AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND
SOCIAL WORK

What we were reading in 2018

Following on from last year's editorial 'What we're reading' (Hyslop, Hay, & Beddoe, 2018) we've included the same analysis as 2018 in this editorial. The selection of the top 15 most read, identified by the web analytics, are presented here thematically. All of these articles are available on the journal website, open access and free to download from our archives. First up is a group of four articles published in the Te Komako issues, which always feature regularly in the top reads, as they should, reflecting Māori writing.

In the first of the Te Komako selection, Jacquelyn Elkington's article, 'A Kaupapa Māori supervision context—cultural and professional,' affirms an indigenous perspective for Māori practitioners of professional supervision particularly in the practice of Kaupapa Māori supervision. Based on research conducted for her PhD study of Kaupapa Māori supervision completed in 2013, Elkington explores the challenges for cultural supervision, deconstructing these by questioning existing power relations within the social services sector. The article reports some key solutions including visibility of mono-cultural values in western origin models of supervision and the revival and creation of more Kaupapa Māori supervision models within safe and protected environments. Elkington also recommends that Kaupapa Māori research methodology underpins future developments.

In 'Theories in Māori social work: Indigenous approaches to working with and for indigenous people,' Awhina Hollis-English (2015) explores how Māori social work practice has been developed upon a strong underpinning of indigenous knowledge, theories and values. Hollis-English describes selected Māori social work theories and explores how they have developed within the social work world and how they can validate social work practice. A number of theories have been described by Māori

social workers from across Aotearoa as the foundations for their social work practice. Theoretical discourse in the world of Māori enables practice development for Māori social workers, "leaning on ancestral knowledge and valuing the skills that are gained through understanding tikanga in a contemporary context" (p. 5).

'The teaching of Māori social work practice and theory to a predominantly Pākehā audience' is the title of Shayne Walker's 2012 article. Walker explores the practices of teaching Aotearoa New Zealand social work students to prepare them for bicultural practice including te reo Māori and tikanga alongside specific teaching on the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi for social work practice. Walker suggests strategies for moving forward to help social work students feel more confident in practices in a bicultural setting. Walker notes that taking a cross-cultural position poses some difficulties as most diversity and cross-cultural models emerge from western rather than indigenous frameworks and thus there is a need to integrate indigenous methods and worldviews.

Paora Moyle's (2014) article, 'A model for Māori research for Māori practitioners,' presents a Māori model for research that draws strongly from Kaupapa Māori theory and principles, using qualitative methods. Moyle explores Kaupapa Māori epistemology and its influences on her entire research project from the development of the topic to the analysis stage, and the importance of giving back to Māori social work participants and the wider community. Referencing Linda Smith's work on decolonising research (1999) Moyle describes "Kaupapa Māori as a 'home grown' form of critical theory that focuses on emancipation" which refers to a "framework or methodology for thinking about and undertaking research by Māori, with Māori, for the benefit of Māori … It is a way of

understanding and explaining how we know what we know and it affirms the right of Māori to be Māori' (pp. 29–30).

In the next section, practice features strongly with five articles focusing on practice matters.

In one of the three older articles in this selection, 'Preliminary comparison between the roles of support workers and social workers in community mental health services' Barnaby Pace (2009) explores the issue of confusion between paraprofessionals, such as support workers, and professionals, including social workers which could lead to conflict in the workplace. Pace hypothesises that, if support workers were recognised more appropriately for the work they do, there would not be the conflict that currently appears present between these two disciplines. This research identified differences in the level of qualification, requirements for registration alongside specific competencies, and the performance of clinical work such as referrals, assessment, information collection and report writing which featured strongly in social work job descriptions. Pace recommends that future research be focused on determining the function and relationship of these two disciplines before developing associate social worker status for support workers, an important debate considering the possibilities of regulation of support workers in the near future.

In another article focusing on the mental health sector, Kathy Martindale, a quality of life (QOL) researcher and Ross Phillips a social worker and mental health consultant, argue that a QOL framework applied in social work practice would assist to determine an evidence base that achieves current "mental health policy ambitions of recovery, inclusion and community care, whilst also providing mental health social work a clear description of role and function" (Martindale & Philips, 2009, p. 56). Exploring concepts such as recovery and subjective wellbeing, this article

sets out conditions for practice in which holistic aspects of a person's life are centred including environmental, cultural and social interconnections. Understanding social and community contexts is particularly important in moving beyond limited medical responses.

'Changing landscapes: Responding to domestic violence in New Zealand' by Yvonne Crichton-Hill (2010) discusses the complexity of social work in domestic violence. Crichton-Hill advises practitioners to be both cautious and creative in their work with women. She argues successful social work requires recognition of the uniqueness of each woman while being cognisant of the social and political forces that have contributed to her situation. The article explores the causal explanations and contextual factors that have shaped Aotearoa New Zealand's social work response to domestic violence. A research-informed, multifaceted, anti-discriminatory approach to practice is proposed.

In 'Incorporating community development into social work practice within the neoliberal environment' Jenny Aimers and Peter Walker (2011) explore community development practice within the context of a community and voluntary sector social services. Their aim is to identify ways that social workers might 're-embed community development within their practice while also resisting the dominant neoliberal political discourse' (p. 39). They are concerned that the government of the day had marginalised community development and use the term to describe activities that were top-down rather than coming from the flax roots.

In 'Social work with older adults in primary health—is it time to move our focus?'

Sue Foster and Liz Beddoe (Foster & Beddoe, 2012) discuss the need for better provision of social work support, including psychosocial interventions, advocacy and risk assessment for older adults in their

homes and residences. They argue that social work in the 21st century needs to establish a presence in the primary care community where their skills would be well utilised. They recommend that research be undertaken in New Zealand to explore the potential for, and likelihood of, acceptance by all stakeholders of a social work service provided at the primary care interface with individuals, families and communities in New Zealand.

The final selection of articles all focus on the profession itself. Also amongst the 2017 top reads, Elizabeth Hobbs' and Nikki Evans' article 'Social work perceptions and identity: How social workers perceive public and professional attitudes towards their vocation and discipline' reports on the fight for recognition of social work's professional status. Social work identity and public perceptions remain strong themes and, given the very public debates about social work in 2019, it would be interesting to explore some of these again, especially the influence of statutory child protection on social work identity, professional marginalisation in multidisciplinary teams and the impact of mandatory registration of social workers.

Matt Rankine (2017), in 'Making the connections: A practice model for reflective supervision,' describes a new model of reflective supervision arguing for an approach to community social work supervision that is grounded in a co-constructed partnership between the supervisor and supervisee. Rankine presents a four-layered model to support critical thinking in the diverse socio-political and cultural contexts of social work and promotes social justice strategies.

Mike O'Brien's research (2009) is based on ANZASW members' responses to a questionnaire describing their approach to social justice and the links between social justice and their practice. 'Social work and the practice of social justice: An initial overview' provides an initial summary of social workers' thinking about and approach to social justice in their practice. O'Brien found that social justice talk occurs much more in the context of individual examples than in broader social policy considerations. The significant finding is that these practitioners frame social justice primarily, and 'almost entirely, about individual actions aimed at more socially just outcomes and experiences for users (p. 9).

Another article that was in the top read in 2017, appears again. Petro Booysen and Barbara Staniforth's (2017) article on counselling as an element of social work explores the legitimate function of counselling in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand finding that social workers regularly use counselling skills. They argue that rigid boundaries between the two professions can have adverse effects for clients at times when multi-skilled professionals are needed. This is an enduring issue and this article retains durable interest from our readers.

Heidi Crawford's (2016) article on being a Pākehā social worker features again in the top reads of 2018. Crawford's personal reflective narrative recounts her journey as a Pākehā towards bicultural practice. In a deeply reflective piece, of great value for students and beginning social workers, Crawford shares her discovery of loss of identity as Pākehā and encourages other Pākehā to connect with who has gone before them in an attempt to understand self and understand others and move towards compassion and hope.

Finally, Rebecca Giles' (Giles, 2016) research report on social workers' perceptions of multi-disciplinary team (MDT) work in major regional hospital in Aotearoa New Zealand has attracted a solid readership. Giles finds that social workers consider that effective and well-facilitated MDTs are very important in supporting the non-medical aspects of patient care. But,

where MDTs do not function well and social work and patient concerns with wider, non-medical issues are devalued, outcomes are less satisfactory for patients.

The current issue

Our most read articles of 2018 demonstrate the enduring interest in local research. This new issue of Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work reflects the growing international contribution to the journal and, in doing so, reminds us that, while we practise in many different and diverse locations, there are some common concerns that occupy the minds of practitioners, researchers, and scholars. This issue includes contributions from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, England and Sweden.

In 'An invisible population—Young carers in Aotearoa New Zealand,' Sue Hanna and Charlotte Chisnell discuss the circumstances of young carers, a population of children, young people and young adults who are often socially isolated and who have received little attention social policy, social work practice and research in Aotearoa New Zealand. The authors review the literature and reflect, as two English-registered social workers, now educators in Aotearoa New Zealand, on practice with young carers in the United Kingdom. Chisnell and Hanna use a children's rights framework to advocate that greater attention should be paid to understanding the complexity of these young carers' roles and their rights as children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) passed in the United Kingdom (UK) made it mandatory for social workers, as well as a wide range of caring professionals, to work within the PREVENT policy, originally introduced in 2002, as one strand of the UK's overall counter-terrorism policy. In 'PREVENT, safeguarding and the common-sensing of social work in the United Kingdom', David McKendrick (Scotland) and Jo Finch (England) theorise the concept

of common sense and how complex issues such as terrorism can be reduced to a series of assertions, claims and panics that centre on the notion of common sense. Programmes such as PREVENT co-opt social workers into an increasingly securitised environment via a significant linking of traditional safeguarding social work practice with counter-terrorism activity.

Alternative, or non-traditional, approaches to responding to oppression and injustice are increasingly sought in social work. In 'Banging the same old colonial drum? Moving from individualising practices and cultural appropriation to the ethical application of alternative practices in social work,' Canice Curtis and Christine Morley explore the application of group drumming practices within social work. Curtis and Morley use critical reflection to explore the ethical challenges of incorporating cultural practices into social work and highlight strategies that support cultural humility.

The assessment of the suitability of social work students for future practice is often a fraught aspect of social work education. In 'Social work students' feedback about students' suitability for field education and the profession,' Ines Zuchowski, Sally Watson, Tracey Dickinson, Nicole Thomas and Sandra Croaker report on a Queensland study conducted with final-year social work students which examined their ideas about suitability and unsuitability for field education and practice. The article reports that students identify a "critical understanding of self, skills, knowledge, attitudes and contextual factors" as vital and with indicators of unsuitability including "lack of preparedness to learn, lack of capacity to demonstrate an understanding of professional values and ethics and inability to maintain professional boundaries or demonstrate basic practice skills". Students make suggestions for further development of an assessment model.

This issue contains one *Research Brief* article, by Michael Wallengren Lynch, a

social work educator teaching in Sweden. In another article on social work education 'Teachers' experiences of student feedback: A view from a department of social work in Sweden,' Wallengren Lynch reports on a study designed to explore how teachers in a department of social work engage with, and manage, student feedback on their teaching methods and approaches. Internationally there is a growing, yet underdeveloped, interest in understanding the emotional impact of student feedback, and how it contributes to pedagogical self-development. It is reported that some teachers experience negative emotions regarding feedback that was unpleasant but had developed strategies to deal with the feedback.

Viewpoints

There are two *Viewpoint* articles in this issue. In 'Social work and social justice: The relationship between fitness to practise and criminal convictions for non-violent activism' Nathan J. Williams, addresses an often-discussed aspect of social work education and professional registration, the matter of criminal convictions gained by those who are engaged in non-violent social justice activism (NVSJA). Williams points out that current "fit and proper" rules under the new Social Workers Registration legislation create a potential barrier for social workers "who go beyond the rhetoric and fight for social justice, in a macro and practical sense," from gaining registration. This does not sit well with the ethical obligations we have under the statements of our professional bodies (local and international) to uphold and strive for human rights and social justice. Williams makes a strong case for reviewing the current policy to align it better with international requirements of social workers.

In 'Overseas social work placements: Can a well-designed workflow contribute to the success of an overseas placement?' Lee Henley, Simon Lowe, Zoe Henley and Claudia Munro reflect on the importance of workflow design for students completing

field education in their social work degree. Specifically, this article examines this in the context of an Aotearoa New Zealand social work student completing a final placement at a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Battambang Cambodia, Children's Future International (CFI). The article describes the advantages of designing an overseas placement approach which is planned to flow from theory development to practice implementation.

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Liz Beddoe for the Editorial Collective,

September 2019

An invisible population—Young carers in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This paper discusses the situation of young carers, a population of children, young people and young adults who have received little attention in Aotearoa New Zealand social policy, social work practice and research.

METHOD: The authors draw attention to the status and needs of this group through a review of literature and through their reflections, as two English-registered social workers, on practice with young carers in the United Kingdom.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS: The paper argues that young carers are a vulnerable, invisible group who require recognition and respect. Using a children's rights framework, it is suggested that more attention should be given by social workers to understanding the complexity of this role, and the rights of young carers as children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

KEYWORDS: young carers; Aotearoa New Zealand; social work; children; caring

The term *young carer* "applies to children and young people under the age of age 18 who provide *regular* [emphasis in original] and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally disabled or misuses substances" (Research in Practice, 2016, p. 2). They are an often "hard to reach" and isolated demographic of children and young people who undertake roles within their families not undertaken by their peers (Smyth & Michail, 2010). As a consequence, they have broader needs for support and attention in order to manage these additional responsibilities. In addition, from a statutory child protection perspective, they are vulnerable to abuse and neglect, exacerbated because the family situations in which they provide caring can be affected by addiction and mental health issues (Cunningham, Shochet, Smith, & Wurfl, 2017;

Kennan, Fives, & Canavan, 2012; Research in Practice, 2016).

A case study recently used as a social worker recruitment tool tells the story: *Leanne is a young Māori girl, the youngest of several children. The whānau live with their extended family. Leanne complained to her teacher that she cooks dinner, cleans the house and is expected to mind her younger cousins. She arrives at school late and is often tired.* The aim of the case study is to ascertain potential social work recruits' knowledge of abuse and neglect and their ability to work effectively with Māori. One of the many challenges facing Leanne, the subject of this case study, however, is that she is being used inappropriately as a young carer; she has too many responsibilities in the home for her age and stage, which she cannot manage. As the case study progresses, it becomes clear

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she is suffering the consequences of this at the abusive hands of adult family members who have serious addiction issues. What exacerbates her situation is the lack of both recognition and definition of what it means to be a young carer in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In this paper, we focus on the existence and status of young carers in NZ through an exploration of relevant literature, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and the United Kingdom (UK). Reference is made to two case studies drawn from our experiences as social workers in the UK. We have predominantly cited research and literature from the UK because the needs of young carers have recently been acknowledged there, in legislation and statutory guidance. We argue that there is a growing need for researchers, social work practitioners and policy makers in Aotearoa New Zealand to do more to ensure the visibility and protect the "living rights" of this group, as young caring is a risk factor for neglect and abuse (Department for Education, 2018).

Background

Mahi Aroha Caring for Carers, the discussion document on "The proposed carers strategy action plan 2019–2023" states that there are approximately 40,000 young carers in New Zealand (Ministry of Social Development [MSD], 2019, p. 5). The same report also states that approximately 9% of carers are aged between 15 and 24 years (MSD, 2019, p. 9). Although the NZ Carers strategy (MSD, 2014) recognises young carers as a distinct group, they have not received anywhere near the levels of attention here as they have in other countries, such as the UK, Australia, Ireland and the US. To date, little research has focused on this group; one exception is McDonald, Cumming, and Dew (2009) who conducted an exploratory qualitative study with a sample of 14 young carers and nine associated family members, in which they identified the need for further research in the area. Young Carers New Zealand describe young carers as a

special interest group for children and young people who help to support ill, elderly, and disabled friends and family members. Young carers often also support people who have an addiction (Supporting Families (n.d.), see supportingfamilies.org.nz).

This definition highlights that care provided by young carers is required because a family member has a chronic condition, illness, or issues with drug and alcohol addiction. The implications of this often means, however, that the young carer role is not just confined to providing medical supervision and personal care for the family member concerned, and that this may be only one aspect of the young caring role. The *NZ Carers Strategy Action Plan for 2014 to 2018* (MSD, 2014) also undertook to "better understand the needs of younger carers, older carers, and carers of older people in need of assistance" (p. 24).

Much of the research attention on young carers has occurred in the UK and, from the 1980s onwards (McDonald et al., 2009; Phelps, 2017). However, this situation is acknowledged in other parts of the world and *parentification* is used in the US to describe this role and associated family arrangements; this is a term which captures the role reversal that occurs when children and young people assume the nature and level of caring responsibilities normally reserved for adult primary caregivers (Charles, Stainton, & Marshall, 2009). Charles et al. (2009) make a distinction between situations where this form of role reversal happens because parents abdicate their parental responsibilities and those situations where, through necessity and family circumstances, young carers assume some, or the entire normal parental role for a temporary period (Chase, 1999, as cited in Charles et al., 2009).

The review of the literature that follows will discuss who falls into the category of a young carer, the major methodological issues associated with defining this group, its prevalence, the positive and negative

impacts of young caring, and the statutory social work responsibilities that exist in the UK in respect of young carers.

Who is a young carer?

Definitions of young carers are contested and differ throughout the world (Cree, 2003). Ordinarily, within families, parents or adult caregivers provide care to dependent children. In the case of young carers, however, the reverse is true. In the UK, under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, a young carer is defined as a "person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person" (s 63). This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail, elderly, disabled, or who abuses alcohol or substances. Under the auspices of both acts, local authorities and county councils have a duty to offer an assessment where it appears a child is involved in providing care. Families, however, may choose to conceal young people's caring activities, or young carers may not define themselves as such; consequently, establishing the scope of this population has been difficult. Definitional challenges associated with establishing who young carers are, how many they number, who they care for, what forms their caring takes, how much they do and what are the impacts, have been complicated by methodological inconsistencies in the research (Aldridge, 2018). For example, definitions of young carers in several studies have used different age ranges (Cree, 2003). More recently, the term young carer has been applied more specifically to children and young people under the age 18, while young adult carers aged between 18 and 25 years have been identified as a separate and growing category (Children's Society, 2016). Additionally, while words such as *regular* and *significant* were commonly used to indicate the amount of caring undertaken, recent research has shifted the focus onto the impact of these responsibilities on children's lives (Aldridge, 2018). The locus of caring has also been extended to include caring

activities that take place outside the family home (Cheesbrough, Harding, Webster, & Taylor, 2017).

What is the young caring population in the UK?

Data from the 2011 census in the UK identified 166,363 young carers under the age of 18 years in the general population (Children's Society, 2016). Additionally, an analysis of British 2001 and 2011 census data shows a significant increase in young carers aged between 5 and 9 years of age (Children's Society, 2016). In the last four years, the number of young carers has increased by 10,000. This situation has, arguably, transpired because of ongoing austerity cuts to adult services (Bulman, 2018).

It remains difficult to establish an accurate picture of the extent of this population of young people. Reasons for this include: the varying age ranges informing inclusion criteria in research studies (Aldridge, 2018), and observations that young carers themselves may not identify with the term, young carer (MSD, 2019); feared stigmatisation, fear of removal from their homes, parents not describing or identifying their children as carers and young carers themselves may not distinguish what they do from normal household responsibilities (Aldridge, 2018). These are all factors which contribute to the difficulties of providing an accurate picture of the size of this group.

Conflicting data about the prevalence of young carers led to completion of several studies over the last five years commissioned by the Department for Education, which utilised a range of mixed methodologies to address inconsistencies in the existing data sets (Aldridge, 2018). In 2019, research undertaken by Joseph et al. found that 22% of young people were defined as young carers with approximately 7% undertaking a high level of caring responsibility and 3% a very high level of care. (2019, p. 2).

What do young carers do?

Methodological issues have also affected research findings exploring what and how much young carers do. Young caring activities are currently considered as falling into six areas: domestic tasks and gardening; emotional support; intimate care (toileting, washing showering, lifting, dressing and feeding, including administration of medication); supervision of younger siblings; bill payments; and translation responsibilities for non-English-speaking relatives (Dearden & Becker, 2004, as cited in Research in Practice, 2016). While caregiving within families is often reciprocal, and children regularly do household chores and baby-sitting, there is a continuum. Kennan et al. (2012) stress the need to differentiate between a level of caring and contribution to household tasks that is positive, and that which affects negatively of the young person's health, welfare and well-being. The point here is that children and young people should not undertake amounts of caring that would detract from their physical and emotional well-being, education or potential (The Care Act, 2014).

What are the impacts, both positive and negative, of a caring role for young people?

Young carers have acknowledged caring to be a "two-way street", with a number of positive impacts being associated with this role (McDonald et al., 2009). These include a heightened understanding of the needs of others which, in turn, contributes to increased maturity (Banks et al., 2002). The ability to provide complex caregiving tasks competently, and feeling needed, often helps young people to feel worthwhile (Aldridge & Becker, 1993; Banks et al., 2002). The benefits of, and to, young carers of this role are acknowledged. What is identified as pivotal in distinguishing between positive and negative impacts however, is the presence of a loving parent who is reciprocally engaged and responsive to the young person and her/his needs,

regardless of caring arrangements (Tatum & Tucker, 1998). Likewise, the perceptions of the young carers themselves are also crucial. Those who feel their situation is manageable, have good social support and effective coping strategies, experience less stress and better adjustment than those who do not report these protective factors (Cunningham et al., 2017).

Most available literature, however, demonstrates clearly that the role of young carers can have negative impacts on young people's self-esteem, their social relationships, educational attainment and transition into adulthood (Children's Society, 2013, 2016; Cree, 2003; Dearden & Becker, 2004; Moore, McArthur, & Morrow, 2009). In the UK, for example, 27% of young carers miss school or experience educational difficulties. This compounds significantly when caring for relatives with drug or alcohol misuse problems. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely to have a special educational need or disability. As a group, they achieve significantly lower educational attainment at General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE), the equivalent of nine grades lower than their peers do, and are less likely to go on to higher or further education. They are more likely not to be in education, employment and training between the ages of 16–19 (Children's Society, 2013, 2016; Dearden & Becker, 2004). According to the 2011 British Census, young carers are twice as likely to report "not good health". This increased to five times as likely when involved in caring for over 50 hours per week. Young carers have acknowledged the stress associated with the role and a school survey found that 38% of young carers had mental health problems (Children's Society, 2013).

The length of time spent caring, the nature and severity of the family member's illness, incapacity or disability (Cree, 2003), the age of the young carer (Dearden & Becker 2004), and the amount of responsibility for caregiving (Children's Society, 2016) all impact on the well-being, education and

emotional development of young carers. In addition, these impacts are affected by the level of informal and formal support available outside the home (Children's Society, 2016), and physical conditions and levels of support for the young carers within the home.

Protective factors and the development of resilience

The risk factors associated with the role of young caring can contribute to the child experiencing the adverse conditions of social exclusion and neglect. However, research suggests that there are a number of protective factors that support children and which help them develop resilience. Resilience can enable a child to grow and develop despite facing adverse circumstances. It is associated with the presence of a combination of protective factors including psychological attributes, family support, and external support systems. "Resilient children are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, cope with change and uncertainty, and to recover faster and more completely from traumatic events or episodes" (Newman & Blackburn, 2002, p. 1). For example, a study of young carers in Northern Ireland found that appropriate knowledge of their parent's illness had a positive impact on the child's capacity for resilience (McGibbon, Spratt, & Davidson, 2018).

Factors contributing to young caring

How do children and young people find themselves in these roles? The major determining factors contributing to young caring involve poverty and low income, factors in the UK exacerbated by policies of fiscal austerity, with resulting negative impacts on welfare and the provision of social services (Aldridge, 2018). Lone parenthood is also being identified as a contributing factor (Aldridge, 2018). The Children's Society report *Hidden from View* (2013) identifies that young carers

are also one-and-a-half times more likely to come from black or ethnic minority communities, and twice as likely to speak English as a second language. Increasingly, research has identified that, in 29% of circumstances, young carers are assuming caring responsibilities in homes where adults have mental health issues and problems with addictions (Children's Society, 2016).

Statutory responses to young carers

Identifying young carers, however, is not necessarily straightforward. In England and Wales, social workers have a statutory duty of care under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014, to recognise and undertake assessments when young people are involved in caring. As noted, there are many reasons why young carers are a hidden population, and families often conceal young carers' roles because of the common fear that statutory social work intervention may result in family separation. Care figures justify this fear, with more than 2000 children placed in state care because of the parent's illness or disability. The number of children placed in care through "parental illness or disability" ranged between 2,380 and 2,720 annually (2011–2015), which represented 3–4% of all children placed in care (Zayed & Harker, 2015). Research undertaken in England to establish how effective the legislative changes had been in improving the identification and support of young carers and their families found support for young carers varied considerably. Only 19% of parents of young carers reported that their child had received an assessment of their needs by the local authority; the main support they received came from young carer projects or schools, and 64% received no support at all (Cheesbrough et al., 2017).

The following case studies highlight some of the tensions and dilemmas that arise when working with young carers.

First case study

During the second author's practice as a social worker within statutory children's services in the UK, there was the opportunity to work with children and their families within a number of different settings. Throughout this time, I witnessed how easily children and young people assume the role of carer, usually without complaint.

There may be a variety of different reasons, which can lead to parentification, or the reversal of roles within families, but this case study focuses on two specific areas of practice; these are: working with parental substance misuse, and mental health issues.

While there may be increased risks associated with children living with parental substance misuse or parental mental health issues, there are not always safeguarding concerns or difficulties in parenting capacity (Davies & Ward, 2011; Velleman & Templeton, 2016). The harm, which remains hidden, is the harm which occurs when children and young people assume the role of carer without support or recognition. During practice as a child and family social worker, I observed how children and young people who are in this situation often lack routine and live chaotic lives.

Children in this situation are likely to experience a poor diet, and to miss school and health appointments. Despite the impact that caring responsibilities can have on children and young people, many young carers are very loyal to their parents, and often reluctant to disclose the full extent of their responsibilities in case they are removed from the family home (Sempik & Becker, 2014).

Unfortunately, my contact with young carers often came when the child/young person transitioned from a child in need to being a child at risk of significant harm. One of the most traumatic cases I experienced concerned a mother and her two children aged 5 and 7 years.

The seven-year-old was a young carer. The case only reached the attention of local Child and Family services following a house fire in which the family was involved.

For a number of years, the mother had been able to manage her alcohol dependency, her paid work and the care of her children. Unfortunately, when she lost her job. her alcohol dependency became more acute and she found it difficult to provide care for them. The situation continued to deteriorate and concerns were noted by the children's school, because their appearance was sometimes dishevelled and they appeared to have lost weight, however no action was taken and no referrals were made to the local authority statutory Child and Family Services. The situation was not judged to present as a risk to the two children.

The elder child, a boy, was fiercely devoted to his mother and had promised her he would not tell anyone about their situation because he had been told that, if he did, he and his sister would be "taken away". He provided physical and emotional care for both his mother and his sister. He washed clothes, helped his younger sister to dress, cooked meals and cleaned. On one occasion, whilst he was cooking baked beans, a dishtowel caught fire, which ignited the curtains in the kitchen. The boy managed to pull both his mother and his sister out of the flat before the fire brigade arrived.

Consequently, the children were moved into foster care because of concerns they were being neglected and an assessment of potential further risk of significant harm was undertaken. However, despite reassurance, the boy believed that he had failed his mother and that it was his fault that he and his sister were placed in state care.

Unfortunately, there is a popular view that mental health issues and substance

misuse are personal and moral failings rather than being social and health issues that require support and treatment. Within this context, parents who misuse drugs or alcohol are often judged as irresponsible or failing parents (Manning, Best, Faulkner, & Titherington, 2009). This negative and oppressive view can have the effect of reducing both the parents' and the children's willingness to seek and engage with support, as the above case exemplifies, consequently this presents a significant barrier to valuable early engagement with support services.

Reflecting on the social work practice lessons from this particular case, there appear to be two major ones. First, the extent to which adult and children's services work effectively together to assess concerns and support families varies considerably. This lack of communication can exacerbate the isolation that young carers experience. The importance of effective, multi-agency working where children are vulnerable or at risk has been consistently highlighted by the *Working Together* statutory guidance (Department for Education, 2018).

Second, young carers are often resilient and usually want to continue with their caring responsibilities because they do not want to disrupt the family or risk being placed in state care. Our priority as social workers should be to provide the type of support which serves to strengthen children's resilience. Within this context, one key aspect of the social work process should be to listen to what children and young people are saying and involve them in professional discussions about their own care and that of their parent(s) and siblings. McGibbon et al. (2018) undertook a qualitative piece of research examining the experiences of 22 young carers in Northern Ireland. The aim of the study was to identify factors which could both challenge or develop young carers' resilience. The results demonstrated that providing young carers with knowledge about their parent's illness and involving them in care-planning discussions had a positive impact on their resilience.

Historically, professionals have been criticised for their lack of focus on the child, making the child almost *invisible* (Munro, 2011). Bee, Berzins, Calam, Pryjmachuk, and Abel (2013) suggest that professionals can fail to take into consideration the views of children, and fail to share information with them about what is happening to their parents. A further risk in my experience is that professionals may focus more attention on the needs and views of the parent, and not fully consider the child's perspective.

Second case study

This second case study, also from the UK and provided by the lead author, offers an example of what can be accomplished with young carers when interventions can be planned, and when the rights of children under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention On the Rights of Children are respected, and their voices are heard and acted upon.

During my time working for a London based local authority, I had the opportunity to co-work a case involving a young adult carer, with social workers employed in statutory child protection services in a Family Support and Protection team, which had responsibility for managing longer-term interventions with families.

It began as an urgent referral about spousal domestic abuse, involving a mother of four children. There was a history of domestic violence in the relationship, however, on this occasion the attack resulted in the mother being hospitalised because of her injuries. At that point, she terminated the relationship with her husband and brought charges against him, for which he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Sadly, the mother was diagnosed with a serious illness and subsequently died. Prior to her death, a lot of careful work was done with the children to ascertain their wishes about their future. They wanted four things, to

remain together as a sibling group, and for the eldest sibling to be their caregiver, to have no contact with their father, and finally to stay in their family home, (a local housing association flat). The eldest child was 18, legally an adult in the UK, the youngest child was eight, and there were two children between these two ages. The social worker involved was committed to hearing the voices of children in this family, to putting them at the heart of the social work process and to ensuring they had the support they needed to become an independent family unit in the care of their eldest sibling. It was what the children wanted, but it was obviously a considerable responsibility and commitment for the eldest sister to assume at her age and her stage.

The children were able to access wrap-around support services for their newly constituted family that ensured that the children's schools were aware of their situation, and that the eldest sibling was able to pursue study; they accessed ongoing family and individual counselling, and had sufficient financial support.

At the time of my involvement, legal orders were in the process of being finalised. In a family meeting I attended, the social worker carefully outlined the impending court processes required to finalise the legal guardianship and custody orders. The social worker then met with each of the children individually, including the eldest sibling. Something that struck me, as the youngest child showed me around their home, was the large notice board in the kitchen covered in messages about the children's individual achievements, and group notes to self about what they were proud of about their family. This was a visual demonstration of their collective identity as a functional, competent, successful, hopeful family. The social worker had formed a strong bond with each of the children, strong enough for

the youngest girl to confide how much she still missed her mother, and be comforted by his response.

Albeit that the time frames were different for both the cases cited, this example has been included to demonstrate how well it is possible to support young carers when interventions can be planned, focussed, prioritise the voices of children, and address the challenges of their daily lives in a holistic way.

Discussion

It is usual for children to contribute to the smooth running of a household by undertaking some cleaning, and or cooking and supervision of younger siblings. In fact, these chores are often encouraged and considered developmentally desirable. These expectations become problematic, as noted, however, when the caring responsibilities and tasks required of children and young people are excessive or inappropriate for the child's age and stage, and negatively impact their education, well-being, social networks, and life opportunities.

Recent literature and practitioner experience suggests strongly that, when working with young carers and their families, it is important to respect and achieve a balance between a duty of care toward young carers, whilst respecting their contribution to family life and acknowledging family relationships are reciprocal and interdependent (Phelps, 2017; Research in Practice, 2016). This is, as the first case demonstrates, a delicate balance to maintain.

Worldwide, social work interventions for young carers are generally limited (Cunningham et al., 2017). Although social workers in the UK have a statutory duty of care under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 to assess the situation of young carers, mechanisms for screening and assessing the needs of young carers vary in quality, are inconsistent, or do not exist (Aldridge, 2018). In addition,

despite the implementation of appropriate legislation, progress toward realising the legal requirement to offer assessments to young carers remains very slow (Cheesbrough et al., 2017). There are a number of reasons for this. The most obvious is the broader systemic impact of austerity on contracting social care budgets, and a refocusing of funds away from prevention and early intervention towards risk management.

The lack of progress on attention to young carers may also be related to the way this group of children and young people are positioned in the child-protection discourse. Young carers are often a silent, taken-for-granted, population. They are largely invisible, do not complain and, when identified, are usually seen as being "in need" rather than "at risk",' i.e., children who require support as opposed to children who are at risk of significant harm. They perform an important social function keeping families together and often do not seek recognition. The first case that was reported on demonstrates what happens to young carers when their situation becomes an emergency that requires urgent involvement with statutory child and family services. At this point, as was evidenced, the state takes over, and young carers may not be involved in the decisions made in respect to their future. They manage unrealistic expectations and responsibilities as best they can until it becomes too much for them and then, to place a further burden on them, circumstances are taken out of their control as though their former contribution was meaningless.

This paper seeks to challenge the low visibility, and lack of recognition young carers experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. This group is recognised in the UK, and has received attention from researchers and charitable organisations since the 1980s. Why is it that a legal duty of care toward young carers is enshrined in two major pieces of UK legislation, but they receive so little attention in Aotearoa New Zealand? Why,

we ask ourselves, do the most recent figures from the UK estimate that there are 166,363 young people identified as young carers (Cheesbrough et al., 2017; Phelps, 2017), and no statistical recognition of this group of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand? This may have something to do with attitudes towards personalised informal care which is the norm for many families, or how children's informal care work is socially constructed in Aotearoa New Zealand (McDonald et al., 2009). One possibility is that caring work done by children is minimised and reframed as normal: "a little bit of house work never hurts anyone, it didn't do me any harm." It may well be that the combination of these factors contributes to the invisibility and invalidation of young carers' experiences. In Aotearoa New Zealand, we argue, if the current social construction of young carers continues to be accepted as a norm within families, rather than acknowledged as an issue, the long-term potential exploitation of this group's labour and domestic servitude will continue.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) (United Nations, 1989). Article 12 (1) of this convention places an obligation for agencies to involve children in decisions that affect them. The rights of children, however, to have a voice in respect of their own self-determination, and the processes affecting their lives, have been deemed controversial (Smith, 2016). The right to participate alters the perception of a child from being a passive recipient of adults' actions, to one that sees children as separate social actors—people in their own right (Smith, 2016). Apropos of this, Phelps (2017) suggests the voice of the young child needs to be heard and "filtered through the prism of professional understanding based on legislation and the rights of the child" (p. 118).

However, before these rights can be upheld, the group's status needs to be acknowledged. The recognition of children as social actors, rights' holders, and as having living rights

will assist with many of the social work practice challenges identified in naming and subsequently working respectfully with young carers and their families. The concept of children and young people as social actors views children and young people as active in the construction of their own lives not just as the objects of adult concern, but able to exercise self-determination and articulate independent viewpoints in their own right. Smith (2016) comments that children are rights' holders and this involves recognising that, as such, they should be empowered to make claims and hold to account, social workers and families, who are recognised as primary and secondary duty bearers, for protecting the rights of all children. Associated with this, the idea of living rights incorporates the need for children's rights to exist beyond policies and legislation as meaningfully contextualised within their daily lives so as to make a make a real and discernible difference. Leanne's situation, for example, as referenced at the beginning of this article, is unlikely to enable her to get a tertiary education qualification. For this to happen, young carers need the backing of social workers, as primary duty holders, to support them to have a voice, as well as the opportunity to use it, to make their living rights meaningful (Smith, 2016). The participation of young carers is essential to gain insight into this unique role and the variety of family circumstances that necessitate it and thus enabling the development of an appropriate social policy context to support practice with this group (Phelps, 2017).

Conclusion

Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory to the UNCRC and, according to Article 12, the state has a responsibility to guarantee that all children have a voice, to recognise that they are capable of forming their own views, have the right to express their views and have them taken seriously. This paper argues that young carers are a hard-to-reach and potentially vulnerable population of children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand who, as an identifiable group, do not get due recognition and attention from social workers as primary duty holders. Their lack of visibility is concerning, given what overseas research and practice suggests about the challenges facing this group, and what is already known about the support they often need to ensure their own needs are not sacrificed for the needs of those for whom they are caring.

As a profession, we owe it to this group of children, young people and young adults to do better by them. A good start would be to recognise their unique status, and to establish with them what they need.

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PREVENT, safeguarding and the common-sensing of social work in the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) passed in the United Kingdom (UK) made it mandatory for social workers, as well as a wide range of caring professionals, to work within the PREVENT policy, originally introduced in 2002, as one strand of the UK's overall counter-terrorism policy.

METHOD: The paper offers a theoretical account of how complex issues, like terrorism, that understandably impact on the safety and security of countries, are reduced to a series of assertions, claims and panics that centre on the notion of common sense.

IMPLICATIONS: We theorise the concept of common sense and argue that such rhetorical devices have become part of the narrative that surrounds the PREVENT agenda in the UK, which co-opts social workers (and other public servants) into an increasingly securitised environment within the state. In other words, the appeal to common sense stifles critical debate, makes it hard to raise concerns and positions debates in a binary manner. We use the example of how there has been a decisive linking of traditional safeguarding social work practice with counter-terrorism activity.

CONCLUSIONS: We posit that linkages such as this serve to advance a more closed society, resulting in a "chilling" of free speech, an increase in surveillance and the unchecked advancement of a neoliberal political agenda which promotes economic considerations over issues of social justice. This we argue, has implications for not only the UK, but for other countries where social workers are increasingly being tasked with counter-terrorism activities.

KEYWORDS: safeguarding; counter-terrorism; social work; PREVENT

We wrote a very early version of this paper in the aftermath of a terrorist attack on the UK's Houses of Parliament in March 2017, during which a policeman and four tourists tragically lost their lives. A lone attacker drove down Westminster Bridge, running people over before stabbing a policeman at the gates at the House of Parliament. We recall this event all too well, as well as previous terrorist attacks in the UK, namely the 2005, 7 July bombings in London, whereby 52 people lost their lives and over 700 were injured. Other terrorist attacks in the UK include the 2007 Glasgow airport attack, whereby a car filled with explosives was rammed into the doors of the main terminal; the London Bridge terrorist attack in 2018, where eight people died; and the Manchester Arena attack a few months later, whereby a lone attacker detonated a bomb that killed 22 people, some of whom were young fans of Ariana Grande who was

playing in concert that night. These were, and still are, difficult to understand and process for citizens and rightly cause fear and anxiety. Indeed, as residents of London and Glasgow, we share those continued anxieties about our safety and, like any other citizens, are broadly in favour of counter-terrorism measures to ensure that those who wish to do harm in the name of religion or politics, are rightfully prevented from carrying out devastating terrorist attacks.

What we increasingly note, however, are what we describe as thin and common-sense narratives that often dominate discussion about terrorism and how to prevent terrorism. Alongside this, such common-sense narratives have also crept into social work policy and practice in the UK. We set about here to interrogate the UK's counter-terrorism policy, PREVENT, as a prime example of a common-sense narrative, and the detrimental impact this has on social work in particular. Accordingly, we critically explore PREVENT, by drawing on the works of Italian political philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, utilising his concepts of hegemony and common sense that are central to his thinking. Using the theoretical proviso of common-sense narratives, we will explore how the anxiety around terrorism and violent extremism, mobilises thin discourses that advance the aims of the neoliberal project embodied in Britain by the current government while, at the same time, eroding a desire for a more egalitarian society characterised by a more equal distribution of wealth and greater equality.

Our key aim is to critically consider how such counter-terrorism policies may serve to reframe, and reduce the role and emancipatory tasks of social workers, while developing a new professional reality for social work driven by securitisation and surveillance, rather than traditional social work values of empowerment, liberation and conscientization. We will argue that social work professionals in UK and other Western democracies are increasingly being deployed as agents of state securitisation. We will

explore the surreptitious methods by which this is facilitated and the ways in which policy and practice deploy series of objects, images and linguistic devices to promote a sense of global insecurity (Massumi, 2015) which restricts traditional sites for the development of empowering narratives central to social work practice. The article begins with a brief overview of the UK's PREVENT policy in order to contextualise subsequent theoretical explorations.

PREVENT

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the USA, many Western democracies, including the UK, subsequently revised their counter-terrorism policies. The UK's overall counter-terrorism policy, known as CONTEST was introduced in 2003, with further amendments in 2009, 2011 and 2018. CONTEST covers what has become known as the "Four P's": Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The PREVENT policy aims at, firstly, identifying those at risk of or suspected of extremism and radicalisation and, secondly, preventing people being drawn into terrorism. The Government's definition of extremism is as follows:

> Vocal or active oppositions to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faith and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism, calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. (HM Government, 2014)

And radicalisation is defined as the:

> …process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism, committing terrorist acts either abroad or on home ground. (HM Government, 2014)

The PREVENT policy, however, was ramped up significantly when in July 2015, The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

came into force in the UK. This requires a number of specified agencies, including schools, colleges, prisons, local authorities, and higher education establishments to actively promote "British values" (McKendrick & Finch, 2016). It also places a legal duty on such professionals to work within the PREVENT agenda. In other words, such practitioners must now identify and report those deemed to be at risk of extremism and terrorism, possibly work with security services to assess the level of risk, and, provide services if required.

For social workers, now under a statutory obligation to work within the PREVENT agenda, this poses distinct ethical challenge, not least of which is being caught up so decisively in the state's security apparatus (Finch & McKendrick, 2015). We also note the co-opting of the term "safeguarding" within the PREVENT agenda which, in our view, deliberately attempts to frame such social work interventions in a benevolent, simplistic and common-sense manner. We now move on to consider the meaning of common sense, and how, a benign and everyday word is increasingly cynically and worryingly applied in complex social policy spheres.

Gramsci and common sense

The call for a common-sense approach is a familiar rallying cry from a range of neoliberal actors. For example, when Michael Gove was the UK Secretary of State in 2012, while extolling the virtues of early interventions in Children and Families work and the positive influence this could have on placing children for adoption, he called for social workers to deploy a common-sense approach to the issue of inter-racial adoption by placing black children with white families (UK Government, 2012). Further examples of politicians extolling the need for common sense include Boris Johnson who, in the BREXIT campaign, excused his own racist attitudes by suggesting it was common sense to feel afraid seeing a group of black youths when out running (Jeffries, 2016).

Former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, regularly invoked the notion of common sense in his speeches. For example, on one occasion urging social workers to use common sense when dealing with suspected cases of child abuse (Holeman, 2015) and in relation to Ashya King, a seriously ill child who was removed from hospital and taken abroad by his parents (against doctors' advice), Cameron called for an "urgent outbreak of common-sense" (More-Briger, 2014). Indeed, the common-sense rhetoric continues with Iain Duncan-Smith, referring to, at the time of writing, then current Prime Minister Theresa May's remark about the need for tighter immigration controls after the Westminster attack as common sense (BBC News, 2017).

The deployment of this particular phrase seems to indicate that there is some kind of sense that is held in common, an immutable, obvious, simple sense that is so obvious to everyone that it does not require description, qualification or explanation. Common sense in this particular idiom, suggests a set of ideals and values that are so recognisable, non-controversial, and straightforward, so widely shared and accepted, that there is no other realistic, viable alternative. The point of view described as common sense, is just so obvious and irrefutably true. Further, one who does recognise or deviates from this common-sense view, must be considered a potential risk to society. We suggest, however, that the concept of common sense needs urgent attention and critical analysis, because of its profligate and indiscriminate use in social work and other policy arenas.

A critique of the concept of common sense is offered by Gramsci (1973). He describes common sense as a linguistic device used to support the existence of hegemony. Gramsci (1973) describes hegemony as the state of being where powerful elites, the state or juridical government, exercise "direct domination or command" (1973, p. 12) over the population, or as Gramsci referred to them, "subalterns" (1973, p. 12). Common sense is deployed by elites therefore, as a

disciplinary vehicle to ensure their position of power remains unchallenged, hence allowing it to remain secure and to be expanded. Subalterns are viewed with a sense of disdain and are seen as unlikely to challenge the ideas being suggested as they are delivered by those in power. To further maintain this hegemony, the development of a sense of "feeling as opposed to knowing" (1973, p. 418) is vital; hegemony requires a domination of the media and other methods of communication by those in power. Further, matters pertaining to national security are presented, using a performative narrative which utilises iconic imagery.

If we relate this to events in London, immediately following the March 2017 attack on Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament referred to at the outset of this paper, images of the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and red London buses were frequently deployed, while Parliament itself was described as the "cradle of democracy" by many news outlets in the UK and beyond. We noted that references to the Blitz were frequent, and the indomitable spirit of Londoners was a common theme across the reporting of the event (see for example, *The Daily Mirror*, 2017). While to some extent accurate (indeed, one of the authors of this paper who resides in London, was rather defiantly making statements of getting on with it and not being afraid when travelling on the London transport system the following day), such responses can also be seen as what Mayo (2008) describes as "distorted and fragmentary" (Mayo, 2008, p. 430) deliberately amplifying cultural references that evoke familiar and powerful remembrances, emphasising Britain as an island nation proud of its independence and resilience. These versions of events are mobilised and reinforced by powerful intellectuals and actors, including for example, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who proclaimed that the events were "an attack on the very heart of our democracy and the symbols of the values we cherish so much..." (UK Government, 2017).

Gramsci described such processes as "diffuse uncoordinated features of a general form of thought common to a particular period and a particular popular environment" (1973, p. 300). In the case of the London attack, the reinforcement of hegemonic power through cultural iconography supports a narrative of resilience and stoicism, simultaneously providing reassurance while reinforcing a familiar uniqueness of British life. As a device, this set of linguistic and cultural references are deliberately deployed to reinforce to subalterns that hegemonic power is retaining control despite the reality of the current crisis and the threat of future attacks. A feature of hegemony is its control over the media and its ability to manage and co-ordinate a clear message which maintains the imbalance between hegemony and the subaltern masses. It is of interest to note that the development of social media has been a site of concern for the hegemony as it struggles to develop a means of control over a diffuse and novel method of communication. Whilst, in the context of a sustained series of terrorist attacks this may be understandable, it can also in the current circumstances, be seen as a retrenchment of privacy for all and an opportunity for the government to advance its involvement in the private lives of its citizens. Policies such as PREVENT and its proponents, employ such "distorted and fragmentary" narratives, as well as bring about surveillance and securitisation creep, which will usher in the potential demise of traditionally caring and emancipatory professions.

Common sense and neoliberalism

In a more recent exploration of the politics of common sense, Hall and O'Shea (2015) describe it as:

> ...a form of "everyday thinking" which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world. It is a form of popular, easily-available knowledge which contains no complicated ideas, requires no sophisticated argument and does not

depend on deep thought or wide reading. It works intuitively, without forethought or reflection. It is pragmatic and empirical, giving the illusion of arising directly from experience, reflecting only the realities of daily life and answering the needs of "the common people" for practical guidance and advice. (2015, p. 8)

In other words, common-sense explanations for complex world events for example, provide the populace with simple certainties. Equally, when politicians call for a common-sense approach, this has a resonance with the populace, who can intuitively, and very easily, without thought or reflection, grasp, understand and make sense of such everyday problems and on the surface, simple and seemingly effective solutions to these potentially anxiety-provoking issues. Thin narratives are thus effectively employed.

Hall and O'Shea (2015) argue that common-sense narratives have been deployed, for example, as a vehicle to obviate the effects of the profligate behaviour of bankers and venture capitalist which resulted in the financial crisis of 2007–2008 and, further, have been used as:

> …an alibi for a far reaching and further restructuring of state and society along market lines with a raft of ideologically driven reform designed to advance privatisation and marketization. (2015, p. 11)

Furthermore, they contend that neoliberalism unfairly targets the most vulnerable in society in a process where the state bears the responsibility for the socialisation of debt accrued, while profits from this process (in the forms of bonuses for bankers gained as a result of the required restructuring following the crash) have been subsumed by private individuals or institutions. This has significant and worrying consequences for those who are experiencing vulnerability as public services suffer under the ideology of austerity. In real terms this sees brutal cuts to public service budgets resulting in significant losses to jobs and services.

The application of this form of common sense creates a doctrine of competitive individualism where the accrual of wealth and power is seen to be located in the strength of character of the individual; the familiar call for the unemployed to "get on their bike" to look for work voiced by former UK Conservative MP Norman Tebbit in the 1980s is rephrased and modernised into a strivers v skivers dichotomy favoured by Cameron and his former Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne. In this febrile environment, the influence of wider political and social structures is ignored and those who are left behind in society are perceived as lacking in moral ability and courage. Standing (2011) argues that one result of this is that a new precariat class has emerged, one that is defined by mobility and its social and economic uncertainty. Referring to the neoliberal project, Standing (2011) states:

> …it reveres competitiveness and celebrates unrestrained individual responsibility, with an antipathy to anything collective…The state's role is seen as primarily setting and strengthening the rule of law. But the law has never been minimalist, as some neoliberals depict it. It is intrusive and orientated towards curbing nonconformity and collective action. (2011, p. 132)

In brief, the neoliberal regime needs, despite protestations to the contrary, an intrusive and strong government to ensure its ideology flourishes. Standing (2011) sees a significant shift from collectivist postwar welfare regimes to one that sees those with wealth and power increasing their global reach and power while those in poverty experience greater risk, insecurity and precarity. We are making the argument therefore, that the continuing penetration of neoliberal ideology is supported by the hegemonic creation of a common sense that asserts that there is no other way or, as has

been a long-standing popular Conservative politician refrain, originally popularised by former Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne and then taken up by former Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, "we are all in this together" (see, for example, *The Guardian*, 2012).

In a Gramscian view, the oppressive nostrums of neoliberalism thus curtail an alternative from emerging, and a series of straw men are created to divert the subalterns' attention from the hegemony's continued dominance. So, as we argue, a threat of terrorism, and those who perpetrate it, diverts attention away from increasing curtailment of civil liberties, increased surveillance, securitisation creep and the demonisation of particular communities or faith groups, namely, Muslim communities who become in effect, "straw men" and are "othered".

Hall and O'Shea (2015) argue further that the state is travelling in an explicitly neoliberal direction, one which emphasises a free individual, engaging with others, without government interference, through market transactions, scaffolded by images, ideas and linguistic devices which, when taken together, represent the hegemonic notion of common sense which supports the permeation of neoliberalism into every aspect of our society. As it can be seen, traditional collectivist ideas embodied in the welfare state of collectivism, strength in unity and the power of working-class movements are diminished through the establishment of new common sense vocabularies described by Massey (2015) as:

> …the vocabularies which have reclassified roles, identities, and relationships – of people, places and institutions – and the practice which enact[s] them embody and enforce the ideology of neoliberalism, and thus a new capitalist hegemony. (2015, p. 26)

Having established the relationship between hegemony, common sense and neoliberalism, we return to the PREVENT agenda and give consideration to the role PREVENT plays in operationalising what Gandy (1993) described as the panoptic sort, a method of social surveillance developed by marketing professionals to identify and classify people who can then be targeted for particular goods or services. We will develop the argument that a policy like PREVENT is a natural consequence of the furthering of the neoliberal agenda, utilising a securitising narrative to create a non-problematic and common-sense relationship between safeguarding and radicalisation.

Safeguarding, securitisation and radicalisation

Fergusson (2007) argues that recent developments in social work policy have seen a shift in the terrain, away from generalised notions of welfare towards more personalised approaches which see the individual as paramount. Fergusson (2007) argues that this comes about at the expense of more traditional social work notions that emphasise the centrality of structural issues that impact on the lives of individuals. He argues that this shift has supported the neoliberal tenet of the transfer of risk from the state to the individual, and, that this transfer is activated through policies such as personalisation. We would develop this further and suggest it can also be seen most decisively in policies like PREVENT. Giddens (1991) describes the concept of "ontological security" which is often used in international relations, and refers to a sense of mental stability that is derived from the security and familiarity of surroundings that can be challenged by chaotic, unpredictable and unexpected events. We advance the argument that, in the immediate aftermath of the Westminster attack, a similar set of events occurred which aimed to increase a sense of national ontological security; the apprehension and death of the attacker was an immediate action which eliminated the risk and the swift media led diffusion of iconic imagery, created a sense of familiarity which worked against the chaos of the attack. The use of iconic imagery by the

media and the promotion of a wartime spirit was mobilised as an evocative set of images and ideas which provided a sense of national familiarity and supported the reinstitution of a feeling of calm.

Similarly, the development of PREVENT along familiar, and to some extent, social work, lines of safeguarding, provides both ontological security for practitioners and the general public alike and can be seen as related to a key neoliberal ideological underpinning, that of avoiding assigning responsibility to societal structures and deeply ingrained inequalities, but rather, emphasising the role of the individual. The term *safeguarding* was therefore decisively co-opted into policy pronouncements and the practices of PREVENT (Finch & McKendrick, 2019). Social workers' (and other professionals') statutory duty to work with PREVENT was promoted as part of normal, everyday safeguarding procedures. Likewise, the promotion by UK politicians of the similarities between online sexual groomers and online radicalisers for example, allowed a familiar notion of wickedness mediated through the internet; the virtual predator hiding on the internet setting a carefully laid trap to entice vulnerable young people into their world where they can be exploited for the nefarious purposes of the paedophile/radicaliser. While we are in no way seeking to undermine this as a reality, we are seeking to develop a more carefully considered and critical discussion around the issues that this exposes.

Ontological security depends, in no small way, on the establishment of a set of images, ideas and debates that the population can engage with in a way that is familiar, and therefore comfortable for them. It is our contention that there are significant differences between online radicalisation and online sexual exploitation. Primarily, those involved in online radicalisation would claim that they are motivated by religion, or a particular political ideology masked as religion, and a sense of political

imperatives that relate in some way to the actions of Western colonialism. Online sexual exploitation does not exist in these dimensions; rather it relates to a desire for sexual and personal gratification that connects to a sense of power (or powerlessness). We strongly suggest that policies that seek to reduce online radicalisation and online grooming need to tread a careful path that ensures they take into account these subtle differences in application and motivation. An urgent need exists therefore, to ensure that policies such as PREVENT are subject to a rigorous academic and professional discussion, as well as empirical research, particularly given the sensitivity of the issues involved and the vulnerability of those whose lives are affected by them, to appreciate the similarities and perhaps, more importantly, highlight the differences in both of them. We have noted for example, the paucity of literature within social work in the UK about PREVENT with only ourselves, Stanley and Guru (2015), and Stanley, Guru, and Gupta (2018) exploring this from a theoretical standpoint.

PREVENT is a neoliberal policy that strongly emphasises the actions of individuals while downplaying the role of the state or other structural actors. To that end, its close relationship, and indeed, the deliberate adoption of traditionally welfarist social work terms such as *safeguarding*, should not allow for a situation where the issues are regarded as the same. As it stands, the current iteration of PREVENT with its emphasis on ontological security fits the safeguarding rhetoric perfectly, as it sees risk being constructed in intimate individual relationships and has little or no tangible connection with structural factors. This was recognised by Emerson (2016) in his role as Special Rapporteur on Terrorism when he observed that many states conceptualised radicalisation in an overly simplistic way that was:

> …based on a simplistic understanding of the process as a fixed trajectory to violent extremism with identifiable markers along the way. (2016, p. 7)

In other words, Emerson is arguing that the existing response to radicalisation lacks a depth of knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the issue at hand and so the resulting policies are unlikely to be the most effective method of intervention. Emerson (2016) goes on to say:

> States have tended to focus on those [approaches] that are most appealing to them, shying away from the more complex issues, including political issues such as foreign policy and transnational conflicts. (2016, p. 7)

We concur with Emerson, as well as other academics for example, Kundani, (2015), Thomas, (2010) and Sabir (2017), that PREVENT is conceptually flawed, as it deliberately promotes an overly simplistic understanding of the complexity of the issue and, as we argue, deploys a common sense notion of "safeguarding as exactly the same as radicalisation" when they have, in our view, significant differences, most notably in the intrinsic motivation and indeed, agency, of those involved in the different activities. If we seek to impact the phenomena of radicalisation and online radicalisation then, we argue, that a Gramscian notion of "good sense" needs to be deployed, in that current responses are mired in the notion of "common sense".

Good sense requires recognition that, in a climate of panic where notions of ontological security are advanced, it is unlikely that the responses that are developed are well thought through and subject to discipline and rigour. The issue of radicalisation is thus multi-layered and presents in different ways in different individuals; however, in almost all cases, it is not solely located in the personal but has a significant connection with the political and structural (Kundani, 2015; Sabir, 2017). Developing a meaningful challenge requires a careful consideration of how the structures that currently exist are equipped to manage the challenges represented by the issue of radicalisation. We will now go on to consider the existing

arrangements for countering violent extremism and offer some considerations of their motivation and their effectiveness.

Countering violent extremism

Buzan (1983) argues that the individual is an "irreducible basic unit to which security can be applied" (1983, p. 243) which dovetails with the notion of individual responsibility that Ferguson (2007) referred to. We contend that, in the tense social and political climate that emerges in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, the influence of external, structural factors such as the political environment or the dominance of a particular economic model is understated. The outcome of this is that (potentially) legitimate societal issues become pathologised as individualised responses, and are not fully taken into account. Simultaneously, a deliberate obscuring of the responsibility that should be borne by the oppressor occurs and sees the oppressor presenting themselves as a victim of an "evil" often coming in the form of a seemingly unsolicited attack on a vulnerable, innocent population.

We argue that PREVENT promotes exactly this set of circumstances as it conceptualises the actions of those it focuses on as located out with any sphere of societal responsibility. PREVENT thus promotes a perception of the pathologised individual and operates in a pre-criminal space which places a requirement on public service workers, such as librarians, nurses, teachers and social workers to be attuned to the threat of radicalisation and to be aware of the referral mechanisms for people whom they suspect of becoming radicalised. As documented earlier, and unsurprisingly, PREVENT has come in for extensive criticism, operating as it does in a moral and ethical dimension that is at odds with the basic tenets of most of the caring professions required for its operation.

The universalism that is at the heart of PREVENT blurs the professional distinctions between those on the "front line" (Coppock & McGovern, 2014) of deradicalisation and

presumes that all public servants have the skills and, indeed, the opportunities to detect the so called "signs and symptoms" of radicalisation. This approach reminds the authors of early child protection training which provided student social workers with images of injuries sustained by children often at the hands of their parents and carers, and then provided lists of the so called "signs and symptoms". This, while useful in an observational sense, is deeply personalised and did little to locate professionals in a place where they can challenge the social phenomenon of child protection. As the work of Featherstone, Morris, and White (2014), Parton (2014) and Garrett (2013) has identified, the issue of poverty is central to child protection, with such activity being more common in deprived environments. The "airbrushing" (McNicol, 2017) of structural factors from the gamut of professional responsibility of social workers paves the way for an increase in pathologised responses (such as signs of safety) as opposed to the development of a professional identity that sees social workers as agents of social change as well as agents of social control. Counter-radicalisation work offers a powerful example of the ascendance of pathologised responses that emphasise the personal over the impact of structural issues that are a result of the dominance of neoliberal ideology.

Social work exists in a demanding professional environment, external factors such as austerity and a national government that seems at odds with central tenets of social work activity such as collectivism and an awareness of geopolitical factors on the actions of individuals, are complicated by internal factors such as aggressive inspection regimes which have the power to remove social work activity from local government while ensuring that local government retains responsibility for any errors. Indeed, there exists a culture of moral hyper-regulation which sees professionals as "24/7" social workers (Banks, 2008; Petrie, 2009) required to uphold public trust and confidence in social work, the result of which is that social

work and social workers are prevented from challenging neoliberalism or at least run the risk of referral to regulatory bodies should they do so on "competence" grounds.

Conclusion

We conclude by arguing that such securitised and so-called "common-sense" policies and practices are evidence of the increased prominence of neoliberalism in social work training, education and service delivery. As a result, significant importance is placed on the ontological security provided by a raft of performance measures, management information and recruitment and retention detail that are a cornerstone of the neoliberal project. These practices are introduced at the expense of ideas of the commons, public good, and the desire to see a better, more equal and fair society, all of which better accords with social work values in the UK, and as enshrined in the International Federation of Workers definition of the practices, purpose and values of social work.

We argue that current social work practices are becoming embodied by the common sensing of social work are a form of deliberate, premeditated, hegemonic activity designed to increase a sense of ontological security underpinned by a form of neoliberal governmentality. At its core, this approach places deliberate emphasis on activities, methods of training and intervention techniques that are exclusory, placing a deliberate over-emphasis on a pathologised, individuated set of responses that deploy a particular interpretation of the role of social workers as professionals who "work on" rather than "work with" families, as well as the significant turn to target individuals. The structural factors that play such a significant role are airbrushed out in favour of a set of responses motivated by new public management and the "performance dashboard" has obscured the belief in radical emancipatory politically motivated social work. We note that PREVENT and its associated practices are an acute example of such a decisive move, with the duty to

safeguard, moving decisively away from a welfarist model, to one of securitised safeguarding.

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Banging the same old colonial drum? Moving from individualising practices and cultural appropriation to the ethical application of alternative practices in social work

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Western conceptualisations of social work are increasingly interested in practices considered to be *alternative* or *non-traditional* to respond to oppression. While incorporating alternative methods into social work is frequently viewed as unproblematic, we suggest critical reflection is necessary to safeguard against inadvertent, culturally unsafe practice and the uncritical re-inscription of individualised solutions.

APPROACH: In this article, we explore the application of group drumming practices within social work through examination of a critical incident. While the benefits of group drumming are well documented, we use critical reflection to explore ethical challenges of incorporating group drumming practices into social work.

CONCLUSIONS: We highlight strategies for social workers using alternative or non-traditional practices that support cultural humility and critical practice goals. This research holds implications for social workers interested in the potential of alternative practices while remaining committed to critical practice and cultural safety.

KEYWORDS: Critical social work; critical reflection; group drumming; cultural safety

Social work has adopted primarily Western ways of working (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015; Healy, 2014). Within contemporary contexts dominated by neoliberalism and managerialism is the ascendance of particular modes of practice including individual therapies, case management, behaviour modification techniques, and risk assessment (Payne, 2014; Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015). In the last decade, there has been emerging interest in alternative methods. For example, there is currently research into using equine therapies in social work interventions (Acri, Hoagwood, Morrissey, & Zhang, 2016; Burgon, Gammage, & Hebden, 2017), incorporating yoga into social work (Behrman & Tebb, 2009; Mahaffey, 2016) and the benefits of mindfulness and meditation (Bo, Mao, & Lindsey, 2016; Garland, 2013; Winters & Beerbower, 2017). While poststructuralism celebrates diversification of practice, critical (modernist) theories caution about adopting approaches that potentially individualise structural problems, and reproduce and/ or impose colonialism. This article focuses

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on another alternative practice: group drumming in the tradition of djembe drumming (Bittman et al., 2001; Fancourt et al., 2016; Faulkner, Wood, Ivery, & Donovan, 2012; Ho, Tsao, Bloch, & Zeltzer, 2011) to consider the cultural and ethical issues raised by critical perspectives, including how structural concerns can be redefined as personal pathologies, and how uncritical applications of group drumming can lead to culturally unsafe practices such as cultural appropriation. Using critical reflection to examine a particular practice incident (Fook, 2016), we ultimately suggest ways to incorporate group drumming practices into social work that support critical practice.

Background to the study

Djembe drumming and social work

Djembe is a drum originally from West Africa and associated with creation myths and the intertwined histories of West African tribes and societies (Charry, 1996; Flaig, 2010). The drum is typically made from hardwood and goatskin and can produce many different sounds, making it a versatile drum suitable for playing in groups (Charry, 1996; Flaig, 2010). Sekou Toure, the first president of Guinea, has been credited with initiating the Western interest in djembe drumming (Charry, 1996; Flaig, 2010). Toure used djembe drumming styles from diverse groups within the newly founded country to create a national ballet and drumming group that led to international acclaim and interest (Charry, 1996; Flaig, 2010; Polak, 2005).

There have been numerous studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of group drumming with various population groups including: children and young people (Bittman et al., 2001; Branscombe, Chandler, & Little, 2016; Faulkner et al., 2012; Ho et al., 2011; Skewes McFerran, 2017; Wood, Ivery, Donovan, & Lambin, 2013); people accessing mental health services (Fancourt et al., 2016; Perkins, Ascenso, Atkins, Fancourt, & Williamon, 2016); and war veterans

(Friedman, 2000) for example. Group drumming practices have also been trialled as a self-care strategy for social workers (see for example, Bittman et al., 2003; Bittman et al., 2004; MacMillan, Maschi, & Tseng, 2012; Newman, Maggott, & Alexander, 2015). While the benefits of group drumming are well documented, questions exist about the often uncritical nature of the studies.

Group drumming as a social work practice with children and young people

The literature about group drumming as a social work practice with children and young people is predicated largely on a seminal study by Bittman et al. (2001), which is entirely biomedical in focus. Saliva samples measured increases in hormones associated with positive emotions following group drumming sessions. However, there was no social analysis about how long-term ill-health is exacerbated by social determinants. While useful for measuring the physiological benefits of group drumming, the focus on the physical/organic aspects of illness, without acknowledgement of the social conditions that cause or exacerbate health- related issues, is of limited use to social work.

Building on this study, Faulkner et al. (2012) describe the DRUMBEAT (Discovering Relationship Using Music, Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts) early intervention programme devised by the West Australian drug and alcohol treatment agency, Holyoake, which uses drumming to engage young people. The programme was developed in response to the difficulties of engaging young people (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people) with cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). All 60 students in the study were considered at increased risk of a range of negative health outcomes in later life. These histories included one or more of the following factors: social isolation, low academic performance, low self-esteem, family conflict, antisocial behaviour, sensation seeking, rebelliousness, high

absenteeism and experimental drug use. A total of 40% of participants were Indigenous. The study ultimately reports that self-esteem, school attendance, cooperation and collaboration increased for participants and there was a decline in antisocial behaviour. Yet, both the programme and its evaluation ignore the history of percussion unique to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and eschew the wider context of colonialism and oppression. Rather than dismantling oppressive structures, the programme offered drumming and CBT practices to assist young people to conform to the education system.

As a corollary, Wood et al. (2013) conducted a broader evaluation of the DRUMBEAT programme across 19 schools, indicating it provides a creative medium for at-risk young people and helps develop self-esteem and social relationship skills. Again, consideration of social factors that contribute to young people being *at risk* was absent from the analysis. As with the other studies, there was no acknowledgement of the cultural aspects of drumming practices with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, a Californian qualitative study (Ho et al., 2011) that focused on young people, primarily of Latino descent (90%), used teacher reports to measure the effectiveness of a school-based drumming program that was integrated with activities from group counselling. The study reported significant improvements in participants' social-emotional behaviour according to "narrow-band syndrome scales, DSM-oriented scales, and other scales" (Ho et al., 2011, p. 8). However, no consideration was given to the structural dimensions of inequality and the multiple stressors that low-income families experience. Hence, the programme was simply successful in making disadvantaged children behave in more socially acceptable ways to fit into the school environment, despite growing up in a divided society. There was also no

exploration of the potential for cultural appropriation, and other practices that may have already been embedded as part of the research participants' culture.

Better in this regard, Branscombe et al. (2016) made and played drums as part of the rituals and communication within the classroom to promote social cohesion. Given a number of the students were from African cultures, the authors identify the need for culturally safe practice on the part of teacher/facilitator. Skewes McFerran (2017) similarly identified the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive group facilitators who can skilfully manage power relations and cultural differences within the group. This research, however, does not consider issues of cultural appropriation and the potential for existing practices within their group's culture to be unearthed.

Group drumming in the mental health field

Group drumming literature in the mental health field is similarly dominated by psychological and biomedical discourses that individualise social problems and neglect cultural considerations. A recent study by Fancourt et al. (2016), for example, found group drumming decreased depression and anxiety in a group of mental health service users. This study's psychological and biomedical focus was indicated by its methods: standardised psychology questionnaires and collecting saliva samples.

Perkins et al. (2016) conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with the same study participants as Fancourt et al. (2016) to explore specific elements of the group drumming intervention that enhanced mental health. This study found the nature of drumming as a form of non-verbal communication, and as an inclusive space free from hierarchy, was the most significant contributing factor to mental health improvements (Perkins et al., 2016). This is a valuable finding as

these features of group drumming begin to address some of the social dimensions of people's experiences, many of whom may have difficulties communicating due to experiences of inequality and exclusion. However, the cultural appropriateness of using African drumming in the United Kingdom or other Western countries is left unexplored.

Group drumming as self-care for social workers

Group drumming has also been identified as an effective self-care practice for social workers. Some studies offer a rather narrow, psychologised view of stress, burnout and well-being (Bittman et al., 2003; Bittman et al., 2004). More contemporary studies explore drumming practice in terms of its capacity to contribute to social wellbeing (MacMillan et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2015). However, consistent with the literature on group drumming in other fields, none of the studies explore the ethics and cultural appropriateness of implementing group drumming from another culture. In addition, these studies also lack a critical analysis because they do not address why social workers might need to engage in so much self-care, thereby ignoring the harm of the neoliberal project and resulting managerial practices within social work systems and organisations.

Other benefits of group drumming

There are a handful of studies with populations deemed to be vulnerable that suggest group drumming can help (Friedman, 2000; Longhofer & Floresch, 1993; MacIntosh, 2003; Watson, 2002; Winkelman, 2003). A consistent limitation with all of these studies is their failure to question the ethics of co-opting practice from one culture, filtering it through the lens of the social worker and imposing that practice onto a vulnerable group. Friedman (2000) collected evidence of war veterans suffering with PTSD, psychiatric rehabilitation patients, Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease patients;

stroke and cancer patients, and autistic children as being aided by group drumming. Other groups reported to benefit from group drumming include people with substance abuse issues (Winkelman, 2003), adult male sex offenders (Watson, 2002), adult and adolescent trauma survivors (MacIntosh, 2003), and people diagnosed with major psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia (Longhofer & Floresch, 1993). However, in each of these studies, the issues are constructed within dominant psychologised and medicalised discourses that individualise social problems and use drumming as a way of treating an assumed pathology.

As a consistent theme throughout the literature, such uncritical applications of group drumming are problematic for social work that claims to promote social justice, human rights, to challenge social barriers and promote the liberation of people (Australian Association of Social Workers [AASW], 2010; Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], 2007). Indeed, Ramsden (2002), who developed the concept of cultural safety, would argue that manifestations of culturally unsafe practice, such as cultural appropriation, are more likely to emerge in the absence of the critical approaches. Consistent with critical social work, others agree that cultural safety involves addressing power dynamics, recognising the structural dimensions of people's lived experiences, valuing cultural identity, and engaging in self-critical reflection (see, for example, Frankland, Bamblett, & Lewis, 2011). Therefore, this study will develop a critical analysis of incorporating group drumming practices into social work, with consideration of relevant cultural and ethical issues.

Ethical considerations when utilising group drumming in social work

The literature suggests adoption of group drumming to enhance social work practice offers benefits for several populations.

However, if social work practice is to meet its espoused commitments to addressing inequality and injustice, critical analysis of the significant ethical and cultural considerations involved in incorporating group drumming into social work practice is fundamental (AASW, 2010; ANZASW, 2007).

Following explication of the underpinning theoretical framework, which is addressed next, the remainder of this article presents a critical reflection on one author's practice (Canice), using group drumming with Traveller children in Ireland. Irish Travellers are arguably the most stigmatised and disadvantaged group in Irish society (Gmelch & Gmelch, 2014; Ó hAodha, 2011). Travellers have existed for centuries in Ireland, moving around the countryside providing trades and services (Gmelch & Gmelch, 2014). Often confused with other Indigenous nomadic European groups, such as Roma, Travellers are native to Ireland with about 30,000 currently living there (Central Statistics Office, 2012). Discrimination has increased because of the modernisation of Ireland resulting in a decline in demand for trades and services provided by Travellers and their move to urban areas in search of work (Ó hAodha, 2011). This critical reflection examines the ethical and cultural considerations involved in adopting group drumming while working with Irish Travellers, with the intention of aligning such a practice with anti-oppressive social work ethics and values.

Towards a theoretical framework to explore the use of alternative practices

Critical theories

A number of critical theories inform this research. Modernist critical theories expose the root cause of social problems within social structures, thus challenging the location of problems with the individual. Given the emphasis on social, cultural, economic and historical conditions and contexts influencing individual and community experience (Mullaly, 2007), modernist critical theories highlight the need for social work to facilitate progressive social change, and not simply focus on practice strategies that help people adapt to injustice (Morley, 2014). Modernist critical theories also highlight white privilege. A key contribution of critical theory to this research then is the questioning of the power dynamics and ethics involved in a white Western male's appropriation of group drumming from a colonised African culture, and the application of this practice onto a cultural group: Traveller children in Ireland.

A critical form of poststructuralism also informed this research to elucidate dominant discourses, reveal unheard voices, and highlight possibilities to develop critical practices. Hence a version of critical theory that encompasses both modernist and poststructural insights was used both to critique potentially oppressive and exploitative practices retained (modernist critical perspective), and to connect the researcher with a sense of agency, to challenge social injustices, by considering diverse options for action (poststructuralism).

Poststructuralism allows recognition of the competing realities that, while engaging in group drumming may facilitate multiple benefits for people, it can simultaneously involve ethical breaches such as individualising practices, and culturally unsafe practices such as cultural appropriation. Specifically in this research, critical (modern and poststructural) theories were used to raise ethical questions about the adoption of cultural practices in social work, particularly in relation to: 1) the potential for ongoing cultural oppression of the group subjected to the practice; 2) the potential for cultural appropriation or cultural exploitation from the group within which the practice originated; and 3) the imposition of strategies (including alternative therapies, such as group drumming) that emphasise individualised change, rather than transformation of oppressive social

structures. The central research questions of this study are:

- How might social work incorporate alternative practices such as group drumming in more critical ways?

- How might critical reflection enable social workers who seek to incorporate alternative practices, such as group drumming into their practice, to do this in ways that respect cultural humility and the espoused social justice and emancipatory change values of the profession?

Critical reflection as a research methodology

Critical reflection is probably more widely known as an educational tool than a research methodology. However, in both applications it enables practitioners to identify and change implicit assumptions unhelpful for espoused/intended practice (Fook, 2016). Critical reflection challenges dominant ways of knowing and seeks to uncover new perspectives. It is grounded in the critical theory traditions outlined above (drawing on both modernist and poststructural appropriations of critical theory) (Fook, 2016), and uncovers how dominant discourses and structures reinforce oppressive practices through our actions, and highlights alternatives (Morley, 2008). In revealing how we contribute to the maintenance of the current social and power relations, critical reflection can create the "conceptual space" (Rossiter, 2005) to acknowledge this and consider emancipation from it (Fook, 1993; Rossiter, 2005).

Within critically reflective research, a critical incident from practice is documented to record the key challenges posed to the practitioner. A critical incident may present as an ethical dilemma, an unsettling or troubling incident, something that is a struggle to theorise, an incident involving a challenge to link theory and practice, or an incident considered to have been executed

particularly well (Fook, 2016). In this study, the researcher chose the critical incident because it represented all of these facets.

Using critical reflection as a methodology, the incident is then analysed using Fook's (2016) structured model of deconstruction and reconstruction. Deconstruction is the process of identifying and questioning the dominant discourses, values, assumptions, binary opposites, and the use of language in the research participant's account of a critical incident. This deconstructive analysis aims to reveal biases, contradictions, missing voices and alternative interpretations of the critical incident (Fook, 2016; Morley, 2008, 2014; Rossiter, 2005).

Having deconstructed the critical incident to unearth alternative interpretations, reconstruction is the next and final stage of the critical reflection research process. Reconstruction involves making new meanings of the incident with the intention of creating new knowledge that enables critical practice. This process is informed by the values of modernist critical theories, with the assistance of a poststructural lens that highlights multiple realities. This theoretical combination enables the creation of new understandings and practices that can, as in the case of this article, inform the development of critical practices that are ethical and culturally safe (Fook, 2016; Morley, 2008; Rossiter, 2005).

Critical reflection can be undertaken alone or within a group. In this study, Author 1 (Canice) worked closely with Author 2 (Christine) to critically reflect on the critical incident. The incident was also presented to a group of 15 social work student peers who acted as peer supervisors to assist the researcher to deconstruct and reconstruct the incident: thus helping to uncover hidden assumptions and generate differing perspectives that led to the development of more critical practice.

The concept of critical reflection as a process and a research methodology is contested

(Hargreaves, 2004; Ixer, 1999, 2016; Wilson, 2013; Yip, 2006). Some of the criticisms relate primarily to the subjectivity of personal reflection given it is largely an internal, cognitive process (Hargreaves, 2004; Ixer, 1999, 2016). However, as Allen (2013, p. 154) explains, "The process is concerned with the 'story' of what happened and the contributing factors in the storying and meaning-making process, rather than finding the 'truth' or evaluating the situation or the people involved." Wilson (2013) and Ixer (2016) question the benefit and effectiveness of critical reflection and posit that the usefulness of simply taking time out to reflect so as to create new theory and practice is limited. However, this understanding of reflection misunderstands the process outlined by Fook (2016) which provides a rigorous process of theorising a practice incident, (based on critical postmodernism), involving systematic deconstruction and reconstruction.

Yip (2006) and Ixer (2016) rightly point to concerns about critical reflection in a neoliberal service delivery environment, particularly the individual nature of reflection. However, the critical element of critical reflection links directly with the political, and often uses a collective process (as was adopted in the present study) to uncover hidden assumptions and generate multiples perspectives that lead to the development of more critical practices.

The critical incident

An extract from Canice's narration of the critical incident which, in the context of critically reflection research, becomes the raw data to be analysed, follows:

> When studying in Ireland I volunteered with a homework club run by a not-for-profit organisation for Traveller children, aged 8 to 12 years. The purpose was to help children whose parents could not read or write to complete their school homework tasks. The six children who regularly attended were often full of

energy after sitting in school all day. Getting them to focus was challenging. One idea I had was to start our two hours together with a group drumming activity. This was based on my experience of African drumming using djembe drums. I was also aware of some research suggesting the benefits of group drumming and enjoyed drumming as personal recreation. I thought this could help the children to focus while being fun and active. Myself and the other volunteers decided to try this. At first, the children were challenging to manage in the group drumming activity, often not following instruction. Over time they became used to the routine and it was observed that they appeared better able to concentrate on their homework following the group drumming sessions. The other volunteers and I thought we had done something good for the children. We wanted to understand this more, and so I embarked on the process of subjecting this practice to critical reflection.

Deconstruction of the critical incident

Deconstruction often exposes gaps between theory and praxis (Fook, 2016). In deconstructing my practice, this manifested in multifarious ways. My practice framework derives from critical postmodern theories, and I seek to implement these into my practice in anti-oppressive and empowering ways. However, a recurring theme within my account of the incident, for example, was the need to establish and maintain control of the group with a view to achieving the group's aims – as I had defined them. Within this "expert" role, I decided group drumming, based on a style originating in West Africa, is what the children needed. This thought (or lack of thought) process had several implications for my practice:

1) It resulted in the implementation of group drumming that seems to re-enact dominant discourses in its recreation of colonial power relations.

2) In positioning myself as the locus of control, I unwittingly created a situation where, in trying to connect the multiple players (including myself and the other volunteers, Traveller children, Traveller parents, the organisation we volunteered for and the voiceless cultures of West Africa from which group djembe drumming originated), a distance was created.

3) I had unconsciously assumed the solutions reside within people in roles of structural power (i.e., myself and my fellow volunteers), which negated the possibilities from elsewhere for achieving group aims, including through engagement with Traveller culture. This assumption also reveals modernist notions of power (i.e., that those with access to material and symbolic power according to Western social structures are ultimately the most powerful (Fook, 2016; Foucault, 1988). The construction of me as *expert* with the solution for group success also reproduces dominant discourses that reinforce my own privilege as a white male.

4) In occupying the role of expert, I rendered the Traveller children and their families as voiceless and powerless, and in need of my "help". This represents the paternalism embedded in my assumptions about helping. I also unintentionally maintained the dominant discourse around Travellers as a problematic part of Irish society (Allen & Adams, 2013; Fetzer, 2017; Mulcahy, 2012), perpetuating a construction of Traveller as other and thereby continuing perceptions of them as an isolated group (Allen & Adams, 2013; Fetzer, 2017; Mulcahy, 2012). I did not consider the multiple and contrasting Traveller identities and experiences prevalent within Ireland (Royall, 2010) and could have done so, for example, when the organisation told me the Traveller children's parents could not read or write. The result

was a deficits-focused practice, which neglected meaningful engagement with Traveller culture to find solutions.

All of these realisations contradict my espoused theoretical position to recognise and value the wisdom of the people with whom I work, decentre my power as a facilitator to develop egalitarian ways of working with people, challenge colonialist practices and discourses, and create empowering and inclusive environments. This deconstruction of my practice brought to my consciousness my lack of consideration for the cultural appropriateness of implementing this group drumming activity (Bohlmann, 2003; Frith, 2003). Nor did I consider my potential appropriation of a deeply symbolic cultural activity from West Africa and the impact positioning the activity out of its cultural context may have on its effectiveness (Bannister, Soloman, & Brunk, 2009). My intervention existed within a context and the intervention was not just a technique; there are social, ethical and moral implications in adopting practice from cultures outside of our own (Banks, 2016).

Reflecting on the incident, I see myself enacting white oppression on multiple fronts. This arises from the assumption that the children need to engage in formal education for their own benefit. This exposes hegemonic assumptions that education is beneficial to their lives (Cox, 1987; Gramsci, 1971; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). This seems to imply a need to *fix* their lives (Cox, 1987; Gramsci, 1971; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). I may have actually risked alienating the Traveller children further by adopting group drumming rather than engaging with values, experiences, expectations and solutions from within their culture. This perspective is silenced, as is any potential perspective of cultures from which djembe drumming originates. I did not intend to reinforce colonial power relations between Europe and Africa, nor create further sources of oppression for Traveller people in Ireland. However, in making assumptions based on

my perspective and life experience, I have potentially recreated and reinforced these social realities.

Deconstruction of my practice raises awareness about the potential to reinforce dominant discourses and structural oppression. This emphasises the need for social workers to critically reflect on the adopting of alternative practices to ensure the aims, ethics and values of social work are upheld.

Reconstructing of the critical incident and implications for practice

Reconstruction considers new interpretations uncovered by the deconstruction process and devises ways to align espoused intentions and actual practice (Fook, 2016). Accepting that Traveller culture had its own solutions to the homework group's challenges leads me to consider other ways of engaging with Traveller children that subvert the ongoing power imbalances and cultural oppression they experience (Fetzer, 2017; Mulcahy, 2012). My reconstructed practice explicitly values the participation of Traveller people in the construction of problems and solutions. I will involve them in discussions about how we work together, rather than making unilateral decisions from the position of outside expert. This culturally safe practice (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015; Happell, Cowin, Roper, Lakeman, & Cox, 2013) corresponds closely with my espoused ethics to work as a critical practitioner who employs anti-oppressive strategies to challenge dominant power relations and structures (Healy, 2014; Morley, 2008). My reconstruction of practice is concerned with the use of group drumming in a more ethical and culturally sensitive manner, rather than the abolition of it from my practice altogether.

Towards ethical use of alternative practices: Shared cultural exchange

Key learning from this reflection illuminates some broad principles for those seeking to incorporate alternative practices into their

social work practice in a thoughtful, ethical and culturally safe manner. A primary consideration begins with a critical recognition of *self*, particularly in relation to privilege and how standpoint enables inadvertent harms. Within Canice's own reflection, this meant acknowledging his positioning as a white male with access to multiple privileges and resources was fundamental (Pease, 2010; United Nations, 2013; Zufferey, 2013). While retaining a critical analysis of positionality and identity, its meaning for power relations and the potential for domination and exploitation, the poststructural influence within this research also emphasises the importance of context. In response to the research question, we therefore tentatively suggest not all replication of practices outside our own cultures is necessarily harmful, and we may need new terms or phrases to differentiate between cultural appropriation and what we tentatively term "shared cultural exchange", to distinguish this as a critically reflective process to benefit social workers and the cultures in question.

Cultural exchange also demands the identification of the practitioner's own position in relation to the originating culture and the seeking of permission to use the practice. This is closely followed by the need to seek genuine engagement with the originating culture to avoid re-enactment of colonial and postcolonial power relations (Bannister et al., 2009). If permitted by the individuals who hold the cultural knowledge, it is important for social workers to recognise and value the opportunity to learn about the cultural significance and practical elements of the practice. It is also an opportunity for dialogue acknowledging past wrongs, to gain consent for the use of the alternative practice and to re-negotiate power relations in a genuinely empowering and equitable way (Fook, 2016).

This reconstruction of practice is based on respect and discussion. It may involve opening a discourse with a culture wherein the practitioner's own ancestral connections

are complicit in colonisation, exploitation and oppression (El-Lahib, 2017; Kang, 2013; Pease, 2010). Through acknowledging the predominant constructions of power in postcolonial contexts, a respectful discussion and interaction can create space where common and differing values are identified and shared cultural exchange occurs. It also creates space for social justice; enabling social workers, Travellers and Africans synthesised research, discourse and action to tackle the various forms of social, cultural and personal oppression they experience (Burns Coleman, Coombe, & MacArailt, 2009; Healy, 2014). This is not to suggest the experience of Travellers, Africans and social workers is the same or the process of shared cultural exchange is unproblematic. Rather, a transversal perspective is important here as it recognises the different experiences of positioning in global society and values these experiences and knowledge as part of the movement towards a more equitable world (Mohanty, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Further, acknowledging cultural significance and practising ethically represents an act of resistance to globalised neoliberal capitalism by refusing to reduce cultural forms to pieces of tradable information (Burns Coleman et al., 2009; Dominelli, 2010; Fook, 2016).

Shared cultural exchange avoids the primary identifiers of inappropriate cultural appropriation. Primary among these is adopting the practice without knowledge or acknowledgement of its cultural significance. Further, lack of exposure and consent leading to caricature of a culture rather than accurate representation, followed by claims of ownership over the version of the appropriated culture when mixed with the culture of the practitioner (Bannister et al., 2009).

Finally, this critical reflection raises broader questions about the implementation of a range of alternative practices in social work. Given the growing interest in practices such as yoga (Behrman & Tebb, 2009; Mahaffey, 2016), mindfulness and meditation (Bo et al., 2016; Garland, 2013; Winters & Beerbower, 2017),

equine therapy (Acri et al., 2016; Burgon et al., 2017) and group drumming (Bittman et al., 2001; Fancourt et al., 2016; Faulkner et al., 2012; Ho et al., 2011), the lessons from this research suggest ethical practice requires workers to consider a shared cultural exchange when adopting these practices. A shared cultural exchange requires critical reflection on the social and cultural context, the cultural norms of the group they are working with and the group they are adopting practice from, their position in relation to those groups, and the historical and contemporary power relations between the group and the social worker's background.

Conclusion

This article offers a critically reflective discussion about the use of alternative practices in social work. We used a practice incident from one of the authors to analyse a specific case example of using group drumming originating in West African with a group of Traveller children in Ireland. While the literature on group drumming is dominated by individualised and psychologised perspectives, it consistently reports positive impacts of group drumming with various population groups. Critical perspectives highlight the ethical complexities for social workers who wish to incorporate alternative practices, considering the legacy of colonialism and ongoing social injustice, oppression and exploitation within societies and across cultures. Despite laudable intentions, social workers can be implicated in the inappropriate practices of cultural appropriation as part of ongoing, unequal, postcolonial power relations.

This article provides a critical engagement with these issues, with a view to creating shared cultural exchange. It demonstrates that critical reflection is a useful tool in reconstructing practice and presents several practice principles to promote shared cultural exchange and avoid culturally unsafe practices including cultural appropriation. It therefore holds implications for social workers interested

in the potential of alternative practices while remaining committed to critical practice and cultural safety.

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Social work students' feedback about students' suitability for field education and the profession

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Many students successfully complete placement, while, for a minority of students, placement may be a time when questions are asked about suitability for placement and professional practice.

METHOD: Research undertaken with final year social work students examined their ideas about suitability and unsuitability for field education and practice and presented them with a model developed with field educators in an earlier phase of the research. The aim of the study was to incorporate students' understanding into the discourse of suitability/unsuitability to further develop a suitability/unsuitability model for collaborative discussions between students, educators and supervisors. Twenty-eight students responded to an online survey.

RESULTS: The results show that students identify a critical understanding of self, skills, knowledge, attitudes and contextual factors as important in assessing students' suitability for field education. Identified indicators of unsuitability included lack of preparedness to learn, lack of capacity to demonstrate an understanding of professional values and ethics and inability to maintain professional boundaries or demonstrate basic practice skills. Students overwhelmingly supported the use of the presented model and made suggestions for further development of the model.

IMPLICATIONS: The discussion emphasises the importance of using a pedagogically informed formative assessment strategy in a timely manner to address professional suitability with students.

KEYWORDS: Field education; suitability; students; assessment; values and ethics; social work education; social work practice

Introduction

There has been significant research on student suitability for social work practice and field placement (see for example, Furness & Gilligan, 2004; Lafrance & Gray, 2004; Sussman, Bailey, Richardson, & Granner, 2014). Much of this knowledge is derived from the perspective of field educators with little insight from the perspective of students. Students have unique perspectives on their learning, and they "… should be afforded opportunities to actively shape their education" (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 359). In the present study, students explored suitability and unsuitability for field education and practice and considered a model for discussion

of student suitability and unsuitability developed in an earlier phase of the research with field educators (Croaker, Dickinson, Watson, & Zuchowski, 2017).

Background

For social work students, field education is an important site for learning about professional practice. Social work educators, the professional social work association and practising social workers play a part in ensuring that students are ready for professional practice and, together, they take on a gatekeeping role for the profession (Bogo, Regehr, Hughes, Power, & Globerman, 2002; Lafrance & Gray, 2004; Sussman et al., 2014; Tam, Coleman, & Boey, 2012).

While field education is a time for learning and growth, it may also be a time of associated stress. Stress can occur for students facing a required demonstration of their theoretical learning in practice and this experience can challenge students' sense of personal and professional identity (Homonoff, 2008). Moreover, it can be difficult for students to undertake the required placement hours in light of multiple other demands, such as family obligations and work commitments (Agllias, Howard, Cliff, Dodds, & Field, 2015). Field education can heighten the financial hardship experienced by social work students (Gair & Baglow, 2017).

The great majority of students do well in field education, indeed, failing students in placement is difficult and unusual (Finch, 2017; Razack, 2000). Students' progress in field education is generally assessed via formative and summative assessment processes. Assessing students' performance against achieving outcomes or goals set in placement specific learning plans, agreements and contracts can provide a strong basis for assessing student suitability in field education and readiness for graduate practice (Cleak & Wilson, 2019; Giles, Irwin, Lynch, & Waugh, 2010). However, for assessment to be authentic it needs to consider the variable context of the placement, supervision and practice in

which the student undertakes field education (Egan, Waugh, Giles, & Bowles, 2017). Egan et al. (2017, p.738) present the following as key elements in assessment processes in field education: "identifying the learning challenge, linking it to the related professional practice standard, developing learning strategies to attain the standard, being explicit about the evidence on which the assessment will be based and contextual factors that affect the assessors decision". Giles et al. (2010) stress the importance of making the principles and strategies for assessment and evaluation transparent to facilitate collaborative reflection.

In the rare instances they occur, placement breakdowns can cause emotional stress for both students and field educators (Basnett & Sheffield, 2010; Parker, 2010). Students have identified transparency, sharing of information and support from the university, as well as addressing power issues in the student–field educator relationship as important factors influencing their experience of the placement breakdown process (Parker, 2010). When difficulties arise in field education, locating the problems can be complex and field educators can question their own abilities in the process of failing a student (Basnett & Sheffield, 2010).

Among the small cohort of students who struggle in field education, fail and/or need to repeat placements (Basnett & Sheffield, 2010), sometimes concerns are raised about the overall suitability of the student for field education and/or the profession. Generally, placement breakdowns can be attributed to "not good enough learning", either because of circumstances or personalities (Giles et al., 2010). Failing placement is about the student not being ready to practice yet or in the future (Cleak & Wilson, 2019). Placement has a gatekeeping role for the profession, and supervisors assess students' practice competence (Furness & Gilligan, 2004). When suitability concerns are raised it is about students' overall fitness for practice (Furness & Gilligan, 2004), as placements test their suitability for the social work career (Cleak & Wilson, 2019).

Field educators and social work educators can struggle to articulate professional suitability concerns clearly with students (Croaker et al., 2017; Finch, 2017), in part because suitability in social work is not easily defined. In the past, some have argued that unsuitability is somewhat pathological (Lafrance & Gray, 2004). Similarly, others suggest that fixed personal attributes determine unsuitability for practice (Furness & Gilligan, 2004).

Other authors argue that suitability is related to morals and virtues and students need to be supported in the curriculum to develop these characteristics (Holmstrom, 2014). Sussman et al.'s (2014) study about suitability/readiness for social work practice showed that field educators identified students' ability for conceptualisation and self-reflection as central to supporting the development of practice skills, personal attributes and professional practice. Tam et al.'s (2012) Canadian study identified indicators for professional suitability for social work practice relating to overall social consciousness, practice, and personal and ethical suitability. These indicators are reflected in the essential aspects of the assessment framework for field education

developed by Egan et al. (2017, p. 738) which include "ethical practice, reflective practice, assessment, teamwork, interpersonal communication, community development, research, policy, organisational development and supervision".

Social work educators develop tools to measure student performance and competence against many of the authentic assessment concepts (Bogo et al., 2002; Tam et al., 2012). However, it is difficult to assess the non-academic elements of social work, such as attitudes, behaviours or beliefs. Cleak, Hawkins, Laughton, and Williams (2015) argue that education institutions predominantly rely on the practice wisdom and experience of field educators to assess these concepts. Similarly, McNamara (2013) points out that any assessment of students' performance in relation to concepts such as attitudes, behaviours or beliefs, significantly relies on individual supervisors' subjective assessment. The organisational background in which the field educator is placed has been found to influence their understanding of suitability (Lafrance & Gray, 2004). To address these, and other issues associated with field educator assessments of student suitability, McNamara (2013) recommends that assessments are made jointly between the student, the field educator and the university liaison person, accessing a range of evidence.

The literature review highlights the centrality of field education in the professional degree. The student's learning experience on placement is impacted by the context of the placement, the supervisory relationship and the students' own skills and abilities. Failing students in field education is complex, and potentially reliant on subjective assessment. This Australian research builds on earlier work with field educators that resulted in the development of a model for defining suitability and unsuitability (Croaker et al., 2017).

Figure 1 highlights that self-awareness and reflective practice are critical to developing and upholding the ethics, values and standards for professional practice

Figure 1. Model for defining suitability (Croaker et al., 2017, p. 117)

(Croaker et al., 2017). Field educators stressed the need for students to demonstrate an openness to learning on placement, such as being open to feedback, being pro-active in seeking learning opportunities and supporting interprofessional diversity in practice. They acknowledged that barriers to growth and personal learning for practice can be temporal and contextual (Croaker et al., 2017).

Figure 2 highlights that students deemed not suitable for social work practice are not able to "demonstrate key values, skills and knowledge required for practice", generally evidenced through lack of professional integrity, disrespect for persons or socially unjust practice (Croaker et al., 2017, p. 118). A key factor in determining unsuitability for practice was the lack of willingness or ability to utilise self-reflection in order to learn and/or develop self-awareness when issues of concern were identified (Croaker et al., 2017).

The focus of the concern was less on the assessment of whether a student passed or failed a placement against set assessment criteria, and more on engaging in discussion about suitability where supervision and feedback does not lead to critical reflection and personal/professional growth.

In this current phase of the research, final year social work students were asked about their understanding of what constitutes suitability and unsuitability for field education and practice and afterwards asked for specific feedback on the suitability and the unsuitability models presented in Figures 1 and 2. Suitability for field education and practice were presented as one concept, because suitability concerns relate to fitness and competence for practice, not just field education (Cleak & Wilson, 2019; Furness & Gilligan, 2004). This article presents the findings from this survey of final year students.
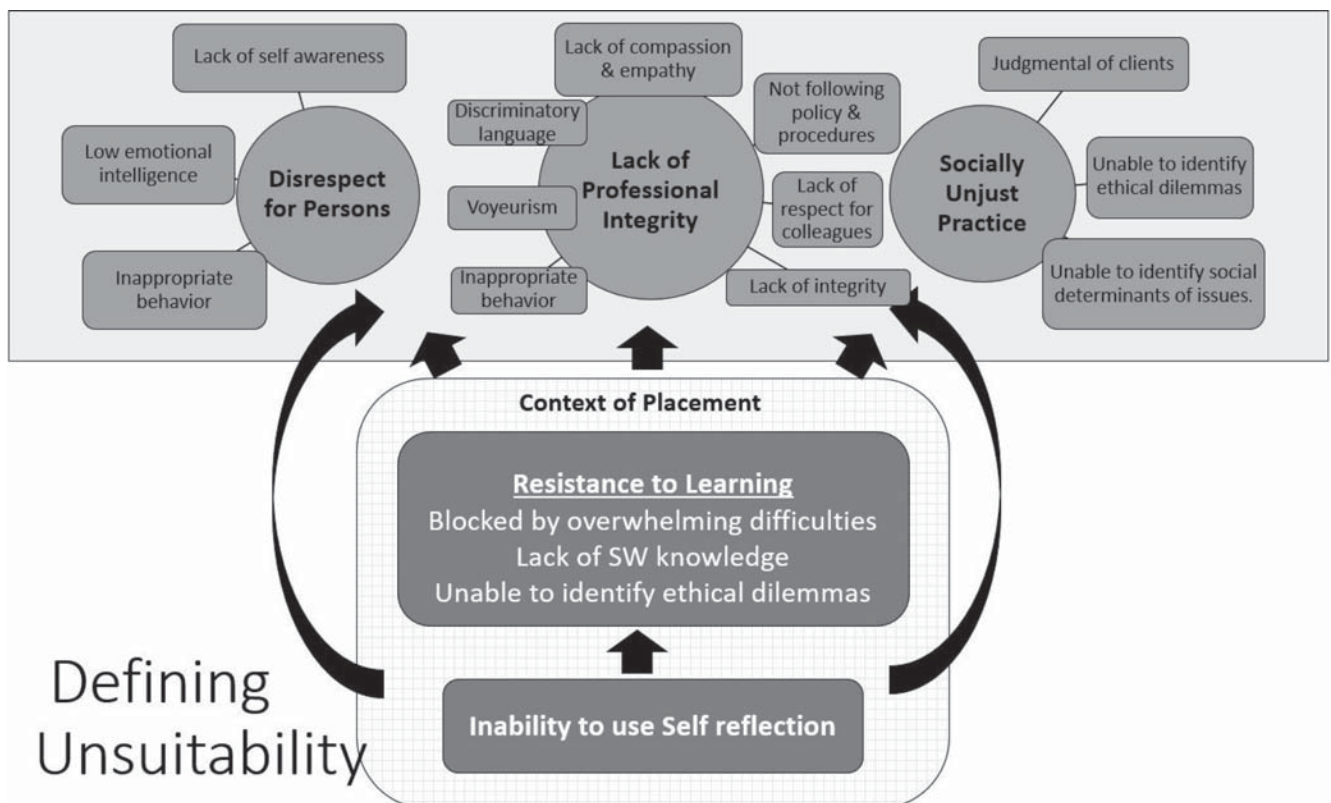

Figure 2. Model for defining unsuitability (Croaker et al., 2017, p. 118).

Methods

The research was undertaken by the James Cook University social work field education team in conjunction with a final year social work student on placement. Four academics and one placement student conducted this research; all have authored this article. In 2017, an anonymous survey link was sent to 76 final year Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (PQ [Professionally Qualifying]) students enrolled in social work field education by the university's administration team. Survey Monkey software was used to support the data collection and analysis (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003). Both qualitative and quantitative processes were used in the study. The study was approved by the university's Human Ethics committee.

The survey sought students' understanding of social work student suitability for practice as well as feedback on a suitability/unsuitability model developed in an earlier phase of the research (Croaker et al., 2017). The research questions posed were: What is students' understanding of student suitability and unsuitability for field education? What is students' feedback on the model developed with the field educators? The aims of the survey were to gain insights from students in order to check their understandings of suitability/unsuitability, to refine the model and to explore with students how this model might be applied in practice. In order to first gain an insight of students' understanding of suitability and unsuitability, the initial three, open-ended questions explored participants' ideas for student suitability, their prior use of models/frameworks for suitability and key indicators for suitability, before presenting the developed model.

Basic student demographics were collected, including gender, cultural background, degree studied, number of placements completed and number of placement breakdowns experienced. The survey was pilot tested by a potential respondent prior to its administration (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003).

In total, 28 (N = 28) surveys were returned, resulting in a 37% response rate, however six of these were incomplete. All 28 respondents provided the following information in response to the first six questions of the survey: 93% (n = 26) were female and 7% (2) male; 7% (2) were of non-English-speaking background; 57% (16) of the respondents were enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Work degree and 43% (12) in a Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) degree. In total, 79% (22) had undertaken two placements, 18% (5) one placement and 4% (1) had not yet completed a placement.

Students were asked whether they had experienced a field placement break-down. Of the 27 respondents to that question, 15% (4) responded that they had, and 85% (23) responded that they had not. One of the students who responded that they had experienced a placement breakdown did not complete any further questions. All of the students (4) who experienced a placement break-down had two placements, 75% (3) were enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Work degree, and 25% (1) in a Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying degree). There were no significant differences in responses of the respondents who had experienced a placement break-down to those who had not.

The survey posed 17 questions in total; six of the 28 students did not respond to the remaining questions seven to 17. Therefore, the overall survey response rate for question seven and beyond is 29%.

Data analysis

The demographic data were analysed statically and summarised. The responses to the qualitative questions were coded by members of the research team and then analysed thematically, cross-checked and collaboratively discussed by the authors to ensure interrater reliability (Liamputtong, 2009). As a first step, individual researchers identified themes and compiled narratives

from the findings in relation to each question. The narratives compiled for each question were then collated and analysed further. The research team, comprising of four field education academics and one student, developed a mind map to show aspects of the model that resonated with the students; aspects of the model that students identified as requiring further emphasis or elaboration; and new aspects suggested by the students.

Results

The findings highlighted that student ideas about suitability and unsuitability aligned with the models that had been developed with field educators. The findings were analysed and, through secondary analysis, linked to the topic areas in the presented model.

While the students' responses matched field educators' framing of suitability around professionalism, openness to learning and self-awareness through reflection (Croaker et al., 2017), the analysis of the student responses also highlighted the importance of contextual factors that need to be taken into account when considering suitability and unsuitability.

Ideas about suitability and unsuitability

Students were asked to consider suitability and unsuitability twice. Once generally, responding to an open question, "What do you consider important when thinking about suitability for social work field education experiences and/or professional practice?" and a couple of questions later, "What do you think are indicators of suitability for social work field placement/professional practice?" In total, 22 students responded to the initial question asking them what they considered important when thinking about suitability for social work field education and/or professional practice. All but one respondent listed more than one concept in their answers.

Initially, considering suitability for field education and/or social work practice, respondents listed a number of contextual factors relating to either their own personal circumstances, the supervisory relationship or organisational practice highly. Within the responses (26) pertaining to contextual factors, placement within an area of interest or passion as an important factor for suitability was mentioned 10 times. Previous experience (2), balancing placement hours with paid work requirements (2), self-care (2) and getting along with the Field educator (2) were also highlighted.

A further set of responses related to professionalism, such as demonstration of skills (2), knowledge (2) and values and ethics (5). Self-awareness, including understanding own values, flexibility and reflection was also rated as an important indicator of suitability by receiving a total of seven responses. Some students highlighted links between self-awareness and placement in an area of interest:

> Knowing your area of interest and your inner self, needs, wants etc.

When asked specifically about indicators of suitability, responses were still similar, but the focus shifted more on professionalism, openness to learning and self-awareness. Column 4 of Table 1 highlights what students identified as the specific suitability indicators for social work field placement/ professional practice. A total of 22 students answered this question.

Overall, while there was still a focus on contextual factors, more students provided answers relating to professionalism, openness to learn and self-awareness. Contextual factors related to the placement organisation, field education delivery and support, and the student's personal circumstances accounted for a total of 22 responses. Apart from initiative (n = 4), which received the highest number of responses in this topic area, students identified a range of different indicators for suitability such as fit with

Table 1. Student Responses Regarding Understanding Suitability for Social Work Field Education and/or Professional Practice

Topic area in the presented model	Considerations for suitability	Number of responses	Indicators for suitability	Number of responses
Contextual factors	**Placement organisation** – compatibility with agency (1), location (1),	2	**Placement organisation** – Tasks provided (1), fit w agency (2), location (1)	4
	Field education delivery & supervision – getting along with FE(2), enthusiastic & professional FE(1)	3	**Field education delivery & supervision** – SV relationship (2)	2
	Student's personal circumstances – interests (8), passion for profession (2), previous experience (2), self-care (2), balancing placement hours/paid work (2), affordability (1), support (1), readiness (1), maturity (2)	21	**Student's personal circumstances** – interests (3), previous experience (1), self-care (2), balancing placement hours/ paid work (2), initiative (4), getting out of comfort zone (1), readiness (1), resilience (1), maturity (1)	16
Professionalism	Ethics and values (5), skills (2), knowledge (2)	9	Values (5), skills (6), knowledge (4), ethical decision making (2), understanding own practice framework (1)	18
Openness to Learning	Open-mindedness (2), following instructions (1), clear learning plan (1)	4	Willingness to learn (3), openness to new experiences (7)	10
Self-awareness	Self-awareness (2), understanding own values (2), reflection (1), flexibility (2)	7	Use of self (1), critical reflection (7), openness to feedback (1)	10

agency (2), the supervisory relationship (2), interest (3) and balancing placement hours and paid work (2).

Respondents' answers more clearly related to issues of professionalism when asked about specific indicators for suitability. The concepts listed related to social work values were: (5), application of social work skills (6) and knowledge (4), ethical decision making (2). Openness to learning (10), critical reflection and openness to feedback (10) were identified as a crucial indicator for suitability. For example, one student's response highlighted that:

> A student needs to be willing to learn, open to new experiences and flexible with how they work.

Table 2 provides a summary of responses to a question asking students to outline indicators of unsuitability for social work field placement/professional practice. Twenty-two students answered this question.

The most commonly suggested indicators of unsuitability focused on a lack of preparedness to learn (10); and a lack of capacity to demonstrate an understanding of professional values and ethics (8). A *lack of preparedness to learn* was described in various ways including:

> Expecting others to direct your learning; and
> Closed off to new learning, rigid thinking.

This lack of preparedness to learn was also described in conjunction with a lack of ability to reflect.

Other commonly suggested indicators of unsuitability included students' "inability to maintain professional boundaries" (5); and students' "inability to demonstrate basic practice skills" including communication and team work skills (5).

Four respondents suggested unsuitability for field placement should include a focus on

Table 2. Indicators of Unsuitability for Social Work Field Education and/or Professional Practice

Overall topic area in the presented model	Indicator of unsuitability	Number of responses
Contextual factors	Organisational barriers to demonstrating suitability • High turnover of personnel • Practice manuals missing • Working in a setting not interested in student/education • Not recognising student is a learner	5
	Poor relationships	2
Professionalism	Not demonstrating ethical standards or values	8
	Inability to demonstrate practice skills	5
	Student lack of preparedness and inexperience	3
	Lack of social work knowledge	1
Openness to Learning	Not being prepared to learn different ways of working • Resistance to learning • Rigid thinking • Inability to reflect	10
Self-awareness	Inappropriate use of self	5
	Not understanding supervision	1

barriers to demonstrating suitability presented by the placement organisation, including:

• consideration of the unsuitability of practice areas/organisations due to conflict with a particular student's personal values, experiences and/or interests (2); and

• consideration of whether a placement site offers sufficient recognition of and opportunity for student learning.

Prior use of frameworks to consider suitability

Respondents were asked whether they had used any framework, model or other process to consider their suitability for field education and/or professional practice. In total, 22 respondents answered the question; of these 27% (6) responded in the negative. The majority of the respondents could identify models, frameworks and ways of thinking that they had applied in considering

their suitability for field education and/or professional practice. Most commonly they identified that they had used social work knowledge or models; 36% (8) outlined social work theories, models and values as reference points. One participant, for example highlighted:

> [I] often engage in critical reflection and have benefited from this especially when receiving supervision on placement.
> I also think that just being involved in the education process can be an indicator of how well you align with the professional values.

A number of participants indicated that their area of interest (3) and their compatibility with the organisation (2) influenced their thinking about their suitability for placement or practice. One respondent, for example outlined:

> Yes and no. My framework for practice has changed to suit the organisational capability frameworks to some extent

which supports the idea that it can be situationally interpreted.

Suggestions for developing the presented model further

Respondents were presented with Figure 1 and Figure 2 in separate questions and asked: (i) whether they thought the student suitability/unsuitability model for field education and or professional practice would be useful, (ii) whether anything needed to be added to or deleted from either model; and (iii) why, or why not?

The majority of the respondents thought that the model developed for exploring suitability was useful and recommended the use of the model early in their degree. They also highlighted that they would want to have any concerns about their suitability raised early in their field education experience, presumably to allow them time to address such concerns.

Of the 22 respondents to the question about whether the model would be useful, 86% (19) thought this model was useful, 5% (1) did not indicate either support or rejection and 9% (2) responded in the negative. Of those who thought the model would be useful, 55% (11) provided no further comment or indicated general support for the elements included in the model and 27% (6) commented it looked simple, clear and/ or easy to use, including as a mechanism to:

> Help student(s) understand their role.

Two respondents who thought the model would be useful suggested a focus on students' ability to "work" in an organisation and another respondent suggested the model required further elaboration.

The two respondents who indicated the model would *not* be useful offered the following reasons:

> I believe we are always open to learning, but some organisations do not have SW opportunities.

> (It) fails to recognise reality and complexities of what students go through when being placed in to agencies to complete unpaid placements as powerless units with minimal to no rights.

Similarly, of the 22 respondents who answered the question on whether the unsuitability model was useful: 90% (20) thought it was, 5% (1) did not indicate either support or rejection and 5% (1) responded in the negative. The majority of students (16) who responded that the framework was useful also commented that they found the framework reflected their knowledge of unsuitability suggesting that it was "a thorough diagram of unsuitability" and "practically covers everything". A number of respondents (10) commented that the diagram was "clear" and "easy to follow".

One student identified the framework as problematic and another as limited. One suggested that unsuitability "is not necessarily around basic SW values". Both students wanted alternative explanations for a possible unsuitability evaluation of the student: one suggested the fact that "some people do not fit with specific organisations" needed to be reflected in the framework and the other identified the framework as a "classic blame the victim model".

Suggestions for using the suitability model with students

Out of the 21 responses to the question about how students would use the suitability model in the future, 81% (17) stated that they would use it: to address or articulate aspects of their practice, measure the quality of their work, in preparation for placement and as a reflective tool. Respondents' comments included:

> It's a good visual to encourage thoughtfulness around these key skills.

> I believe they could also serve as a helpful tool in being able to articulate the profession to others.

Two people expressed that they would not use the framework in the future. One did not comment further and the other stated that they perceived the framework to be one-directional, and heavily skewed as a university-serving model.

The majority of respondents (13) suggested that the presented model could be a useful tool to facilitate such a conversation and/or to facilitate a shared understanding of the issues at hand. Comments included:

> Yes, it could provide a visual, objective framework to use to describe any challenges being experienced.

> This framework can help both parties have a good understanding of the importance of the student having professional practice and can provide a guideline to any concerns either party may have.

Further, respondents suggested that the model could be used as a tool for facilitating critical reflection and to identify key practice challenges facing the student. One student suggested that the framework could also be used to identify more contextual issues pertaining to the placement, including other staff's behaviour towards the student, "as the student would not be able to highlight behaviours of individuals within the organisation they are placed with that doesn't sit well with them."

The overwhelming response to the question of how students would like field educators or liaison staff to engage with them if concerns about suitability were identified was that this should be addressed directly with them (17). This was often linked to the concepts of honesty (5), timeliness (4) and communication (3). The following response summarises the overall sentiment well:

> To be honest with their concerns. Direction and clear communication is key. We are the students in the end. We need guidance from professionals,

even if it means identifying concerns with our suitability.

A number of respondents (4) highlighted that the manner feedback is given is important, as indicated in the following comment:

> Affirming the student not framing it as a personal attack. Focus on skills that might be missing more than personal qualities. Being polite, considerate and kind in their delivering of feedback.

Of particular interest is that five of the 21 respondents to this question suggested that the described model for suitability should be used more broadly across the social work course including prior to field education. For example, one suggested that:

> …this framework could be used in marking 2nd, 3rd and 4th year assignments, added to the rubric to help student see their strengths or understand areas for improvement, which would support understanding regarding suitability.

Extending the model

Students' responses regarding suitability and unsuitability more strongly focused professionalism, openness to learn and self-awareness after they considered what might be specific indicators. Even though the focus on contextual factors as determining elements of suitability for placement and/or practice remained at a similar level, students also clearly located professionalism as an important indicator for suitability. The responses relating to professionalism increased by 100%, openness to learning by 150% and self-awareness increased by 75% when considering indicators for suitability.

Nevertheless, contextual issues continued to be important issues in the students' responses. Figure 3 shows how the student feedback affirms ideas about suitability
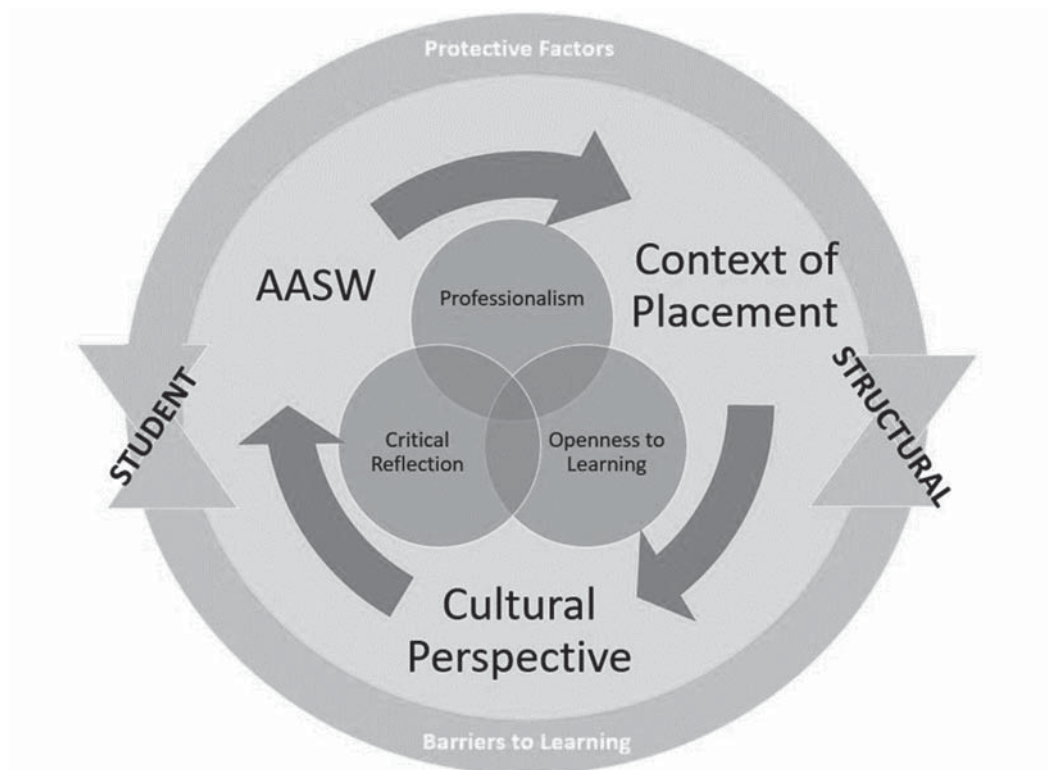
Figure 3. The context of exploring suitability.

developed with field educators, but extends and complement the model to capture the challenges presented within the placement context, personal and structural barriers that my influence the students' ability to demonstrate suitability. The new model equally considers placement preparation, support and discussions alongside a focus on professionalism, self- awareness and openness to learning. Placement context issues can be interpreted broadly although students identified sub-standard field education programmes, non-compatible supervisory relationships or agency environments and personal challenges. In developing the new model of suitability, the diagram illustrates how the context of a student placement can influence a negative assessment of student suitability, yet does not pre-determine the outcome of the student experience.

Placement context and student strengths are also acknowledged as possible protective factors for students on placement (AASW, 2013). Field education preparation, embedded field placement support processes, effective supervisory relationships, student skills, knowledge and experiences, and their understanding of their learning needs are all considerations and tools in addressing challenges within the placement. The new model illustrates how student suitability is influenced by positive and negative contextual issues.

Supervision with students can actively explore the student's learning experience and journey to professional practice in the context of the structural barriers that might impact their learning journey, the protective factors that can be put in place and any aspects that shape the supervisory relationship, the organisation and the student placement. The aim is to provide a placement environment that is spiritually, emotionally and socially safe (Cleak & Wilson, 2019), one in which students can

explore suitability for, and progression to, professional social work practice.

Placement contextual issues have the potential to significantly undermine the placement experience of the student if not considered by the organisation and/or the university in planning and supporting the placement. Overall, suitability for placement considerations connect to the field education programme, organisational factors, the student experience and learning needs and how well the university has introduced suitability throughout the degree.

In this Australian study, the guidelines of the Australian Association of Social Work have been referred to. However, these are in line with the global definition of the social work profession issued by the International Federation of Social Work (2014) and the implicit core mandates of promoting social change and empowerment, and core principles of respect, dignity and upholding human rights and social justice, social work theories and science, to guide social work practice in Australia and elsewhere.

Discussion

This research has highlighted the importance and value of seeking student input into discussion on suitability for practice in the context of the delivery of social work education. It provided useful information to confirm and extend the model beyond students' individual attributes to the consideration of contextual factors, but also affirmed the usefulness of using this model for discussions about students' suitability for social work practice early in the degree. Students clearly identified indicators of suitability as located in the areas of contextual factors, professionalism, self-awareness and openness to learning, the correlation/interrelation of these areas and their equal importance in relation to determining suitability for placement/ professional practice.

Student responses showed that they considered professionalism, openness to learning and self-awareness even before being presented with the model that had been developed with field educators and that the model developed with field educators has relevance to them. This is an encouraging result for social work education. In engaging students in research about educational practices, we are preparing future practitioners to be active and engaged learners. Moreover, listening to student voices includes students' views as a legitimate perspective in educational practices (Cook-Sather, 2006).

Prior work highlighted the importance of transparent principles and strategies for assessment facilitating collaborative discussion and critical reflection (Cleak & Wilson, 2019; Giles et al., 2010). The findings here highlight that most students support the use of explicit models and methods for discussion of suitability and unsuitability for social work field education and practice. The model offers students a practical tool to facilitate collaborative discussion and critical reflection in order to consider ethical approaches to practice, meet the expected standards of practice and become practitioners (Giles et al., 2019). Students also recommended early proactive engagement in discussions around suitability on their journey to professional social work. This suggests discussions about suitability need to occur early in the degree, not just in association with placement.

Finally, students suggested consideration of contextual issues when suitability concerns are raised with them. Without doubt, contextual factors can shape, facilitate and limit social work practice and education, such as pressured workplaces or financial hardships of students (Agllias et al., 2015; Gair & Baglow, 2017). What the current findings have further highlighted is that the contextual frame of the placement experience, such as organisational issues are central to students' experiences and thus need to be overtly discussed in

setting up placement opportunities and reviewing performance in field education. In this light, more explicit recognition of contextual factors involving structural barriers, organisational shortcomings and students' practice aspirations are important considerations in order to avoid "blaming the victim" and/or being too heavily skewed towards "serving university purposes".

This focus on contextual factors needs to also take into account that working with students in social work field education programmes is impacted by education becoming a commodity (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Students paying to undertake a 500 hours placement expect a *good product*. For some students this is shaped by pre-conceived ideas of what is a good placement including what might lead to the employment outcomes they hope for at the end of their degree. As a result, it can be speculated that suitability for students can be about the placement suiting them. It would appear that such a perception of suitability being connected to student interests and preferred fields of practice could inhibit students' ability to appreciate the significant learning opportunities various placement opportunities may offer them. This is addressed to some extent by the inclusion of openness to learning as an essential element in the suitability model. However, a tension is that students make many sacrifices in order to undertake a placement, including experiencing additional financial hardship during placement (Gair & Baglow, 2017), and additional work, life, family balance pressures (Agllias et al., 2015). In this context, it is understandable that some students might feel let down by social work education, a sense of double betrayal: the placement may not meet the expectation of a good product and the impact of their adjustments and sacrifices to undertake placement may not be recognised. This could foster an environment of frustration which may impact on professionalism and could also inhibit self-reflection

and openness to learning. Formally acknowledging contextual factors that impact on students' preparation for practice throughout the degree, including in particular, in placement finding discussions with students and during placement, aligns well with a critical approach to the practice of social work.

Many workplace cultures and environments do not meet an idealised version of social work practice. Yet, we do not want students to lose the vision of ethical, socially just and human-rights-based practice. Preparing them for this practice requires students to engage in diverse and complex work in a neoliberal environment (Morley & Dunstan). It also requires social work supervisors and educators to make an effort to properly support the students in their learning and help them to critically unpack circumstances and contexts that are less than ideal. While we present students with ideas that learning can happen anywhere, and that the perfect placement is a myth, the preparation for ensuring they can work in complex environments with a strong social work identity needs to be explicit through the curriculum in order to facilitate their field education journey utilising critical reflection and liaison support (Morley & Dunstan, 2013).

The original and extended model therefore present a useful tool for student's consideration and discussion of their own circumstances and their pathways towards becoming a professional social worker, allowing students to distinguish more clearly on areas they do have control over versus areas outside of their control as a student, learner and developing practitioner.

Further research could explore the application of this updated model early in the degree and the impact this has on student preparation for practice and confidence for field education. Social work educators could engage with students about suitability for social work practice early in the degree by including the model in subject

outlines and content. Other research could explore active engagement of students in the shaping of assessment as a way of promoting professional integrity and student confidence.

Limitations

While the survey response rate was deemed appropriate in relation to the overall target population, the results cannot be generalised due to the relatively low numbers and the limited context of one university. While surveys do not achieve in-depth knowledge, for this study it was decided that an online survey tool was most appropriate to encourage honest feedback through anonymity and confidentiality.

Moreover, the survey tool did not distinguish between suitability issues impacting field education and graduate practice, but asked about suitability for either in the same question, as field educators, in an earlier phase of the research, spoke about suitability issues impacting field education and graduate practice in a global sense. Thus, aspects specifically relating to the summative assessment of suitability for field education have not been considered. Future research could help with further clarification, interpretations and understandings regarding students' suitability for field education and the larger question of suitability for professional practice.

The model includes the consideration of cultural perspectives. Further exploration is needed to explore how cultural contexts and aspects of supervision might be defined and considered across countries and nations.

Conclusion

The findings from this research emphasise the importance of considering contextual factors and not only those internal to the student when addressing professional suitability concerns with students. The elements of the presented model are well acknowledged as relevant to field education and are

commonly considered in preparing students for field education; however, the presented model is a practical tool for curriculum development and engaging in discussions about suitability for field education and suitability for professional practice between students, field educators and social work educators early in social work education. Utilising a visual tool to frame student professional suitability as a collaborative endeavour involving students, the field and the social work educators can actively engage students and facilitate professional integrity. Engaging with students early and respectfully in the evaluation of suitability for practice assists the professional growth of students. Ideally, discussing suitability with students needs to occur throughout the curriculum and well before placement, so that students are better prepared for field education and professional practice or, alternatively, better positioned to identify that social work practice is not something that they wish to pursue.

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Teachers' experiences of student feedback: A view from a department of social work in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Course evaluations play a significant part in the facilitating of educational programmes at a university. Along with course evaluations, students are often asked for their reflections on teachers' pedagogical methods and approaches. These types of questions can be referred to as student evaluations of teaching, or SETs. Separately, there is growing, yet underdeveloped, interest in understanding the emotional impact the role of being a university lecturer has on the individual teacher. This piece of work is interested in combining the areas of teacher development, SET and emotional impact. Therefore, this research is seeking to understand how teachers in a department of social work engage with student feedback, manage this feedback and understand pedagogical self-development.

METHODS: A mixed approach (an online survey and semi-structured interviews), was taken to gather the experiences of the teachers.

FINDINGS: The results show that all the teachers engaged with student feedback. It also showed that some teachers experienced negative emotions regarding feedback that were unpleasant but had strategies to deal with the feedback.

CONCLUSION: The results also pointed towards individual-directed solutions as the drivers behind creating good practices around pedagogical self-development, and for managing any emotional impact of SETs.

KEYWORDS: emotional impact; student evaluation of teaching; individual strategies

Student evaluations are a common part of the student and teaching experiences at universities, despite the issues long identified with their validity and reliability (Wolfer & McNown Johnson, 2003). Since the 1970s, student evaluations have a played significant part in the running of educational programmes at a university (Kogan, Schoenfeld-Tacher, & Hellyer, 2010). Universities have tried many different approaches to gathering evaluations from students, such as group meetings and regular meetings with class representatives. Efforts to offer feedback on teachers' own pedagogical development have, however, not been so flexible or creative. Indeed, students' feedback tends to remain the most widely used method of feedback on teaching (Johnson & Wolfer, 2001). Furthermore, the teaching evaluation is often mixed in with evaluations on the administration of courses and, in the view of Johnson and Wolfer (2001), is not optimally designed for supporting teachers with their pedagogical

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development. This paper takes the analysis one step further in the direction of the impact the actual student feedback has on teachers, be it experienced as positive or negative. Therefore, the aim of this study is to give a space for teachers to express their experiences of anonymous feedback on their teaching. As a result, the following questions will be the focus of the paper:

- Do teachers read and identify with student feedback?

- How do the teachers process the feedback on professional and personal levels?

- What strategies do teachers use for pedagogical self-development?

Background and rationale for research

The context of student feedback in current times must be considered in reference to dominant discourses around education and students as *consumers* of their education. At the forefront of these discourses is New Public Management (NPM), which has been a defining characteristic of contemporary university teaching across Europe over the last 20 years. This business-based approach to the management and delivery of education has had significant impact on how a university is run. This has resulted in a move "from more collegial and horizontal accountability to more vertical reported through new layers of performance indicators and performance management systems, along with growing activities of regulatory bodies…" (de Lourdes Machado, Soares, & Teichler, 2017, p. 236). NPM has also created the rhetoric of students as consumers and "coupled with a faith in the power of the markets to have their needs met" (p. 236). As a consequence, comments from students can be seen from the perspective of a satisfied or dissatisfied customer (Budd, 2017). These comments can have a significant impact on careers in some countries, such as the USA (Kogan et

al., 2010), when applying for tenure or in wage negotiations. This approach to public affairs also refers to increased competition, budgetary constraints, reforms based on performance, assessment and monitoring and increasingly managerial roles taken on by academics. The aforementioned idea of the students as consumers of their education also feeds into this rhetoric. The practice of social work is also privy to NPM language contests. For instance, in the United Kingdom, criticism has been levelled against government spin which uses the language of social work (use of *empowerment*, for example) but often in a tokenistic and superficial manner (Heffernan, 2005).

Much has been written about the impact NPM has had on the practice of workers and its impact for clients/service users in the public service, but the impact of NPM practices on the individual teacher in the university setting is seldom explored. Their emotional *well-being* is seldom looked at when compared to teachers in other educational settings such as primary and secondary schools. A useful concept to help focus the discussion is Soini, Pyhältö, & Pietarinen's (2010) idea of "pedagogical well-being". They argue that teachers in secondary school settings can experience "the pedagogical processes within school communities [through] either feelings of engagement and empowerment and a sense of satisfaction or feelings of stress and anxiety" (p. 736). The teacher can experience stress through dealings with parents and joy and empowerment through their interaction with students. They argue that how one experiences pedagogical well-being can have an impact on a teacher's self-image and self-esteem. Many factors make up pedagogical well-being and it is the contention of this paper that feedback from students plays its part. Seeking to explore the interplay between the "audit society" (Power, 1999), where everything is "measurable and held accountable", and the practices of the university teacher are relevant to help us understand the emotional engagement NPM policies and

practices can have on individuals and to develop a sense of teachers' pedagogical well-being. The emotional impact felt by the teacher in universities is complex, context-based and is not solely centred on student expectations and feedback. Studies show that organisational factors, job dissatisfaction, burnout and health symptoms are all linked to high levels of emotional labour in teaching (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). However, given that student–teacher interactions are the most prevalent source of teacher emotions in their role (for a review, see Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), there is a strong case for seeking to understand this relationship. In addition, Quinlan (2016) writing on higher education teaching and learning underpins the importance of relationships for emotions in interactions and vice versa, which stresses the need for more empirical research on that issue. Often the university lecturer's path is solitary, especially when it comes to teaching development and managing stress. There is considerable research on teachers' stress and working conditions in other educational stages, such as secondary school (see for example, Kyriacou (2001)), but understanding the emotional impact of working as a university lecturer is still largely in its infancy. The university teacher is expected to entertain, inspire, motivate, explain and examine. In the everyday teaching setting the role is performance-based and played out in front of live audiences with SETs as the voice of the critic. This requires extensive emotional management on behalf of the teacher in order to "induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). Hence emotional labour involves the "management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display and it is instrumental in that it involves the management of feeling ... for the benefit of another person" (1983, p. 7). The ideas of pedagogical well-being and emotional well-being are interlinked and the research questions in this paper seek to understand how this is played out in the respondents' everyday teaching.

It is important to note that this paper considers that dialogue with students is crucial to the development of teaching of social work and gaining *constructive alignment*. Constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999, 2003) is based on the theory of constructivism and states that the teacher should align the planned learning activities with the learning outcomes. Many researchers in social work education grapple with the challenge of teaching theories and approaches that students are expected to integrate into their future practice. These theories often ask the students to reflect critically on their future roles as social workers but, at times, "educators are rarely held to this same standard" (Teater, 2011, p. 572). The pedagogical practices of aiming for constructive alignment can be seen in parallel to the influence NPM has had on the approaches to managing education and how the language of Briggs is adapted to serve the interests of NPM approaches. For example, the need for feedback strategies is key to a constructive alignment approach (Teater, 2011); however, the majority of these approaches seldom refer to feedback on the teachers' actual teaching. Instead, generally, feedback refers to students' learning and feedback as consumers of their education.

A critical take on SET

Much of the published research takes a critical stance on student feedback and on SETs. There have been many questions over the last 20 years regarding the relevance of SET (Hornstein, 2017), in particular countries (e.g., USA) where SETs are used as arguments for tenure appointments and in salary negotiations. In the author's experience, SETs in Sweden tend to be used for discussions about course improvement amongst course teachers and are not necessarily part of wages or professional development conversations with line managers. However, this is not to say that this is the case for other social work academics working in Swedish universities. Many studies problematise students' methods of evaluation as the criteria that

students use are likely to be unrelated to teachers' actual teaching qualities (Boring, 2015). On top of this, response rates tend to be around the 29% mark, bringing the reliability of using student assessment as a fair measure of a teachers' pedagogy into question. Braga, Paccagnella, and Pellizzari (2014, p. 85 point out that "good teachers are those who require their students to exert effort and students dislike having to expend this effort, especially the least able ones, and their evaluations reflect the utility they enjoy from the course". Research has also found that, by looking at SETs from the students' perspective, younger people are more likely to give criticism, show a gender bias in their responses and "punish" their teachers through the SET. The format of teaching, the size of the classroom and even the subject matter have also been shown to play a role in students' responses. Hamermesh and Parker (2003) identified that physical attractiveness can also impact SETs. Sebastian and Bristow (2008) found that students rated female teachers dressed in formal clothes as less likeable when compared to female instructors in casual dress. Style of dress in this study did not, however, impact likeability for male instructors. In defence of the student position, it has also been suggested that students are not guided as to what constitutes good teaching and therefore their feedback can be based on emotional reactions and biases (Sherman & Backburn, 1975). Kogan et al. (2010, p. 100) conclude that the benefits can be related to course development, students' sense of influence but they have to be considered in the context of the potential costs, such as "including faculty's loss of confidence and reduced self-image".

Material and methods

In this section I will give an overview of how the research was conducted for this study. As mentioned, the research targeted teachers in a social work department where the author is employed. The total possible number of respondents was 70. However, the survey response rate was poor with only 25 people and three (30-minute) interviews

conducted. This can possibly be attributed to it being a busy time in the term and the subject matter may not have been of interest to the majority of potential respondents. In hindsight it would have been beneficial to have sent out a reminder email—this was not done on this occasion.

The survey was administrated via an online survey (Sunet) tool so as to reach as many respondents as possible. Gathering large-scale data enables one to generalise, focus on scores and rating and ensure that the data are representative (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The benefits of using an internet-based survey include reduced cost and time to distribute, and calculations are carried out automatically. In addition, online surveys are anonymous, accessible and engaging. On the negative side, the online survey risks rapid loss of interest on the part of the respondents. A low response rate (such as 20%) is the norm when compared to a paper survey. Reliability can be brought into question given that those who reply are those who are interested in the topic. However, in an effort to address issues of reliability, triangulation is achieved through the use of interviews with some of the survey participants. For validity, the survey was tested through a pilot with a colleague and, as a result, questions were adjusted. The interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) resulting in the creation of three themes. The quantitative data are presented in descriptive format and matched to the three themes. The data were not analysed for gender and experience, although this would have potentially provided an interesting perspective. Approval for the study was sought and given by the head of the department and consent by the respondents was given by their participation in the survey and interviews. The seeking of ethical approval through discussion with the head of department was considered sufficient by the author and the department head. While the respondent numbers were low, they are roughly in line with an expected response rate (Cohen et al., 2007).

Results and analysis

The following section is organised via three themes that were created using thematic analysis and that were prominent and recurrent (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in the empirical data. The themes of *engagement and experience*, *emotional management* and *strategies for self-development* allow the data to be organised in a coherent manner and these are connected to the paper's research questions. The survey and interview data will be discussed together under the relevant themes.

Engagement and experience

The teachers were asked if they read the student feedback that was connected to their teaching. All the teachers from the survey and all three interviewees reported that they read the feedback, ranging from *sometimes* to *always*, with the majority (57%) reporting that they always check student feedback regarding their teaching. With respect to the question regarding whether they sometimes experienced feedback that they considered to be personal in a way which made them uncomfortable, 35% of the respondents agreed that they had experienced this. On the other hand, 28% stated that they never experienced anything of that nature. The majority of the respondents (64%) felt that the feedback from the students on their teaching could sometimes be helpful.

Emotional management

Relative to experiencing and managing negative feedback, 85% of the respondents stated that they speak to colleagues in an informal capacity. By negative feedback, the following examples given by one of the respondents illustrate the type of thing which teachers have read: "*x doesn't know how to talk or relate to students*" or "*x never looks for our opinion, just reads from the slides*". Another respondent commented that they "*fear looking at the evaluations*" because of the expected impact it will have on their

emotional well-being. The remaining respondents spoke to either a line manager or family member about it. In contrast, when it came to managing positive feedback, only 42% would tell a colleague about it, while 21% would think about it but not tell anyone about it. Significantly, none of the respondents on the survey and interviews answered that they would keep negative feedback to themselves. When asked for an overall reflection on the emotional impact SETs have on them, a total of 21% stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed*, with the statement.

Strategies for self-development

All interview respondents identified that creating opportunities for dialogue with students was the best way to get feedback on teaching. In their opinion, the teacher has to grow a "*tough skin*" to be able to deal with negative comments, even if it is from a small minority. One respondent highlighted the "*benefits of having a structure*" and can include something like a "*student representative*" to be a channel for feedback. This teacher stated that these ideas were things she had developed over time and on an individual basis. The subjective approach to managing student feedback was also echoed by one interviewee who explained that they also used their own approach to getting feedback on their teaching. In this instance, the teacher explained that they used the theory they were teaching by asking students for feedback and engaging in critical reflection and learning on the lecture experience. The interviewee explained that they were trying to "*live the model*" so to speak, and were able to apply it to the context of student feedback—the respondent spoke about the values underpinning the method she teaches and, in a personal way, she integrated these values in her teaching practice. All interviewees expressed the importance of trust and an openness to self-development when it came to taking on student feedback but they were also in agreement that SET, anonymous and online, were not practically helpful for this.

Conclusion and discussion

This paper sought to answer the following questions:

- Do teachers read and identify with student feedback?

- How do the teachers process the feedback on professional and personal levels?

- What strategies do teachers use for pedagogical self-development?

When combining the interview and survey feedback we can get a picture from the respondents that student feedback is important to them. It is clear from the findings that the respondents firstly read the SET, then some internalised the feedback to help develop their pedagogy and others internalised the feedback in ways which make the experience uncomfortable. The management of that feedback reflects the importance of collegial support and, in some ways, this can be seen as a support for professional development. For a significant majority of the respondents, student feedback on their teaching was seen as something which helped their teaching development. The research also revealed that the freedom exists for individual approaches to engage students regarding feedback on their teaching and these strategies are unique to the individual. This makes a case for the importance of flexibility in creating one's own pedagogical well-being—but this presupposes emotional well-being in the first instance. If an individual has a poor self-image or experiences high stress, it is unlikely that that they will feel competent to use individual strategies. The findings point that a certain percentage of the teachers experience SET as negative and, while they have support from peers, the questions remain about how they go about developing their pedagogical well-being. There is also an argument to be made that we need to be better at sharing our examples of good practice so that sharing the positive experiences is seen as important for organisational growth and individual development. In conclusion, having SETs as the only formal means for internal pedagogical development simply does not cut it.

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Social work and social justice: The relationship between fitness to practise and criminal convictions for non-violent activism

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Social work as a profession is underpinned by ideas of social justice and human rights, and that social workers have an ethical obligation to uphold these ideas. Social workers have a history of engagement in non-violent social justice activism (NVSJA), and a proud record of achieving social change in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, having a criminal conviction for engaging in NVSJA can be a barrier to social work registration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

APPROACH: An exploration of current research around NVSJA and social work registration was conducted. Along with an examination of the Social Workers Registration Board's (SWRB's) *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement*, with a consideration on the reporting of acts of NVSJA and social workers by the media.

CONCLUSION: Those who engage in NVSJA are often likely to gain criminal convictions. This creates a potential barrier for social workers who go beyond the rhetoric and fight for social justice, in a macro and practical sense, from gaining registration. This has become additionally important since the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act (2019) passed and with registration becoming mandatory two years after the Act gained royal assent. There is a need for a change to the *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement* so that the SWRB is better able to support social workers who are standing for what social work is all about, or at least, what social work is stated to be all about.

KEYWORDS: social justice; activism; convictions; fit and proper

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Promoting social justice and human rights by challenging discrimination and institutional oppression is a core aspect of the social work profession, and a core ethical responsibility for individual social workers (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW], 2014; International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2018). This is often done through acts of non-violent social justice activism (NVSJA), such as protesting, with the aim of bringing social justice and human rights issues to the attention of policymakers, employers, and the general public (Noble, 2015; Ostrander, Lane, McClenden,

Hayes, & Smith, 2017). However, there is a disjunction between the Social Workers Registration Board's (SWRB) *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement* and this idea. As it is not uncommon for social workers to engage in acts of NVSJA (Schrader, 2010). It, also, is not uncommon for those involved to be at risk of getting arrested for such acts, with Māori at higher levels of risk of gaining a conviction after arrest (Duarte, 2017; Eketone, 2015 Keane, 2012; Schrader, 2010). This currently could lead to a barrier in registration and employment as a social worker in Aotearoa New Zealand (Dennett & Pratt, 2016; SWRB, 2018).

The current fit and proper person policy statement

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 states the SWRB is required to consider any criminal convictions to help determine whether an applicant meets the criteria to be deemed a fit and proper person to practise social work. This is done on a case-by-case basis, where the board will review the nature of the criminal offence. As a part of this consideration, the circumstances of the offence, when and where the offence occurred, any rehabilitation undertaken by the applicant, the conduct of the applicant since the offence, along with a range of other factors are explored (SWRB, 2018). There is, however, no mention of criminal convictions for NVSJA in the SWRB's *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement*.

What does being fit and proper mean?

The Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 lays out three criteria that can lead to a social worker being deemed an unfit and improper person to practise social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The first of these criteria is if the applicant has a conviction for an offence punishable by imprisonment of at least three months. The other two conditions concerning fit and proper status are whether the board is satisfied that the applicant is unable to adequately perform the actions required to be a social worker, or if there are reasonable grounds for the board to consider the applicant not to be of good character or reputation (Social Workers Registration Legislation Act, 2019). However, does being fit and proper go beyond this? Staniforth and Fouché (2006) argue that the most important factor to consider whether an applicant is a fit and proper person to practise social work is their potential liability to *ngā kiritaki* (service users). Research conducted by Appleton, Rankine, and Hare (2014) reflects the views from social work academics and fieldwork educators. These views deemed fit and proper to include aspects such as the

social worker's honesty, integrity, ability to know and work within their limits; ability to give and receive feedback; their capability to work interpersonally with *ngā kiritaki*; and their capacity to uphold the principles in the ANZASW's *Code of Ethics* (Appleton et al., 2014). Additionally, the research conducted by Appleton et al. (2014) showed that adherence to the principles of social justice and human rights; an ability to make ethical decisions; being culturally respectful and the ability to bring evidence into practice were all important in being considered fit and proper. In reality, the second and third criteria of the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 around an applicant being a fit and proper person to practise social work relate to the findings presented from Staniforth and Fouché (2006), and Appleton et al. (2014).

The relationship between social work and social justice

Ostrander et al. (2017) reported that part of being a social worker is to challenge unjust social systems, social injustices, and human rights violations. Social workers engaging in macro practice, which involves a push for social change, challenges to social inequalities and other social justice action (Austin, Anthony, Knee, & Mathias, 2016), can create change for social workers in micro practice and for *ngā kiritaki* (McBeath, 2016; Reisch, 2016; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). There is a strong belief across the social work profession that social workers have a responsibility to fight for social justice and social change, at both macro and micro levels (Clark, 2006; Duarte, 2017; Grodofsky & Makaros, 2016; Hamilton & Fauri, 2001; Morgaine, 2014; Payne, 2002; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014; Thompson, 2002). Standing up for social justice is more than rhetoric or an idealistic view of what social workers should aim to achieve. As Ostrander et al. (2017) reported, social workers have been on the front-lines fighting for social justice and social change historically in various circumstances through NVSJA. In fighting for social justice, a social worker's

practice can, and often does, extend beyond their job description (Payne, 2000, as cited in Thompson, 2002). Engagement in NVSJA is often labelled *radical social work* in contemporary times, but historically, social workers have had a strong presence in social movements, in challenging social injustices in the political arena, and standing up for oppressed population groups (Noble, 2015; Reisch, 2016). Ostrander et al. (2017) acknowledge that participating in protests, marches, rallies, or joining civic organisations and political parties can be an effective method for social workers to meet the ethical obligations around social justice and human rights set out by the IFSW (2018).

The Aotearoa New Zealand social justice activism context

Participating in social activism is not foreign to New Zealanders. Our nation's history has been defined by acts of social activism, such as the Springbok Tour protests, 1984 Waitangi Day hīkoi, Vietnam War protests, anti-nuclear marches, and the homosexual reform marches (Keane, 2012; Schrader, 2010). More recently in Aotearoa New Zealand, we have had the foreshore and seabed hīkoi, the anti-mining rally, and the anti-TPPA protests (Fagan & Bath, 2016; Gagné, 2008; Nippert, 2010). Many of these social protests, hīkoi, and marches have led to heavy police involvement (Keane, 2012). From this engagement in social justice activist events, there have been multiple arrests of New Zealanders (Baker, 2007; Schrader, 2010). As reported by Noble (2015) and Ostrander et al. (2017), social workers are often involved in these acts of NVSJA. Duarte (2017) refers to the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and states that many social workers had heavy involvement in these social justice movements, fighting for social change. Having social workers heavily involved in these events, while many in attendance are arrested, indicates that a number of social workers are likely to have gained criminal convictions as a result of standing and fighting for social justice.

International responses to regulating social workers with criminal convictions for NVSJA

The policies of social work regulators and associations in the United States, Australia Canada, Northern Ireland, and England all had similar responses: that decisions on criminal convictions are made on a case-by-case basis relative to social work regulation (British Columbia College of Social Workers [BCCSW], 2018; Health and Care Professions Council [HCPC], 2012a, 2012b; New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2013; Northern Ireland Social Care Council [NISCC], 2017). In most cases, international social work regulators conduct a criminal record check on applicants (HCPC, 2012a; Social Workers Act, 2008). In policies available to the public from the international social work regulators community, there is no mention of criminal convictions in relation to NVSJA (BCCSW, 2018; HCPC, 2012b; NYSED, 2013; NISCC, 2017).

Looking at fitness to practice, CORU[i] (2010), the social work regulator for the Republic of Ireland reported that applicants must satisfy the registration board that they are a fit and proper person to practise social work by providing information on their character, health, knowledge, and skills. However, much like the other international regulators, CORU (2010) requires information on any criminal convictions of the applicant. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) (2015) outlines the values required by social workers to underpin their standards of conduct and practice. These include being respectful of individuals, working in a person-centred way, promoting the autonomy of *ngā kiritaki*, (though of course the NISCC uses the term 'service users') acting in the best interests of *ngā kiritaki*, promoting equality and inclusiveness, and their ability to provide safe and effective care (NISCC, 2015). None of these international regulators had anything around NVSJA written into their publicly available policies on fitness to practise social work.

Criminal convictions and social workers

The Ministry of Justice's *Request for Criminal Conviction History* form is something all social workers and social work students will be familiar with (Apaitia-Vague, Pitt, & Younger, 2011). As social workers are regularly required to disclose their criminal convictions, the effects of their convictions can be felt across the entirety of their career. Dennett and Pratt (2016) reported on a community social worker who could not find employment as a social worker despite being qualified and applying for numerous positions, due to a conviction from 34 years earlier. Apaitia-Vague et al. (2011) published the difficulties of finding a position for students with criminal convictions in a generally risk-averse environment. When considering the effects of having a criminal conviction can have within the social work profession, we need to consider differences in conviction rates in Aotearoa New Zealand. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori are more likely to be arrested, convicted, denied diversion, or imprisoned than Pākehā for the same crimes (Department of Corrections, 2007; Eketone, 2015). As the SWRB's *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement* considers applicants' criminal convictions, the fact that Māori are more likely to gain criminal convictions for the same crimes as Pākehā could lead to a potential barrier for Māori in becoming social workers registered with the SWRB.

Conclusion

There appears to be a disconnect between what research shows being fit and proper is, the ANZASW's *Code of Ethics*, and the SWRB's *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement* (ANZASW, 2014; SWRB, 2018). While the current *Fit and Proper Person Policy Statement* does allow for case-by-case consideration, where the offence is explored in detail, it must be questioned whether this is enough. Does this accurately reflect the SWRB's view on the relationship between social work and social justice, and the ethical responsibility of social workers? With the longevity of the impacts of a criminal conviction on one's social work career, the

likelihood of Aotearoa New Zealand social workers gaining convictions, and the cultural bias of our justice system, shouldn't the SWRB set an example for the social work profession around criminal convictions for NVSJA?

Do the professional bodies of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as the ANZASW and SWRB, believe that social workers should stand up for social justice in a practical sense? If they do, why not let it be known in their policy statements or other publicly available documents? Acts of NVSJA have had such positive effects in Aotearoa New Zealand historically, and those involved should not be punished for taking a stand. Social workers are supposed to value macro practice, positive change, and social justice. If this is more than rhetoric, this should be reflected in the policy statements of the professional bodies for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Acknowledgement

Endnotes

i   The name **CORU** originates from an Irish word, 'cóir' meaning fair, just and proper. These are values that resonate deeply within the organisation, and reflect commitment to protecting the public by regulating health and social care professionals. **CORU** is not an acronym.

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Overseas social work placements: Can a well-designed workflow contribute to the success of an overseas placement?

Lee Henley[1], Simon Lowe[2], Zoe Henley[1] and Claudia Munro[3]

ABSTRACT

This article reflects on the importance of workflow design for students completing field education as part of a social work degree. Specifically, this article examines this in the context of an Aotearoa New Zealand social work student from the University of Waikato (UoW) completing a final placement at a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Battambang Cambodia, Children's Future International (CFI). The main body of the article reflects on the advantages of designing an overseas placement approach which is planned to flow from theory development to practice implementation, termed "knowledge development and flow" (Henley et al., in press).

KEYWORDS: placement; overseas; flow; knowledge

[1] Children's Future International

[2] University of Waikato

[3] Tutaki Youth Inc

As part of the four-year Bachelor of Social Work programme (BSW) with the University of Waikato (UoW) and a requirement of the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), social work students undertake two practice-based placements with a minimum of 120 days total (SWRB, 2014). The BSW at UoW, under specific circumstances, allows an option for students to complete their placement overseas. This article considers the impacts of an international placement and how careful planning can benefit the student's skill development and knowledge.

As part of this placement, the student completed 60 days based at a NGO in Battambang Cambodia, Children's Future International (CFI). The student worked predominantly with the social work team within CFI but also spent time with education and operational teams. This field education experience is considered alongside a similar placement in Cambodia in 2015 (Hay, Lowe et al., 2018), and other Aotearoa New Zealand based placement experiences.

The student, Claudia Munro, was in the final year of her social work studies; she had not previously visited a developing country. For this student, an international placement was a huge undertaking and a courageous commitment. Simon Lowe is a lecturer in field education on the social work programme at UoW, Aotearoa New Zealand. Lee Henley is the Executive Director of CFI and took the role of field educator and supervisor for the student. Zoey Henley, the Managing Director at CFI, also supported the student.

CFI is an NGO working with children and their families and is situated in Ek Phnom, approximately eight kilometres north of Battambang, Cambodia. Ek Phnom is a rural and an extremely poor region of Cambodia. CFI was founded to prevent human rights abuses and protect and uphold the dignity of some of Cambodia's most at-risk children. CFI came into existence in 2009 after its founders

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witnessed persistent, yet preventable, human rights abuses against children in Ek Phnom, where they had been living and working as educators. CFI exists to, first provide for the basic needs and safety of children (ages 5–21) and their families in rural Cambodia and, second, to provide them with educational opportunities not otherwise available. CFI's model of service takes a results-driven approach for a community with untreated trauma from the Khmer Rouge genocide, poverty, malnutrition, unsafe migration, and exploitative experiences such as child labour, physical and sexual abuse, underage sex work and neglect. CFI aims to empower children and youth to break the cycle of poverty utilising innovative social work approaches (CFI, 2019).

This article focuses on the placement design of "knowledge development and flow", and whether it was effective in increasing the efficacy of a student social worker on placement in addressing knowledge and awareness of consumer empowerment and service dependency among managers and staff at the placement NGO. From its conception, this placement was approached as being a learning environment for the student, one where the student was encouraged to contribute for the benefit of the NGO, its staff and service users. The intention was for the placement to be planned in a way where the student would acquire knowledge and use this knowledge in service delivery; an example being running a workshop on mental wellbeing for teenagers. As such, a knowledge development and flow approach was used. The student would therefore be sharing her knowledge around theoretical and research approaches.

Placement planning

Before this placement commenced significant consideration was given to how the student's learning objectives would be reached and practice delivered. All parties were cognisant of the need for detailed planning to minimise the potential stress of an overseas placement in a developing context (Agllias,

2010; Litvack, Mishna, & Bogo, 2010). The preparation included discussions around:

- building an understanding of overarching theoretical approaches regarding consumer empowerment, service dependency, and advocacy;

- completing multiple literature reviews. These were the first learning activities and practice flowed from these. These reviews focused on empowerment, dependency and advocacy;

- developing an understanding of pertinent issues in a community context;

- developing a workshop designed to share knowledge with CFI staff (focused on consumer empowerment, service dependency, and advocacy). These flowed from the literature reviews;

- using outcomes from workshops to inform and develop policy frameworks (for a consumer participation group and exit pathway);

- evaluating placement success by measuring against learning outcomes and development of the social work processes at CFI.

This approach used a knowledge development and flow process as each task was informed by the previous one. The resulting flow is displayed in Table 1 which breaks down the placement work and achievements, demonstrating how the tasks allocated were designed to gather knowledge and flow into each other

For example, one key task was "Education Opportunities" of which was broken down into the following stages:

1. complete a literature review on empowerment, dependency and advocacy;

2. develop own understanding, thereby enabling education;

Appendix 1:

Table 1. Placement Flow

Student Work Plan												
Objective	**Week 1**	**Week 2**	**Week 3**	**Week 4**	**Week 5**	**Week 6**	**Week 7**	**Week 8**	**Week 9**	**Week 10**	**Week 11**	**Week 12**
Education Opportunities												
Complete Literature review on empowerment, dependency and advocacy			▨									
Develop own understanding Enabling education				▨								
Present information						▨						
Evaluation of presentation							▨					
Developing further cultural understanding/knowledge												
Develop awareness of dos and don'ts												▨
Develop some language knowledge												▨
Review and design systems in a developing context to reduce service dependency												
Collect data from literature reviews and other sources							▨					
Develop a clear exit pathway								▨				
Develop clear guidelines for exit process									▨			
Present information to staff										▨		
Completing research in a developing context												
Develop questions	▨											
Develop questionnaire	▨											
Consent forms	▨											
Analysis data			▨									
End line												▨

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Applying literature to practice														
Complete literature reviews								■						
Consider how this evidence impacts service provision									■					
Use evidence in developing intervention group to increase empowerment										■				
Reflect on use of evidence and impact											■			
Writing an article for local publication on placement experiences														
Complete personal research								■						
Produce draft proposal									■					
Complete draft article											■			
Produce completed article												■		
Develop an intervention group to increase consumer empowerment														
Identify staff members								■						
Meet with staff									■					
Information group for parents										■				
Identify parents														
First group												■		
Directing a mental health workshop														
Understand content			■											
Deliver workshop 1					■									
Consider changes					■									
Deliver workshop 2					■									
Evaluation						■								

3. present information to the staff group;

4. evaluate presentation.

Clear goal-setting enabled staff supporting the student to guide her interventions with the various teams at CFI. As described earlier, the teams included a social work team, an education team, and an operational team. The process of goal-setting made the identification of learning and development goals relatively easy. While much of the work completed by the student was through direct practice with the different teams, there

was an overall focus on the development of policies and processes within CFI. Policy development involved the student mapping current processes and considering how to develop new ones; these developments were regularly discussed with CFI staff and managers. This provided an excellent opportunity for the student to be involved in policy and process development, and for her to actively contribute to the agency. These mechanisms, including referral intake, triage, allocation, assessment, care-planning and review, helped staff to consider appropriate methods to reduce service dependency, increase consumer empowerment, and encourage discharge from CFI services. These processes were new concepts to the CFI social work and education teams; although the team were already using a strengths-based model in their work with families (Hillier, 2017).

Throughout the student's placement, much was achieved and learnt by the CFI staff. One of the main findings was the impact of tacit learning. As the student was sitting with the social work team, they demonstrated greater learning regarding empowerment and dependency, this appeared to be due to daily tacit learning. This is discussed in a further article (Henley et al., 2019).

Placement literature

Research of previous international student placements identify how social work knowledge, work knowledge and self-knowledge had high contributions in the success of the international placements (Hay, Lowe, et al., 2018; Matthew & Lough, 2017). When considering an international placement, the cultural context impacts on a huge proportion of the work and there is a need for knowledge as to how to work within this appropriately (Beecher, Reeves, Eggertsen, & Furuto, 2010; Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). Hay, Maidment, Ballantyne, Beddoe, and Walker (2018, p. 5) conclude how knowledge which includes "historical, ethnic, cultural, social, economic and

religious context" are important and should be considered. Additionally, complementary research shows that there is a heightened importance of understanding one's own culture and one's self, regarding being able to recognise cross-cultural differences and similarities (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Garneau & Pepin, 2015).

Intimate understanding and ability to apply a range of social work theories and models are deemed as essential for international and cross-cultural social work intervention. Maidment, Chilvers, Crichton-Hill, and Meadows-Taurua (2011) conclude that a precise understanding of social work theory, initially by field educators, supervisors and field placement coordinators, and latterly by the student enables increased competence to practise cross-culturally.

Of significance is recent research, based on social work student satisfaction of experiences on placements in New Zealand. In this research, Hay, Maidment, et al. (2018) explain that little is known regarding this subject. What is clear is that many social work students experience a range of traumatic events while on placement (Collins, Coffey, & Morris, 2010). Davys and Beddoe (2009) argue that regular and effective supervision is a way to address the possible impacts of these events. The relationship with the field educator is of importance as they have a responsibility to prepare the student to prevent negative impact (Bride & Figley, 2007). In this instance, this relationship was of significant importance as this placement entailed completing work in an entirely new culture and environment. Therefore, this relationship was deemed critical for the success of this placement.

Placement outcomes

Throughout weekly supervision between the student and Executive Director, consideration was given as to how to make the workflow benefit both the organisation

and the student, and how to maintain flexibility on placement and respond to the unexpected. Each of these points led to the discussion and development of a structured work plan.

The work plan was a key component to the development and flow of the student's placement. This allowed for the planning of specific work tasks to be broken into clearly defined completion timeframes. The work was designed to follow a specific order, or workflow linking the majority of the tasks back to the first major goal.

A benefit of having a clear workflow process to follow, meant the student was able to balance their work plan alongside unexpected learning opportunities such as visiting clients at home and community centres. The student found the value of knowledge gained from these extra learning opportunities added value to the placement and the work plan. Intricate planning of the placement fitted well with the mandated requirement for weekly supervision, as per SWRB regulations, (SWRB, 2014) which contributed to the student's development while working through the placement flow. Consequently, regular, planned supervision formed a huge part of the structure of the placement, enabling and supporting the student to flow from one task to the next, respond to the unexpected, while simultaneously reflecting upon knowledge development, values and experiences. The student was able to reflect on her experiences in a number of fora. Mainly though, these included reflection with the field educator during clinical supervision, and confidentially online with the field placement coordinator through Mahara, an electronic platform. Mahara is an online journaling software that enables students to reflect, confidentially, on experiences whilst on placement. These reflections are part of the placement assessment and are shared with the field placement coordinator at the university. Students on placement with the BSW at UoW are expected to complete a minimum of two critical reflections per week

online. The intention is to develop levels of insight and personal growth through the development of critically reflective practice (Tesoriero, 2006).

Separate to the assessment of the placement, outcomes were also measured by surveying staff about their knowledge of specific concepts at the start, middle and end of the student's placement. These concepts underlined and guided the student's work and can be seen through the research data of "International Social Work Placements: Can a student from overseas stimulate professional learning for staff in a community development NGO" detailed later. The student's impact of work around service dependency and consumer empowerment can be seen in Table 2 through a comparison of learning achieved for CFI social workers and teachers from baseline to endline . This chart shows the impact of the work the student completed. According to the data collected significant increase in knowledge in all areas was achieved.
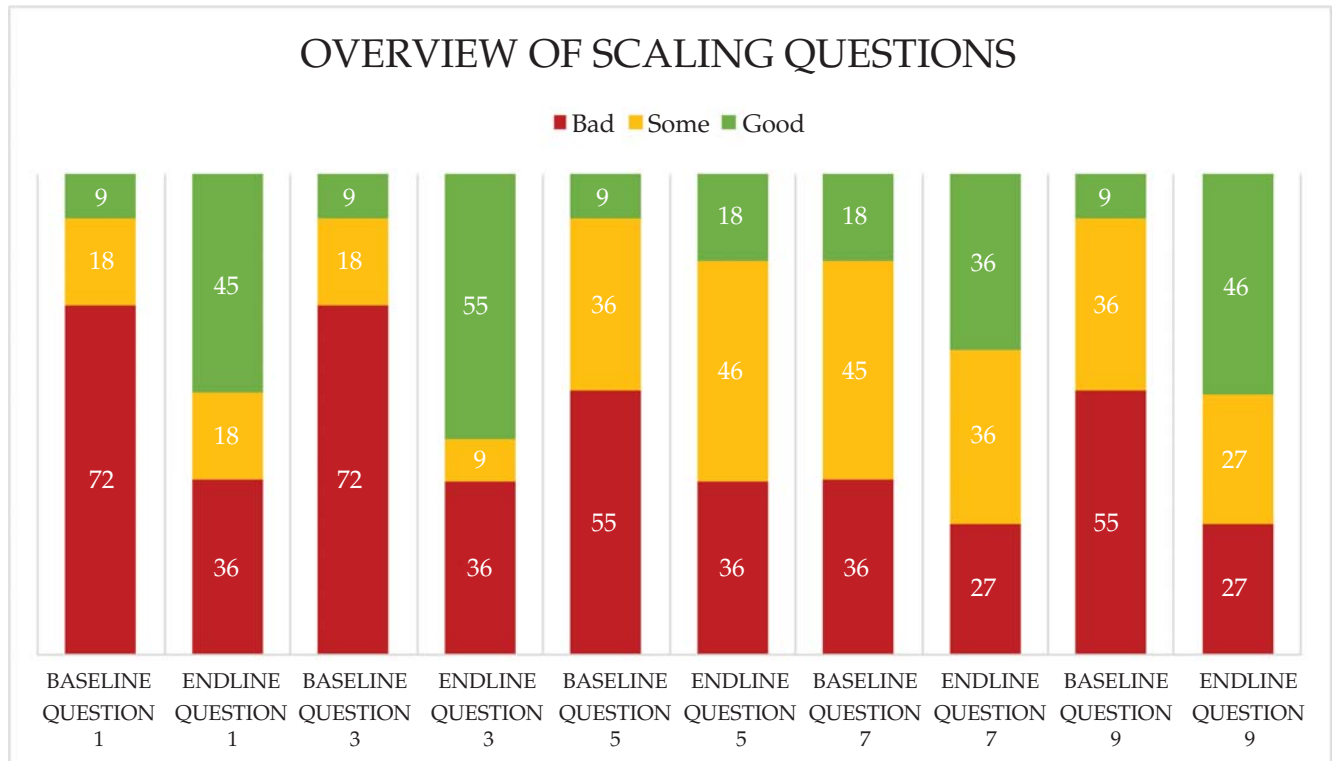
Employing a knowledge development and flow approach to placement planning meant the student was empowered to develop their knowledge, by completing each task as planned. This knowledge then flowed onwards to the staff group via a workshop and developed into a policy and process for service provision; and flowed into the next stage of the work plan.

Further reflection

This placement was planned and delivered within the previously mentioned knowledge development and flow framework (Henley et al., 2019) approach. Simply put, the student gathered knowledge and this flowed through into the host NGO. However, this reflective account also demonstrates the importance of clear planning designed to develop a student's abilities. Alongside an understanding of the complex local context is the need to recognise and feel comfortable with one's own culture and be able to recognise and discuss differences across

Appendix 2:

Table 2 – Student Impact. Baseline to endline.

OVERVIEW OF SCALING QUESTIONS

■ Bad ■ Some ■ Good

	Bad	Some	Good
BASELINE QUESTION 1	72	18	9
ENDLINE QUESTION 1	36	18	45
BASELINE QUESTION 3	72	18	9
ENDLINE QUESTION 3	36	9	55
BASELINE QUESTION 5	55	36	9
ENDLINE QUESTION 5	36	46	18
BASELINE QUESTION 7	36	45	18
ENDLINE QUESTION 7	27	36	36
BASELINE QUESTION 9	55	36	9
ENDLINE QUESTION 9	27	27	46

cultures (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Harrison & Turner, 2011; Saunders, Haskins, & Vasquez, 2015). In this placement, much of the supervision discussion was focused on observed differences, working in a different culture to encourage the student to be able to discuss these differences and respect them.

What does appear constant across the literature is the need to consider concepts and theories carefully when working cross-culturally to not dis-empower or collude with voyeuristic tourism (Hay, Lowe, et al., 2018). The student displayed good awareness of the need to practise in an appropriate manner with respect to culture, while forming quick relationships with staff and responding well to advice and supervision discussion (Ranz & Langer, 2018).

Hay, Maidment et al. (2018) discuss how students often feel luck plays a huge part in their placement. This placement was

deliberately planned in advance to positively enhance the student's experience, increase their skills by employing a knowledge development and flow approach, and to amplify potential benefit to the placement provider. The deliberate planning of learning opportunities provided the structure for the student to feel comfortable with their learning and, importantly, confident in knowing what tasks needed to be completed. The approach of removing luck and replacing with intensive planning was a key feature of this placement's success.

Reflections for future

Based on the participant's experience (student and CFI staff), the following thoughts are relevant:

1) Overseas placements need to be well planned and targeted to achieve certain outcomes.

2) Good quality liaison and prior planning between university staff, placement provider and student is essential.

3) Planning of overseas placements should commence at least three months prior to commencement.

4) Field supervisors should consider using a knowledge development and flow approach for placements to maximise impact and learning achieved.

Conclusion

Adopting a knowledge development and flow approach ensured this placement was prepared well and optimally structured for both the student and the host organisation. The student acquired knowledge in a planned and measured way and applied this knowledge to the benefit of staff and service users at the host agency. The student's progress and any areas of concern were able to be addressed in a transparent and timely manner and compared to agreed milestones established at the start of the placement.

Employing a knowledge development and flow approach provided clear structure in an otherwise unpredictable environment. This reflection offers some evidence as to how effective planning and goal setting can result in a successful overseas placement.

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Doing research in social work and social care: The journey from student to practitioner researcher

Social work and care settings increasingly call for the training and development of practitioner researchers as evidence (i.e., data gathered and analysed through research processes) is required to inform best practice interventions (ANZASW, 2013; Beddoe, Yates, Fouché, & Harington, 2010; SWRB, 2016). Significant repeat references within the literature to the ambivalent relationship social work practitioners and students have in relation to learning about, doing, and making use of research exist (Chakradhar, 2018; Dodd & Epstein, 2012; Epstein, 1987; Gray, Sharland, Heinsch, & Schubert, 2015). Unfortunately, students struggle with the new, often challenging, language of research as well as understanding how it might fit into their future practice (Cameron & Este, 2008; Jones & Sherr, 2014; Unrau & Grinnell, 2005). Several texts have been written that skilfully unpack the complexities of research concepts (Bryman, 2016; De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom, 2011; Neuman & Robson, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2014)). However, for the novice researcher, these resources are not always accessible due to the density of content and use of technical language regarding the level of foundational research knowledge they may possess.

As a lecturer in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland, in Aotearoa New Zealand, I can confidently remark that research-averse attitudes are representative of social work students enrolling in a research course for the first time. I refer to these students as being *research-allergic*, as my experience teaching research courses confirms what the literature says about students being research-phobic. Flynn and McDermott promise tools to build confidence in relation to both comprehending and using research for evidence-based practice (EBP). In trialling the incorporation of its ideas, their book proved to be a useful resource for many of the once apprehensive, research-allergic, social work research students.

The authors of *Doing Research in Social Work and Social Care* acknowledge the tension between research and professional social work and care practice contexts early on in the book. However, the book is not another academic piece focused on 'why research is necessary to social work and social care students and practitioners' (although this becomes increasingly evident through its engaging real-world examples). Instead, the text serves as an introductory 'how-to guide' for doing research where the authors place a strong emphasis on producing rather than consuming research. As such, the book is positioned as a tool to manoeuvre the uneasiness with which both students and practitioners approach incorporating research into practice.

The authors segment this book into three parts in order to purposefully hold the reader's hand through each step of the research process: 1) preparing for research; 2) doing research; and 3) making use of research. Part one is spread across four chapters. The layout assuages reader

anxieties about the intimidating nature of research through articulately describing the essential building blocks of research knowledge. Combined, these four chapters allow the reader to understand the answers to several questions: *Why do research in the professional practice context? How does research develop? Why is what you do in research and how you do it (i.e., ethics) important?* And finally, *How are research questions formulated?* Part one leaves the reader less intimated and more excited to begin doing research.

In Part two, the reader finds themselves considering how their study might take shape. Multiple elements of research design are traversed (e.g., study and aims, sampling, data collection methods, and data analysis). Part two finishes with the inclusion of 'the toolkit'. This is an attractive element for lecturers, first-time research students or practitioner researchers. The authors deliver short, smart resources for kick-starting two different aspects of research: 1) a template for organising a literature review; and, 2) a research proposal formatting guide. While beneficial, the toolkit aspect of the book left me wanting more exercises and 'get-started' activities or tools I could share with my students to support their independent research. Part three focuses on making meaning of both qualitative and quantitative data—or how to put the knowledge gleaned from research to use. The authors provide synopses of various strategies for analysis and creative dissemination. The take-away message of this section reminds the reader that 'context matters' in all aspects of conceptualising research.

There are several strengths threaded throughout the text. In particular, Flynn and McDermott use student-friendly, engaging language. This worked well to simplify complex research concepts into useable ideas for the novice social work researcher. At times, further details on a specific aspects of research were required due to the nature and scope of the course I was teaching. However, Flynn and McDermott's book provided the ideal foundation to begin consuming thicker descriptions of research located in enduring research texts such as Bryman (2016), Rubin & Babbie (2014), or *Research at the Grassroots* by De Vos and colleagues (2011). The 'key take-home messages' section at the end of each chapter often utilised powerful imagery to elicit reflection on the research project as a whole, rather than its individual parts. These sections also served as snippets to guide both effective and ethical research practice.

Why should Flynn and McDermott's text be the staple resource for introductory social work and social care research papers? After personally experimenting with much of the content in an undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) applied social research paper with a group of 39 research-allergic students, the majority reflected that the book's ideas integrated into weekly lectures and tutorials made the idea of conducting research-in-practice more tangible. For some, the content exported from the text enabled students to make sense of previous BSW coursework ideas and experiences they encountered during third-year practicum placements. This was especially true of the Chapter Five content related to research design, where students reflected on how they might develop a research project relating specifically to their practicum organisations. It is indicative from overall course feedback in my undergraduate courses that the need to and value of locating research in social work practice settings was recognised through incorporation of content from this book.

For students, the material is easily digestible which is necessary for those first encountering the language of research. This book achieves relevance and accessibility through the inclusion of case studies, researcher experience comments and insights (referred to as *the chorus*), as well as accessible figures. These key components of foundational learning for research-in-practice were valuably tailored to the book's two main audiences and skilfully woven throughout each chapter.

For teaching purposes, the objectives set out at the beginning of each chapter were helpful in formulating lecture learning outcomes and establishing a teaching direction. The reflection questions and case studies were easily adaptable into engaging classroom activities – making pivotal concepts memorable. In addition, sharing the authors' conceptualisation of 'research as journey', was a useful metaphor to first-time research students who achieved a sense of comfort in the fact that they were beginning their own journeys into application of EBP. For current practitioners in the social work or care settings wanting to dip their toes in to test the metaphorical research waters, this book is a great first step.

The authors will entice all who read the book to take the plunge into the wonderful world of practice-based research! Just as it is important to have a greater understanding of the allergic triggers that might cause a flare-up, I now encourage my students to identify their research-related "trigger words" (e.g., epistemology, ontology, paradigm, and rigour) early on in the semester. Chapters within Flynn and McDermott's text continue to be a good resource where I refer students to explore the concepts they identify as trigger words in digestible formats. It is with a strong recommendation I suggest adopting the use of this book in BSW introductory research papers. I look forward to increasing integration of this text into the social work research papers that I teach.

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Reviewed by **Laura Chubb**, University of Auckland

Poverty, inequality and social work: The impact of neoliberalism and austerity politics on welfare provision

Ian Cummins, 2018
Policy Press, Bristol, England
SBN 978-1447334828, pp. 200, paperback, NZD50.00

Ian Cummins' book, *Poverty, Inequality and Social Work,* is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature focused on neoliberalism and social work. The book provides a necessary challenge to the profession in arguing that, while social work is practised in the context of inequality and poverty, we have failed to clearly focus on these issues.

The book starts from a broad perspective, providing a conceptual overview of neoliberalism, and explaining how it came to dominate economic and social policy in the West. The book progressively covers a range of issues, looking at discourses regarding the poor, changing social attitudes, and how social work has been affected by changes in the political, economic, and social spheres.

Cummins explains how neoliberal ideology has had pervasive social impacts, undermining structural explanations of poverty and social connectedness. These shifts are illustrated with examples showing how media, and politicians, have stereotyped the poor as lazy and undeserving. Through such stereotypes governments are able to avoid responsibility for increasing poverty, and are able to justify cuts to service provision.

The wave of austerity which has been imposed across the West following 2008's financial crisis is presented as a continuation of the neoliberal project. Cummins clearly demonstrates the ideological nature of austerity and how it has functioned as a pretext for the hollowing out, and outsourcing, of social services.

Cummins describes how the imposition of neoliberal reforms has dramatically altered the environment in which social work is practised; simultaneously increasing need while decreasing resources for social services. As well as increasing need, neoliberal policies have changed how social services operate, forcing services to act as if they were subject to the free market.

Cummins highlights how this political and social environment creates the risk that social work practice could become a tool of the neoliberal state. In this role social workers are expected to practise in an increasingly standardised and punitive manner. This risk is amplified by deliberate attempts by politicians to undermine the structural focus of social work education.

The final chapter devotes a considerable amount of space to various conceptualisations of justice, introducing a range of philosophies, and discussing how the role of the state could be re-imagined. Whilst stimulating, this space might have been better devoted to further discussion of how social workers can respond to the challenging conditions Cummins describes.

One of the overarching themes of this book is that social workers must have a strong awareness of poverty and the impacts of neoliberalism, both in the lived experiences of those we work with, and as a

political ideology. Through this awareness Cummins believes social workers will be able to critically evaluate our work, how we may be part of harmful systems, and how we can practise differently.

Cummins also highlights the need for the profession to take a clear political stance, resisting the imposition of austerity, and advocating for a more humane state. Cummins argues that the social work profession must be an active political force, and that failure to do so represents an abandonment of the profession's values.

While the book is highly readable, providing a good introduction to a range of concepts, Cummins does presume a certain degree of familiarity with political terminology

and sociological theories. Thus, while the book will be useful for students, it may require some degree of scaffolding for undergraduate students.

One of the strengths of this book is its relatively short length, as well as the impressive array of references, statistics, and examples which Cummins draws on. Despite traversing a wide range of topics the book remains engaging and highly readable.

Cummins draws primarily on the UK context to illustrate trends in politics, the media, and service provision. The global nature of neoliberalism, and austerity, means that these examples are still relevant to a broader audience.

Reviewed by **John Darroch**, PhD candidate, University of Auckland

A land of milk and honey? Making sense of Aotearoa New Zealand

This is an edited collection of 21 chapters written by sociologists for Aotearoa New Zealand students. The target readers are sociology students; however, it is a useful text for a range of disciplines, particularly social work. It would be a handy text for first-year degree students as the chapters are short and provide an introduction to the chapter topic. The book was published in 2017 and is therefore current, however some content will become dated as changes in legislation and funding priorities made by the Labour-led coalition take effect. One of the strengths of the book is the broad range of topics introduced, providing an overview of Aotearoa New Zealand society through a sociological lens.

The chapters are grouped by themes: state and nation; ethnicity in Aotearoa New Zealand; social class and economic inequality; gender and sexuality; and contemporary issues. The last group of chapters includes ageing, domestic violence, imprisonment, the intersection between urban and rural dwellers, and climate change. Most chapters start with an historical background of the topic to provide context followed by a broad outline of the current situation in Aotearoa New Zealand in relation to the chapter topic. The historical back-drop is useful when reading each chapter; however, there is repetition between chapters. As each chapter has a limited word count, some chapters focus on some key areas rather than covering the topic in full. For example, in Richard Shaw's chapter about democracy he focuses on specifically on aspects of enfranchisement for Māori and women.

Unlike some edited books, where chapters have no obvious connections, the authors in this book have helpfully signposted links between chapters. Themes which run through the chapters also provide connections between chapters. Colonisation and institutional racism is one theme. This theme is raised in Chapter one, with an exploration of how the process of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand established a social and economic environment platform for capitalism to take hold, through to chapters in the last section where, for example, Tracey McIntosh and Bartek Goldman discuss institutional racism in the criminal justice system. Another theme running through the book is the impact on society of neoliberalism rolled out by the fourth Labour government in the 1980s. In a chapter about class divisions, Bruce Curtis and Marko Galic define neoliberalism as "a way of organising the capitalist economy that involves a focus on improving profitability" (p. 135). A number of authors also describe the hegemonic process, an aspect of neoliberalism whereby citizens are deceived into acting and voting against their own interests. This explains the insidious hold neoliberalism has over the Aotearoa New Zealand population.

Of interest to social workers working in the family violence sector is a chapter by Vivienne Elizabeth about intimate partner violence, marginalisation and masculinity.

The wider context which creates the milieu in which intimate partner violence is likely to occur is outlined. The connection between neoliberalism and the construction of manhood based on being a successful breadwinner and feeling powerful through consumption is explained. The potential consequence for those who feel a failure when measured against this model of masculinity is the use of violence as a way to re-assert patriarchal power. Pressure men experience within society to be a certain way (also discussed in Richard Pringle's chapter on masculinity) is an area in which we as social workers can work to create change. This chapter provides clear links from the macro to the micro.

For social work students, this text will support learning about the way the personal is political within Aotearoa New Zealand society. It provides a context for understanding how social structures impact on everyday life. For social workers it is a useful resource to update our knowledge about the social, economic and political environment which affects the people we work with. However, due to the limited length of each chapter, for an in-depth grasp of each topic, wider reading is essential. Awareness of the impact of social structures on the personal is a foundation for social work and after 30 years of neoliberal politics this is more important than ever.

Reviewed by **Lesley Pitt**, Lecturer in Social Work, Open Polytechnic