



## The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher

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### Previous Issues

**November 2009, Volume 21, Issue 3, Themed Issue: “Occupational Social Work in the New South Africa”**

#### **Editorial (pages 20-283)**

*Adrian van Breda and Angela du Plessis (Guest editors)*

#### **The scope of occupational social work practice in South Africa (pages 284-300)**

*Adrian van Breda*

The understanding in the literature of what occupational social work is has evolved and become highly complex and nuanced. Notions of the work community, of interface and goodness-of-fit, of multiple client systems and of person-in-environment have become central to our conceptualisation of this field. A key implication of this rich understanding is a comprehensive and holistic approach to practice. This paper seeks to evaluate contemporary occupational social work practice in light of these understandings. Based on a quantitative-qualitative survey of 44 occupational social workers in Gauteng province, the author assesses current understandings of occupational social work by those who practise it. Furthermore, the author describes the scope of contemporary occupational social work practice. Adopting a critical stance, the author makes several proposals for enhancing the quality and depth of occupational social work practice.

#### **The nexus of developmental social welfare, occupational social work and social security (pages 300-318)**

*Jean Triegaardt*

This paper addresses the interface and debates between developmental social welfare, occupational social work and social security. The discourse in social security and developmental social welfare has been devoted mainly to the impact of social grants and its developmental outcomes on poverty. The other pillar of social security, social insurance, is particularly relevant for occupational social work, but has not received much attention in developmental social welfare literature. Sectors of workers who are particularly at risk and marginalised are discussed. Suggestions are entertained about the domain of occupational social work with respect to multi-modal practice within a developmental welfare paradigm.

#### **A model of occupational social work practice: A developmental social welfare critique (pages 319-336)**

*Adrian van Breda and Angela du Plessis*

The ‘fit’ between occupational social work (OSW) and developmental social welfare (DSW) has periodically been challenged. In this paper, the authors test the Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM), developed in the South African National Defence Force, against the five themes informing DSW practice and philosophy. The paper explores the OSWPM’s capacity to extend workers’ rights in the workplace. The authors interrogate the link between economic and social development, and look at the potential of OSW to increase worker participation and promote deep democracy in the workplace. OSW services are seen as adding to workplace partnerships and welfare pluralism. The imperative within the DSW framework that macro change be a key aspect is compared to the OSWPM’s commitment to interventions aimed at changing the work environment. Recommendations are offered which suggest ways of enhancing the alignment so that the OSWPM can better reflect the objectives of the national welfare imperatives.

#### **Aligning occupational social work to corporate citizenship (pages 337-355)**

*René Carapinha*

Occupational social work practice models often exclude knowledge of the role of business in society when intervention aims and roles are proposed. This deficiency debilitates comprehensive and integrative interventions. To remain relevant, a systems perspective on the role of business in society should be incorporated into practice models. In this article the role of business in society is reviewed. The changing nature of corporate responsibility from corporate social investment towards a systems approach, known as corporate citizenship, is illustrated. Corporate citizenship entails a repurposing to a socio-commercial role in order to generate mutual value for business and society through engagement with stakeholders. An assessment of why and how occupational social work should contribute to corporate citizenship is presented. The paper concludes with recommendations for occupational social work to develop accountability practices, engage employees as citizens and facilitate collaboration with communities to promote corporate citizenship.

### **Triple bottom line corporate governance: Potential new opportunities for occupational social work (pages 356-369)**

*Jennifer Dry and Patricia Nqweniso*

The nature of corporate governance has changed significantly both in South Africa and internationally. The social bottom line and the environmental bottom line are now as important in corporate governance as the financial bottom line. Increasingly, corporate governance is anchored in ethics, core values and core principles. The social bottom line in triple bottom line corporate governance is relevant to occupational social work. Occupational social workers need to familiarise themselves with the philosophy and meaning of the triple bottom line. In doing so they could position themselves to add additional value to the organisation in managing people optimally. This paper encourages occupational social workers to reflect on the possibilities for enhanced forms of service delivery within their own organisations.

### **A new vision for employee health and wellness in South Africa: What can occupational social work offer? (pages 370-388)**

*Elaine Harrison*

This article describes two central policy frameworks that could shape employee health and wellness programmes in South Africa: the White Paper for Social Welfare and the Draft Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework. These are highlighted as an idealised paradigm for employee health and wellness in the South African context. The author assesses and compares current employee health and wellness practice against these frameworks and highlights the disjuncture between them. The main areas of discord revealed by this study are the absence of a developmental approach, a piecemeal approach that is not comprehensive and integrated, lack of clarity on the positioning within organisations and lack of clarity on the kind of human resources required. Occupational social work is recommended as a discipline that can bridge this gap to ensure an approach to employee health and wellness that is truly developmental and focuses on the development of human and social capital.

### **Occupational social workers as organisational change agents (pages 389-405)**

*Arista Bouwer*

Occupational social workers, because they are employed in the workplace, are in the unique position of being able to render services not only to the individuals, families and groups in an organisation, but also to the organisation itself. This potential, however, is frequently under-utilised by occupational social workers. Within a developmental paradigm, the facilitation of a working context that is conducive to human development is a vital contribution that occupational social workers can make. Such interventions shift the emphasis from the expectation that individuals must accommodate the workplace towards the workplace accommodating the workforce. In so doing, occupational social workers contribute towards the developmental vision of "a humane, peaceful, just and caring society." This paper describes an approach to and methodology for implementing such interventions.

### **HIV and occupational social work in South Africa: Unique challenges call for unique responses (pages 406-421)**

*Gillian Gresak and Maxine Dorkin*

HIV in South Africa has received much attention in the media, corporate circles and the government, and has become a popular term amongst helping professionals. Despite the awareness and prevention initiatives in South Africa, the prevalence of HIV remains alarmingly high. This article presents some 'out of the box' approaches to dealing with HIV in the workplace. The link between gender, poverty and HIV is highlighted through an example of a micro-finance project. The role of Traditional Health Practitioners as a valuable community resource is explored and the dynamics of a holistic team approach investigated. Lastly, peer education as a key method of intervention in the

workplace is examined and an alternative approach to peer education is explored. The critical role and unique position of occupational social work in addressing the HIV pandemic is explored and recommendations for enhancing this role are proposed.

**Book Review (pages 422-425)**

Lewis, S., Passmore, J. and Cantore, S. (2008). *Appreciative Inquiry for Change Management: Using AI to Facilitate Organizational Development* London, UK: Kogan Page.

*Rene Dembo*

