
Editorial

Mary Nash and Kieran O'Donoghue

In looking for inspiration for this editorial, Mary decided to browse other editorials in social work journals. What a range presented itself! There is a splendid piece of childhood reminiscence on the fascination of the kaleidoscope, with its ever-changing images and colours. The author explained how over the years, her diverse social work experiences could be likened to the kaleidoscope (Rogers, 2010). In similar fashion, this issue of the Journal contains a variety of social work interests and themes, some of which have had little or no recent coverage: social work history, counselling, rural social work, working in the NGO sector with trans-cultural partnerships, and being informed through research in the area of youth work.

To some degree the variety of interests and themes reflects the breadth and depth of social work as a practice and profession and highlights the questions concerning 'what is social work?' and 'who is a social worker?'. It also raises the question of the social work profession's role and responsibilities towards our colleagues in related fields, particularly those in the youth, support and care services. Clearly these are questions that the Association is exploring as we consider the expanded membership proposal. We hope that these articles will encourage members to consider how social work has evolved, its place in a network of professions represented in social and health services, and social work's contribution to the well-being of service users, social justice and a humane society.

As with the kaleidoscope, might we perhaps look at the world appreciating the place of laughter in our lives? We were particularly taken by one editorial on humour. It reminded Mary that when applying for a place on the Edinburgh University professional social work training course (many years ago) she was asked one question during her interview concerning her sense of humour; Did she have one? What was it like? Throughout her social work career, Mary reckons her sense of humour has always eventually prevailed and we consider that the ability to laugh at oneself is undoubtedly an essential characteristic for social workers. Siporin observed that:

Humor is a creative act that helps transform pain and deviance into constructive growth, for clients as well as for oneself. To laugh is not only to last, but to have fun, to grow, to be free and human, to celebrate one's own life with the fellow members of one's community. (Siporin, 1984:464)

Social work humour can be rather black, but Siporin's comments are worth thinking of as we settle into the New Year and all the challenges, disappointments and opportunities that await both us and our clients.

Te Wero: If anyone is inspired to write an article on social work humour for the Journal, we would be keen to publish it.

References

- Rodgers, J. A. (May/June 2010) *Editorial*. Journal of Global Social Work Practice, <http://www.globalsocialwork.org>, downloaded 14/12/10.
- Siporin, M. (1984). Have you heard the one about social work humor? *Social Casework*, 65, 459-464.
- Witkin, S. L. (March 1999). Taking humor seriously (humor in social work) (Editorial). *Social Work*, 44(2), 101.
-