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## West Chester University Master of Social Work Program ~ in West Chester & Philadelphia ~

This fall our faculty were busy presenting at conferences, writing for journals, and collaborating on community projects. We are proud to share some of their achievements with you.

[From Oppression to Inclusion](#)

[Impact of Childhood Bullying](#)

[Revisoning the MSW Concentration Curriculum](#)

[Social Justice by Design](#)

[Human Rights; Forensic Interviewers; Students Studying Abroad](#)

[Teens' Exposure to Violence; Parents' Educational Investment](#)

[Male Gender Role Stress and Choice of Coping Strategies](#)

[Intimacy for Mental Health Consumers; Motivational Interviewing](#)

[Recent and upcoming publications](#)

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### **Gwenelle O'Neal, Professor**

*From Oppression to Inclusion*



Dr. O'Neal has a contract to write a book tentatively titled *From Oppression to Inclusion: Social Workers Advancing Change*. This is proposed as a core text for graduate-level diversity courses in social work. It provides a framework for examining the history of oppression that perpetuates contemporary social divisions and maintains social injustice.

This text will be unique because of its collection of culturally-affirming materials produced by women, people of color, adolescents, older adults, people with physical and learning challenges, and those who identify as LGBTQIA. Mediums include literature, film, video, poetry, music, and art. These can be used

to teach with an emphasis on student awareness of multicultural and intersectional voices, and on potential collaboration with service participants on identity development and civic involvement.

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**Nadine Bean, Associate Professor**

**Irma Hodzic, MSW '14**

*The Lifelong Impact of Childhood Bullying Experiences - How They Might Affect Motivation to Become a Social Worker*



Dr. Bean and alumni Irma Hodzic presented their findings on the long-term effects of childhood and adolescent bullying at a workshop during the NASW-Pennsylvania annual conference in King of Prussia in October. They interviewed MSW students and practitioners who had experienced childhood bullying. The most common themes that emerged were being bullied for being perceived as "different," religion and spirituality playing a role in coping and support, the lifelong impact of bullying experiences, the experiences influencing the decision to enter the social work profession, and a belief that the media should pay more attention to the pervasiveness of bullying.

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**Nadine Bean, Associate Professor**

*Revisoning the MSW Concentration Curriculum (presentation @ CSWE)*



The MSW Program at WCU has dramatically transformed its curriculum over the past year. Its sole concentration is now called Direct Practice with Individuals and Families. The curriculum is designed with a recovery, resiliency and capacity building framework. Graduates are trained to work with individuals and families using strengths-based, research-informed, and community-oriented assessment, intervention and evaluation skills. These skills are designed to enhance resiliency, support recovery, and mitigate the effects of trauma. Dr. Bean and students Victoria McDonald and Bridget McGovern presented this innovation at the CSWE conference in October.

*Narrative Approaches (Warrior Writers, Photovoice) to Teaching and*

Narrative approaches in healing from traumatic experiences, such as exposure to combat, are time-honored and evidence-based. Dr. Bean and Lawrence Davidson, MSW '14, presented their findings from two research projects involving expressive arts including Photovoice techniques for the practice of social work with service members and their families. Dr. Bean shared her findings from a qualitative research project among students in her Social Work with Veterans and Military Families course. Davidson presented his MSW capstone project, in which he interviewed veterans who took part in Warrior Writers workshops. Both led participants with hands on experiences in using journaling and PhotoVoice to process powerful experiences.

**Page Buck, Program Director**  
**Theresa Sullivan, Philadelphia Field Director**

*Social Justice by Design: Programmatic and Administrative Choices (presentation @ CSWE)*



Social work programs serve as an important vehicle of social justice for students and their future clients. The MSW Program at WCU uses a holistic perspective to evaluate candidates for admission, drawing on the tenets of resiliency, recovery and strengths. Candidates are encouraged to discuss their undergraduate experiences in the personal statement, specifically those factors that may have impacted the GPA. This MSW program also seeks to collaborate with students who cannot commit two to three full weekdays to field practicum if they are working to maintain housing, benefits or support a family. When possible, students are offered field placements with some weekend and evening hours, for fewer hours a week over an extended time period, or at a student's workplace. Other social justice initiatives include a limit of one required textbook per course with the option to purchase previous editions and a textbook lending library.

**Christina Chiarelli-Helminiak,**  
**Assistant Professor**

*Advancing Social Work Education through the Integration of Human Rights*

*(poster@ CSWE)*

Dr. Charelli-Helminiak presented a poster on her findings from qualitative research on social work educators' efforts to incorporate human rights perspectives into the curriculum. Dr. Chiarelli-Helminiak completed this work with Dr. Kathryn Libal and Michele Eggers from the University of Connecticut.



*I Love My Job, but ... Job Satisfaction and Burnout Among Forensic Interviewers (poster @ CSWE)*

Social workers predominate in the field of child welfare, and forensic interviewing is a growing specialty. Dr. Chiarelli-Helminiak presented her research indicating that while forensic interviewers are satisfied with their work, a substantial number are experiencing burnout. This research has implications for social work education and practice with abused children.

*Challenges and strengths of studying abroad for students from traditionally marginalized communities (session @ CSWE)*

Studying abroad is an opportunity that expands the value of social work education. However, care must be taken to prepare students for involvement in new and unique environments. This is especially important for students from traditionally marginalized communities. Dr. Chiarelli-Helminiak, and students, faculty and staff from several social work programs, shared their experiences at a CSWE workshop.

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### **Wan-Yi Chen, Associate Professor**

*Adolescent exposure to community violence and depressive symptoms among adolescents and young adults: Understanding the effect of mental health service usage (presentation @ SSWR)*



Dr. Chen and Dr. Kenneth Corvo of Syracuse University used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to study community

victimization among adolescents, depressive symptoms, and the relationship to use of mental health services. Chen and Corvo found that adolescents who were victimized were likely to show symptoms of depression and to use mental health services through young adulthood. Depressive symptoms were somewhat mediated for young adults who used mental health services after having been victimized as adolescents.

### **Amber Holbrook, Assistant Professor**

*Do Specific Dimensions of Male Gender Role Stress Predict Choice of Coping Strategies? (presentation @ SSWR)*



Male gender role stress- the stress resulting from rigid adherence to traditional male gender roles- is associated with poorer behavioral health outcomes, such as increased alcohol abuse and severity of PTSD symptoms. Dr. Holbrook presented the results of her research which found that men who are uncomfortable expressing emotion, or are especially stressed in situations where they appear intellectually inferior or are outperformed by women, may be more likely to rely on problematic ways to cope. Her findings also highlighted the importance of spirituality as a positive method for African-American men to deal with stress.

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### **Julie Tennille, Assistant Professor**

*Sexuality and Intimacy for Consumers of Mental Health Services*



Dr. Tennille is consulting with the Temple University Collaborative for Community Inclusion of Individuals with a Psychiatric Disabilities on a project to develop a toolkit for practitioners to discuss sexuality and intimacy with consumers who have psychiatric diagnoses. The project is in its first of four years of funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

*Motivational Interviewing and Intimate Partner Violence*

Dr. Tennille and Dr. Casey Bohrman, Assistant Professor in the BSW Program at WCU, are collaborating on a research project at the University of Pennsylvania. This project is studying the impact of Motivational

Interviewing on heavy drinking and intimate partner violence among women who seek treatment in hospital emergency departments. Tennille and Bohrman are analyzing interviews with study participants, focusing on those who are parents.

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#### Recent and upcoming publications

**Holbrook, A. M.**, & Nguyen, V. H. (in press). Medication-assisted treatment for pregnant women: A systematic review of the evidence and implications for social work practice. *Journal for the Society of Social Work & Research*, 6(1). doi: 10.1086/680232.

**Lewis, T. O.** (In Press). LGBT-affirming Black Churches' Responses to the HIV/AIDS Crisis. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*.

**Lewis, T. O.** (In Press). Treatment Progress Evaluation: The Basics. On-line continuing education module. Gannett Education.

**Tennille, J.**, Solomon, P., & Bohrman, C. (2014). Using the FIELD Model to Prepare Social Work Students and Field Instructors on Sexuality and Intimacy for Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability*, 32(4), 469-483.

**Tennille, J.**, Solomon, P., Bourjolly, J., & Doyle, A. (2014). Introducing FIELD: Field Instructors Extending EBP Learning in Dyads. *The Field Educator*, 4 (2).

Thomas, R., **Chiarelli-Helminiak, C. M.**, & Ferraj, B. (2014). A case study in immigrant civic engagement research: Linking human rights to social work education. In K. Libal, M. Berthold, R. L. Thomas, & L. Healy (Eds.), *Advancing Human Rights in Social Work Education* (pp. 215-230). Alexandria, VA: CSWE Press.

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