

Research is Practice Too!

Strategic Social Work Practice through
Effective Research & Evaluation

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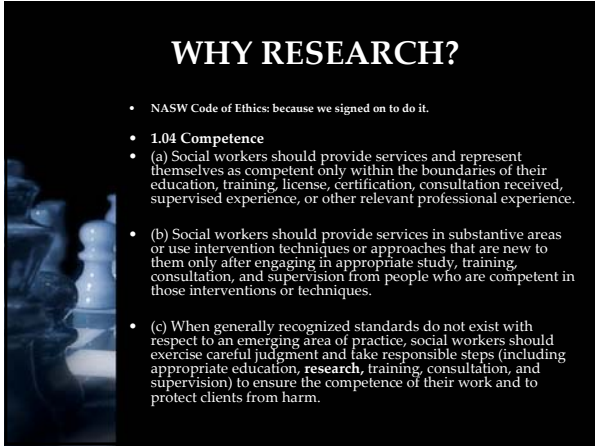
Workshop Objectives

- WELCOME.
- What to expect.
- Objectives for the workshop.
- Understanding how to get answers to:
 - missing information.
 - unanswered questions.
- Understanding different ways to obtain data.
- Understanding the research process:
 - choosing a project
 - assessing is research-ability
 - getting permission
 - agency
 - Lewis-Clark State College IRB committee.



WHY RESEARCH?

- NASW Code of Ethics: because we signed on to do it.
- 1.04 Competence
 - (a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
 - (b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.
 - (c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.




4.01 Competence

- (a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
- (b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- (c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including **empirically based knowledge**, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

5.02 Evaluation and Research

- (a) Social workers should **monitor and evaluate policies**, the implementation of **programs**, and **practice interventions**.
- (b) Social workers should **promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge**.
- (c) Social workers should **critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice**.
- (d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should **carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted**.
- (e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should **obtain voluntary and written informed consent** from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

- (f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- (g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.
- (h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- (i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- (j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- (k) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.



- (l) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.
- (m) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- (n) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.
- (o) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- (p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices!



Best Practice Mandates

- Best Practice v. Practice Wisdom
- Networking.

Who has the resources?

Who has the services?


Will they help my client?

What can I offer them?




Agency Efficacy

- Are our policies culturally attentive?
- Are our policies discriminatory?
- Are the programs we offer effective?
- Are the interventions we offer effective?
- Are we serving the population we claim?
- Are we missing some vulnerable population?




Grant Writing

- Needs Assessments
- Program Evaluations



GETTING STARTED

- understanding how to get answers to missing information and unanswered questions.
- What is it that you want to know about:
 - your programs
 - your interventions
 - your policies



How do I turn these into research-able questions?

- Use the "W's" and add an "H"
- What (what is happening, what is not happening)?
- When (how often, under what circumstances)?
- Where (at home, in the agency, in the community)?
- Why (are things as they should be, are things not as they should be)?
- and How (are services being delivered, are clients improving, are decisions made)?

Where do you get your answers?

- From clients themselves. **
- From records about your clients. **
- From informants. **
- From other professionals. **
- From community members. **
- From other existing data. **
- census.
- other agency records.
- state records and data bases.
- federal records and data bases.

How do you get your answers?

- Interviews: face to face and by phone.
- From individuals with structured schedule to focus groups with open ended discussions.
- Observations: in real time or video taped.
- How specific the observers note behaviors (using established indexes or scales or more inductive methods)
- Surveys: mailed, disseminated by hand, internet.

- Experiments: one group one-shot only, cross sectional, pre-test/post-test, quasi experimental, experimental or single subject designs.
- Record reviews.
- One time only or at several points over "x" amount of time.
- Program evaluations.


WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE I BEGIN?

- Know your agency and the "environment".
- Know the stakeholders.
- Who will promote or support the project?
- Who will oppose it?
- Who is the final authority?
- (Keep going until you "know" you've reached the top)
- Consider the consequences of your findings.
- Who might benefit?
- Who might be harmed or disenfranchised?

- Decide on the resources needed.
- what are they? (remember, time is a resource).
- do they exist?
- if not, can they be obtained?

Internet Resources

- Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
www.cosw.sc.edu/iaswr
- Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research
<http://obsr.od.nih.gov/>
- Research Writing Help
<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/research/writing.htm>
- Bill Trochim's Center for Social Research Methods - An excellent resource for the entire research proposal / project. This site will walk you through almost any question from research question development to data analysis.
<http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/>
- Census and Demographic Data
<http://www.clark.net/pub/lschank/web/census.html>



- ESRC Data Archive <http://www.ciesin.org/IC/esrc/ESRC-home.html>
- Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division <http://www.census.gov/org/hhes/index.html>
- PARnet: Participatory Action Research <http://www.parnet.org>
- Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center-Home Page <http://www.ciesin.org/IC/SEDAC/SEDAC-home.html>
- StatLib <http://www.stat.cmu.edu/>
- The Statistics Homepage <http://www.statsoftinc.com/textbook/stathome.html>
- Trends in Developing Economics Database Search <http://quasar.poly.edu:9090/WorldBank/tides.html>
