions that clients may have. Working closely with trained immigration lawyers will be vital (Jou & Lazzaro, 2009). Because of cultural differences and language barriers, the use of culture brokers (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002), former refugees/asylees who have successfully adapted to life in the United States, has been found to be effective. Language is probably the biggest barrier that this group faces. It is important to use trained and certified interpreters who understand the code of ethics and the role of interpretation (Jou & Lazzaro, 2009). In conclusion, social workers need to be aware of both the asylum process and its impact on clients in order to effectively serve asylum seekers. Collaboration with the legal system, culture brokers, and interpreters is imperative. Knowledge of trauma and posttraumatic stress is vital. As social workers, we provide the emotional support to clients as they navigate our complicated immigration system, which is further complicated by detention. We are the key element of collaboration and support and can provide the advocacy necessary to change current policies.

REFERENCES


Mary Kay Diakite, ABD, MSW, LMSW, is a PhD candidate at Rutgers University School of Social Work, focusing on immigration policy and anti-terror legislation. She runs a family case management program for African Services Committee for immigrants and refugees living with HIV/AIDS in New York City. She has taught as an adjunct professor at both Rutgers and Monmouth universities. For the past 11 years, she has been working with refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, survivors of torture, and detainees. She has run school-based programs for traumatized refugee and immigrant children in three public school districts. After 9/11, she was recruited to work with traumatized Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities. She conducts psychological evaluations on survivors of torture who are seeking asylum detained at the Elizabeth Detention Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey.
On January 19, 2011, in White Plains, New York, St. Vincent’s Hospital case manager Frances Mortenson, 47, was stabbed by her 26-year-old client Jamile Wilson during a home visit. Mortenson suffered multiple stab wounds to her face, back of her head, neck, and abdomen, and was in critical condition before undergoing surgery. Wilson has since been charged with second-degree attempted murder and criminal possession of a weapon, both felonies.

In “The Urgency of Social Worker Safety,” National Association of Social Workers (NASW) past President James J. Kelly, PhD, LCSW, emphasizes the following:

In the past few years alone, we have witnessed the fatal stabbing of a clinical social worker in Boston, the deadly beating of a social service aide in Kentucky, the sexual assault and murder of a social worker in West Virginia, the shooting of a clinical social worker and Navy commander at a mental health clinic in Baghdad, and the brutal slaying of social worker Teri Zenner in Kansas. These are only a few of the murders of our colleagues, which, along with numerous assaults and threats of violence, paint a troubling picture for the profession. (Kelly, 2010)

Violence against social workers has become an inherent risk of the profession, and undeniably one that needs to be addressed on a national scope. Social workers are frequently sent to dangerous situations in neighborhoods, alone and unarmed, that police do not enter without a partner and a gun. Social workers stage life-changing interventions daily. However, what measures are being taken to ensure their safety? What if, as the husband of deceased social worker Teri Zenner questioned, national legislation were passed making attacks on social workers an automatic felony?

Hoffler continues,

At the federal level, NASW has supported the Teri Zenner Social Worker Safety Act, and numerous NASW chapters have worked to introduce and pass legislation that would address these issues at a local level. Without systematic change at a macro level, social work safety will continue to be part of public discourse and concern only after a social worker has been harmed or killed.

Eric Neblung, PhD, licensed psychologist and president of the New York State Psychological Association’s Forensic Division, addresses pervasive matters that social workers and mental health therapists face when interacting with potentially violent clients.
He asserts, While we are at an increased risk for workplace violence than the general public, it is important to remember that the vast majority of persons with mental health concerns are not violent. In fact, they are more likely to be victims of violence than the perpetrators of it.

Furthermore, Neblung continues, At this stage in the literature, there is no clear profile of who gets attacked. In other words, we are all at risk, so do not let your professional guard down.

What formal safety measures are imperative for social workers in the field? In February of this year, NASW offered a webinar on client violence and social worker safety. The webinar, presented by Christina Newhill, PhD, ACSW, discussed a client violence study survey in which she obtained 1,129 social worker respondents. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents had directly experienced an incident of client violence, and more than 63% were aware of colleagues who had experienced client violence (Newhill, 2011). Conducting a thorough clinical risk assessment of every client is critical, as is determining a prior history of violence, drug/alcohol use, and weapon use. In terms of preventing violence, knowledge is power. Individual risk factors that should be explored include demographic, clinical, and biological risk factors.

Additionally, proactive steps such as providing detailed safety trainings for social workers who make home visits, instilling a culture of safety and risk reduction within agencies, utilizing technology such as GPS tracking and cell phones for social workers in the community, and offering crisis management and self-defense instruction will promote safety. Acts as basic as eliminating objects that may be thrown or used as weapons in office settings can make a difference. Safety precautions and the analogous plans should be as automatic for an agency as planning a fire drill. Agencies should establish a worker safety manual and a corresponding committee to address issues and revisit salient concerns.

The NASW Massachusetts Chapter’s Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence against Social Workers has created a general outline to safeguard against potential violence. The safety plan of action concentrates on recognizing signs of client agitation; formulating code words to signal for help secretly; and using de-escalation attempts, disengagement skills, and self-defense. Social workers should always remain close to an exit, and, if feel threatened by a client, should trust their instincts and leave. Legal repercussions of violent behavior should be made known to clients. In 2004, NASW conducted a national study of 10,000 licensed social workers. Forty-four percent of the respondents revealed that they had been confronted with personal safety issues on the job, underscoring the gravity of this threat (NASW Center for Workforce Studies, 2004).

According to Neblung, One of the biggest steps is increased awareness and communication by professional organizations such as NASW.

Getting the word out is key. What is lacking is a formalized approach from training programs. NASW past President James J. Kelly, PhD, LCSW, and others have called for increased training in risk reduction and workplace violence, yet few training programs across mental health disciplines provide this service (Kelly, 2010).

There is no one solution to prevent violence against social workers. Through legislation, advocacy, grants, trainings, and public recognition of danger, assumption of risk by social workers in the field may be diminished.

Sherry Saturno, LCSW, DCSW, ACSW, is the clinical director of the Behavioral Health Center at Westchester Medical Center and was awarded Social Worker of the Year by NASW–New York State/Westchester Division in 2010. She has master’s degrees in social work and criminal justice from Columbia and Long Island universities. She may be reached at SaturnoS@wcmc.com.

RESOURCES

REFERENCES


The United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Articles 7 and 8 of the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child proclamation state that a “child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality, and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents,” and that “States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). While we think of such rights, for the most part, as applicable to children who have the misfortune of living in the midst of war or abject poverty, it may be surprising how apropos they are to many of the children involved in the public child welfare system.

More than any other time in history, children are growing up without their biological fathers in the home. This is even truer for children involved in the public child welfare system. The result of child and family services reviews from across the nation showed that there was very little meaningful engagement of fathers in the public child welfare system. The federal Children’s Bureau responded to this by developing the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System (QIC-NRF). Awarded to the American Humane Association, the National Bar Associations Center on Children and the Law, and the National Fatherhood Initiative, the focus of this five-year project is to demonstrate that engagement of fathers in child welfare systems results in improved child safety, permanence, and well-being for children. Grants for this demonstration project were awarded to four sites for implementation of a father engagement curriculum (presented in a peer support group format) and a cross-site evaluation. Washington State was fortunate to receive one of these grants to implement the project in Region IV (King County) of our child welfare system. (Grants also were awarded in Indianapolis, Indiana, El Paso County, Colorado, and Fort Worth, Texas.)

Findings from What About the Dads? Child Welfare Agencies’ Efforts to Identify, Locate, and Involve Nonresident Fathers (Malm, Murray, & Geen, 2006) were that workers didn’t exhaust all resources to identify and locate fathers, workers inconsistently asked mothers about the father, mothers often were unable to provide helpful information, administrators had differing opinions on whether nonresident fathers were “clients,” and offices had differing policies on assessing fathers for placement. Yet, findings from More about the Dads: Exploring Associations between Nonresident Father Involvement and Child Welfare Case Outcomes (Malm, Zielewski, & Chen, 2008) were that children with involved fathers are more likely to be reunified and less likely to be adopted. There were higher levels of adoption for children with unknown and uninvolved fathers—a pattern that may indicate that fathers are only contacted when their parental rights are being terminated. Finally, it found that children whose fathers provide “informal” supports such as help with rent, medical costs, clothes, and childcare are more likely to be reunified.

While common sense and research say that involving fathers (when it is safe to do so) is best for children, it has been a relatively recent focus of public child welfare agencies. Historically, when children are removed from their mothers’ homes due to child abuse or neglect, the focus is toward providing the necessary services and supports to make the mothers safe and secure caregivers to their children. While this is still a priority, agencies engaging in best practices also have directed their efforts toward engaging the whole family, including, but not limited to, seeking and engaging fathers, maternal and paternal relatives, and fictive kin as potential resources to the child and/or his/her mother. Additionally, based on the requirement for concurrent planning, identifying these individuals earlier rather than later is also wise, as, later in the case, they may need to be approached as placement providers and engaged in family group decision processes.

Unfortunately, these best practice activities do not occur as often as they should. Fathers and the entire paternal side of the family are often left out of this process. This is especially the case when the father is nonresident. The cultural stereotype of the “deadbeat dad” is alive and well, and there is often an assumption
that, if the father is not in the home or readily identified by the mother, he is uninvolved and has, very likely, abandoned his children. Our involvement in the QIC-NRF in Washington State has shown otherwise.

When we initially applied to be a part of the QIC-NRF, we estimated that 50% of the fathers of children placed in King County (the home of Seattle, Washington) would be nonresident. We were surprised to learn that the number was closer to 74% (n=732) of all cases with a child removed during a 20-month timeframe. However, 37% of the fathers were not available for participation because they lived outside the catchment area. Seventeen percent lived out of the state, 9% lived outside of the region, and 11% were incarcerated. Another 7% of fathers had their parental rights terminated or were deceased. Seventeen percent of fathers were not eligible to participate because of individual characteristics (e.g., existing child safety concerns, no contact orders due to domestic violence, or safety concerns for other participants). Sadly, we were unable to engage another 23% of fathers due to lack of contact information and, even more disappointing, because fathers were unknown (e.g., mothers did not know, mothers refused to tell, or the presumed father refused paternity testing) (Harper & McLaughlin, 2010). Already, our assumptions about fathers in the United States were dispelled, and we had an explanation for why it seemed that so many of our kids’ fathers were absent.

Nevertheless, of the fathers we did contact and who agreed to participate in a 20-week peer-facilitated father educational and support group, most had visited with their children during the month prior to their children’s placement in out-of-home care (27% had 1-4 visits, 10% had 5-10 visits, and 24% had 11-30 visits). Similarly, while the majority of fathers were either not required to or not paying child support (58%), 68% of the fathers were providing informal supports to their children, including food/clothing, financial support, rent/household expenses, overnight care, childcare, and medical bill support. Additionally, 35 fathers (88%) said they would like to have their child(ren) live with them, but only 19 fathers (48%) reported being approached by the child welfare agency about having their child live with them (Harper, 2010).

A master’s-level social work student was assigned by the region to support social workers with identifying and locating fathers. The majority of the fathers who enrolled in the program were located. The implementation of this approach was important because, more often than not, social workers had limited time to make the repeated calls necessary to reach the father within the first few days of out-of-home placement, while focusing on the priority of stabilizing the placement. Even for the fathers who were identified as having regular visits with their children before their children were placed and who were not part of the allegations of maltreatment, the majority were required to engage in supervised visitation with their children before being considered for unsupervised visits, much less having their children placed with them. However, many of the enrolled fathers, even those who wished for their children to be placed with them, had to overcome significant barriers to be considered. Based on fathers’ self-reports, it appears that they might require many of the same supports that mothers need to receive in order for them to become stable caregivers for their children. The challenges the fathers faced included financial hardship (71%), unemployment or underemployment (only 17% of our fathers were employed full-time), housing (56%), depression or mental health issues (56%), legal issues (47%), and drug and alcohol issues or difficulty with reading and/or writing (Harper, 2010). Unfortunately, fathers reported that they did not receive the same access to services afforded by mothers. In many cases this is simply because the services do not exist. Only recently has King County opened housing for homeless fathers and their children, and still only a handful of spaces exist. Similarly, access to mental health, drug and alcohol, and anger management services is lacking for men without the means to pay for them. Finally, unlike women who are encouraged to apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), men are often expected to find employment before being considered a suitable placement for their children. Unfortunately, what is sometimes overlooked is the impossibility of maintaining a work schedule while staying in compliance with all of the court hearings and mandated services required by the public child welfare agency. Our agencies are not flexible with regard to when professionals are available to provide services, which often means that fathers need to miss work in order to attend appointments and court hearings.

The good news is that, in the face of all of the barriers, 23% of the men who attended three or more sessions of the groups had their children placed with them instead of having their children remain in stranger care or experiencing long-term foster care placements (some participants’ cases are still open and are moving toward placement with the father) (Harper & McLaughlin, 2011). We hope that this was, in part, a result of the information and support they received while engaging in our 20-week curriculum. The curriculum covered information on how to navigate the child welfare, legal, and child support systems, as well as the myriad ways the fathers would be expected to be responsible as men and as fathers, including being providers, cultural guides, healthy parents, effective co-parents, and community leaders.

Our program was unique in that it focused on fathers, who are often invisible to the child welfare system and experience it as a system designed to serve mothers. Our materials were developed specifically for nonresident fathers, and our project encouraged organizations and professionals who work with parents to consider how their agencies and practices could be more father-friendly. We have no way to determine whether these fathers would have engaged
with the child welfare system had they not been involved in our project. However, based on information provided by the fathers, it is unlikely that they would have engaged with the child welfare system to the extent that they did or that they would have received the supports they required to be good resources for their children.

While the focus of the project appears to be on fathers, the true success of the project is how their children’s lives have been impacted. It is hard for someone who has not been a part of the public child welfare system to imagine what it is like to be a child who is taken from their mother and sent to live with relatives, or strangers. It is equally hard for those of us with children to imagine losing access to our children because of the actions of our children’s other parent. Moreover, it is hard to imagine our children losing the paternal half of their extended family. It is true that the public child welfare system most often engages with mothers, as the majority of children involved in the system are living with their mothers at the time of their entrance into the system; however, systems must begin to examine how they can better engage and serve fathers as well.

It is important that we ask ourselves the question, “How important is a father to a child?” Research shows that children do better when they are involved with their fathers. The United Nations has clearly stated that it is not only important but a child has a right to have their relationships with their parents and families protected and preserved. As social workers, it is important that we continually bring fathers to the forefront and create expectations and opportunities for service providers to engage fathers and to nurture their relationships with their children.

Natasha Grossman, MSW, is the project director for the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System in Washington and a faculty member at the University of Washington School of Social Work. She can be contacted at natasha@uw.edu.

REFERENCES


SEJ&P Resources

Course Syllabi for a Social Work Curriculum
Many universities now provide their course syllabi online. These syllabi show what others who are teaching use for texts, outlines, projects, and even class rules.

George Mason University
http://chhs.gmu.edu/sw/syllabi
This is the course syllabi for the social work curriculum at George Mason University.

Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute
www.law.georgetown.edu/humanrightsinstitute
Georgetown University Law School’s Human Rights Institute serves as the focal point for human rights activities at Georgetown University Law Center. Links to current projects and related publications are available online, including these: Vulnerable Children and the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Sent ‘Home’ with Nothing: The Deportation of Jamaicans with Mental Disabilities.
MARY A. NULTY
What is your area of expertise?
Most of my experience has been in the area of mental health and family work. I trained for five years learning Bowen Family Systems Theory and remained an associate at the Bowen Center for a number of years after that while in private practice full-time. Prior to the private practice, I worked in a number of capacities in the juvenile court system. Since 2007, I have been working as a mental health clinician in an adult correctional facility. I have also taught social work at the college level and worked in the welfare system, in hospital substance abuse treatment, and for several nonprofits (one of which was on an Indian reservation). I currently have a small private practice and write questions for the Association of Social Work Boards.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I have worked with offenders and the Native Americans. Both have expressed considerable appreciation for any services they have received. In my practice with families, I enjoy the long-term work and that gives more opportunity for seeing some clients' learning and personal growth. I also enjoyed employee assistance work considerably and consulting with the organizations affiliated with employee assistance programs.

What do you feel are the major challenges for social workers within your practice area?
In the adult correctional system in the United States, the primary focus for the past 30 years has been upon punishment. This was associated with very little support from state governments, from the legislatures, and/or from the general public for the provision of education, health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training resources for offenders. It is an extremely short-sighted approach. There is a little hope on the horizon in Virginia, as the new governor has placed an emphasis on pre-release planning and has hired a new director of the Department of Corrections who has an innovative and energetic track record from Massachusetts.

JOHN COSGROVE
What is your area of expertise?
I am a practitioner and consultant in organizational and program development, including grantsmanship, primarily in international and crosscultural settings.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I have been fortunate to have had many years of experience in developing, obtaining funding for, operating, and evaluating human service programs. I now take great satisfaction in using my expertise to help others to develop creative and effective responses to a wide range of unmet human needs.

What do you feel are the major challenges for social workers within your practice area?
The major challenge is remaining persistent despite increasingly scarce and inequitably distributed resources and heightened competition for them.

NATASHA GROSSMAN
What is your area of expertise?
I am a faculty member at the University of Washington where I design and manage grant-funded programs and projects that impact the way services are provided to our most vulnerable populations. These include families living in poverty, children and families involved in the public child welfare system, and women receiving public assistance.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I enjoy bringing innovative ideas, practices, and programs into systems that shape the way they interact with and provide services to children and families.

What do you feel are the major challenges for social workers within your practice area?
The lack of resources and funding to provide basic services to families in need, much less to test and implement new and innovative practices, is a considerable barrier to social workers committed to transforming the way public
agencies function and how their services are delivered.

MARJORIE B. HAMMOCK
What is your area of expertise?
I am currently an assistant professor and field coordinator in the social work department at Benedict College. My areas of expertise are field practicum management and cultural competence. I am also an expert witness in death penalty cases.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I enjoy social work practice with people and the opportunity to serve as a change agent, particularly in the area of human rights and social justice.

What do you feel are the major challenges for social workers within your practice area?
Social work education must address the need to adequately prepare for practice students who have personal, educational, and economic challenges but who embrace social work principles and values. Social work education must also look at the examination and evaluation process to ensure that students are ready for entry-level generalist practice.

BOB PRUE
What is your area of expertise?
Social work with Native Americans, particularly the interface between mainstream Western help and healing and traditional health and healing structures, with a focus on spirituality.

What do you enjoy about your work?
I enjoy participating with people as they work to help themselves. Since a lot of what goes on with Native Americans is more structurally focused, rather than individual interventions, I feel as though I get more bang for my buck when it comes to helping to facilitate change.

What do you feel are the major challenges for social workers within your area of practice?
There are times when it seems as though social workers and others working with Native Americans are pulled in two directions—honoring traditional ways while at the same time recognizing the shared humanity Native Americans have with all other Americans and realizing that many of their goals in life are very similar to everyone else’s. This often presents a challenge to overcome.
Did You Know?

A society’s economic system, institutions, and practices influence how well individuals and groups fulfill their needs and achieve optimum development. People’s health and general well-being depend on how well their intrinsic needs are fulfilled. Consistent frustration of these needs tends to cause physical, emotional, and social problems.

Call for Social Work Practitioner Submissions

NASW invites current social work practitioners to submit brief articles for our specialty practice publications. Topics must be relevant to one or more of the following specialized areas:

- Administration/Supervision
- Aging
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- Child Welfare
- Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults
- Health
- Mental Health
- Private Practice
- School Social Work
- Social and Economic Justice & Peace
- Social Work and the Courts

For submission details and author guidelines, go to SocialWorkers.org/Sections. If you need more information, email sections@naswdc.org.

For more information, visit SocialWorkers.org/Sections