

Letters to the Editor

Looking Forward to the New Format

I am responding to your editorial in the Summer edition of our journal. I am both a hospital social worker and in private practice so I found this issue interesting.

I have an opinion on your two questions. I would definitely like to save money. Please say your proposal will save money. Even if it doesn't, I believe that having one "substantial, annual journal" is an excellent idea. Rather than opinion statements which we social workers are so good at and which often make up the majority of the major articles, I would encourage an annual journal of research findings in social work.

Of equal worth would be two or three issues of a newsletter where we could all share more of what we are doing because there wouldn't be the expectation of scholarlyness in the writing of such items. I would like to hear what my colleagues are doing that's relevant to my work. I would like names, addresses and phone numbers to contact them direct. I must admit that I need encouragement and some easy ways to do this. This letter is a start. How about saving money on printing costs or at least mailing costs by sending the newsletter out with the provincial association newsletters?

AMCAP, the Association of Mormon Counsellors and Psychotherapists, has one yearly journal and newsletters as you're proposing. I like it.

The areas of interest that I am currently involved in and would like to see in a newsletter are:

1. tips on running a private practice counselling business
2. psychiatric day programs (my hospital job): life skills, panic disorders, treatment programs for other psychiatric disorders
3. use of video in therapy and life skills training
4. spirituality in therapy
5. multicultural issues
6. group marriage counselling
7. changing workshop presentations
8. peer review evaluation; possibly through viewing videotapes.

From a social worker looking forward to useful and economical change.

Michael Jensen, MA., RSW, British Columbia

Meeting Canada Post Requirements for a Journal

Congratulations, and best wishes with the task of editing our national publication. As the member of the local branch editorial committee for ten years, chair of the provincial editorial committee of OASW for four, and reviewer for *The Social Worker* for a similar number of years, I take a special interest in your suggestions which appeared in the last two editorials.

Alas, as a reader who contributed suggestions on how to achieve the publication's current Canada Post "subscriber" rate status, I hope that changes in content and format would be consistent with their requirements.

The present format of CASW Newsletter as an insert readily permits *The Social Worker* to meet Canada Post requirements for a journal. That format provides a happy marriage between Association information and practice content. It keeps the subscriber reading.

My experience with OASW's *News-*

Magazine, where I was instrumental in the change to the current format, is that our members are more satisfied when Association news and articles are balanced and separated in each issue. My experience locally is similar, except that members are also satisfied with shorter, as compared with longer articles, when the topic of the 14 of 16 pages is thematic.

I prefer articles in each issue rather than one issue dedicated to substantial articles. It fits more closely with my experience of practitioners' reading style. So much information crosses the desk that people browse, read what is of interest, and may or may not go back to it. Too much content in one issue may mean that it is not read, and not referred to again. In both of the above-mentioned publications, we have become thematic.

Should all articles in the publication be peer reviewed? The OASW *NewsMagazine*, having opted for thematic content, also calls for articles from the membership. We solicit articles so that a theme can be widely covered. For instance we have sought to ensure that there is coverage of practice, education, social policy and research perspectives. We have studied the fields of practice of our members and try to explore germane issues in the main fields. To ensure being topical, while also appealing to the general readership, we have asked members from a field of practice to participate in the editorial meeting on that theme.

Finally, the issue of French/English for both publications has proved a challenge. We have been mindful of what you have done. While two years ago the *NewsMagazine* was fully bilingual, articles may appear in each language with a précis in the other, or be published in both languages.

Finally, *The Social Worker* needs to be aware of topics covered by provincial publications and have a section recommending articles of particular note. This could assist in exploring a theme.

I trust these ideas will be helpful to your deliberations.

G. Roderick, Ontario

Support New Format for *The Social Worker*

Re your questions about proposed change in format for *The Social Worker*:

1. I like the idea of a short combination practice and CASW newsletter. I rarely read the articles except to scan them briefly.
2. Let's read about interesting projects that have been successful in practice and innovative ideas for practice.

Carolyn Green, New Brunswick

Unsure about the Proposed New Formats

Here are my responses to your questions.

1. I am unsure about two publications as described. If it means brief articles about relevant practice information, this is probably fine. If not, once a year for professional information is, I think, too long. Also it's easier for me to read a few articles several times a year, than many articles once a year.
2. I am interested in knowing about the following topics.

i. What variety of professional training there is out there. (Recently, I heard about an International Social Work Master's course in the U.S. where it is

possible to do it by distance.)

ii. Coping with chaos (forget change).

iii. Supervision skills.

iv. Are the social workers we supervise our clients?

v. How to liaise successfully with universities about student practicums.

vi. How community practitioners can input to university curriculae.

vii. One session "therapy."

viii. Alternate therapies — art, photo, dance, movement.

ix. Doing social work with demented people — talk therapy doesn't work. What else does?

x. Ideas for reorganizing delivery of social work.

I am in the process of implementing a consultation model at Saanich Peninsula Hospital. This may interest others. Perhaps there are other innovative delivery models that work?

I hope some of these ideas are useful. Thanks for all your efforts.

Myrna Tracy, RSW, British Columbia

The issue of Non-Sexual Dual Relationships frequent ethical concern

I read the article entitled *CASW Code of Ethics and Non-Sexual Dual Relationships: The need for clarification* with great interest.

The issue of Non-Sexual Dual Relationships has been the most frequent ethical concern that I have had to address in the last six years of practice. As a member of the African Canadian Community, I have shared some degree of non-professional relationship with almost every Black client I have served. As I have looked to the CASW (and other) codes of ethics to assist me in navigating these dilemmas I have found them lacking.

As a result I have developed a method of practice that keeps all my colleagues, supervisors and clients fully apprised of my various personal, professional and community involvements. Practising in this way, with an 'open book', has allowed me to discuss potential conflicts with clients long before they occur. It has helped my colleagues and supervisors understand the nature of the Black community and the challenges faced by its members as they seek out culturally appropriate services. This method also ensures that potential conflicts are shared with colleagues, whose objective view is constantly obtained.

As I reflect on the issue of Non-Sexual Dual Relationships and our current position in the CASW Code of Ethics, it is obvious that the issues and concerns of rural or ethnic practitioners have been overlooked. The need to involve such practitioners in the general workings of our professional association is clearly indicated. In addition to the recommendations noted, I would suggest that CASW make more concerted efforts to ensure ethnic and rural participation in the provincial chapters of the association. (I was one of only two or three Black social workers who attended our annual meeting this summer.) I would also suggest that a moderated discussion on this topic be undertaken in an e-mail forum of Registered Social Workers. This would provide even wider participation and perhaps facilitate inclusion of rural practitioners.

My thanks to the authors of this insightful article. Let's keep *TSW/LTS* relevant to those in the trenches!

Robert Wright, RSW, Nova Scotia