



Cardinal Connections

ISSUE 3 | APRIL 2021

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Happy Easter and Passover

to all in the NCSSS community this April!



ACADEMIC CALENDAR

4/15 University Research Day

5/3 Administrative Friday/Last day of classes

5/4-8 Final Exams

5/14 Baccalaureate Mass

5/15 Commencement

Catholic University of America
National Catholic School of
Social Service

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From the Desk of Dr. Dombo

Ending Sexual Violence and Child Abuse: What Social Workers Can Do

Eileen A. Dombo, PhD, LICSW is Associate Professor and Assistant Dean at NCSSS.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, as well as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. I have focused on these issues over the past 25 years of my social work career, and see that there is still so much work to do. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, while rates of sexual violence have fallen by half over the past 20 years, one American is sexually assaulted every 73 seconds, and every nine minutes, one of those is a child (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019). The 13 Grand Challenges for Social Work fall within three broad categories of creating individual and family well-being, stronger social fabric, and a just society (American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, 2021); ending sexual violence and child abuse relates to almost all of these challenges.

What can social workers do to address this challenge? There are many paths to take, such as helping those who have experienced sexual violence and abuse heal from trauma,

creating trauma-informed services in all settings, and crafting national and local policies to ensure access to mental health care and funding for programs and services for both people who experience trauma and individuals who sexually offend, harm, or abuse others. Finally, stopping abuse and violence in all its forms requires understanding of the root causes of these actions, and more social work research in this area is required.

As current social work students, you are taking important steps with education. I encourage you to consider using your elective credits to enroll in SSS 655: Social Work Responses to Trauma: Creating Trauma Informed Programs and Services. This course is designed to provide students with information on experiences of trauma and the current social work interventions on micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Taking a social justice approach, the course content places emphasis on human rights to dignity and safety; the protection of those who are vulnerable and oppressed; and the use of practice interventions that create change



within individuals, communities, and society. It is offered in the upcoming Summer and Fall sessions.

The course is one of four in the newly launched [Certificate in Child Protection and Safe Environments](#), led by NCSSS through The Catholic Project. This four course certificate positions student to be leaders in many arenas to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and sexual violence. Click the link above to learn more about this innovative opportunity to address sexual violence and child abuse. What better time than April, during these critical awareness months, to learn more about ending sexual violence and abuse of children?

References

American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare. (2021). Grand Challenges impact report 2021: An impact report at year 5 of the 10-year initiative. <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org>

Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2019). National crime victimization survey, 2018. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv19.pdf>



Celebrating #CUatResearchDay

For the past five years, CUA has been proud to host University Research Day, a full day of events and opportunities for students, faculty and staff to gather and celebrate, share and learn about the research taking place right here on campus.

It is no secret that research is a growing cornerstone of the field of

social work as it intersects in dynamic ways with our work with our clients and in communities. Dr. Michaela Farber highlights the importance of research in the social work field. "Engagement in research at all practice levels is important, including while getting a degree and in the field. This level of interaction and exploration

continues to legitimize social work as an essential social science profession."

This year's [University Research Day](#) takes place on Thursday, April 15. All students are encouraged to participate in the various, virtual events taking place throughout the day!

*From the desk of the...***Masters Students Association (MSA)**

The MSA is excited to host an upcoming event about social work in the transgender community on April 16 at 5pm. We are honored to be joined by guest speakers from Whitman Walker Health and No Justice No Pride. [Register for the event here](#) or [email the MSA](#) for more information.

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Program Highlights & Announcements

This month, The American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives published a [comprehensive inventory](#) of Dr. Elliot Liebow's papers. Dr. Liebow was an American anthropologist and NCSSS faculty member who is best known for his work and 20 year career at the National Institute of Mental Health. In 1986, Dr. Liebow was appointed the first occupant of the Cardinal O'Boyle Chair at NCSSS.

All students, faculty and staff are invited to support Ward 5 Mutual Aid through the MSA's Spring Supply Drive this month! Drop off will take place Saturday, May 8 from 12-3pm at Shahan Hall. Please email [Ashley Wilson](#) for more information or send donations via [Amazon](#).

MSW PROGRAM

NCSSS has partnered with [GWSCSW](#) to offer a FREE full day licensing workshop for graduating students on Saturday, April 17 from 8:30-5:00 ET. [Register here](#) (with code

"Licensing-CUA").

Are you planning to graduate in May? If you need a licensure letter for the LGSW exam, please reach out to Dr. Sabatino with your mailing address. Also, graduates are required to submit two scholarly papers to fulfill the University's writing requirement. Please email Terri Miller or Dr. Sabatino for questions or more information.

Are you an advanced year student preparing to take the [ASWB Licensing Exam](#)? [Join a study group!](#) Contact [Kim Sims](#) for more information.

MSW ONLINE PROGRAM

Summer registration is open! For the first time this summer session, the online program will be offering sections of Dr. Eileen Dombo's SSS 655 Social Work Responses to Trauma: Creating Trauma Informed Programs and Services.

The Office of Online Field Education will offer Open Drop-In Field Office Hours on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 12:00pm-1:00pm EST and 7:00pm

-7:30pm EST via Zoom. This is informal and feel free to drop-in anytime during the time period to ask a question, etc. For personal questions, we will put you in a break out room and/or schedule a time to discuss in detail with you (if necessary). [\[Zoom link\]](#)

BSW PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce that the Social Work club is up and running this semester! The [Social Work Organization at CUA'S \(SWOC\)](#) mission is to grow as a community, sharing our talents and ideas with the world. Sign up to on [The Nest](#) to get more information, and follow our Instagram [@CUA_SWOC](#) for updates! Contact SWOC leadership for more information: [Elizabeth Darragjati](#)—President; [Semion Masuba](#)—Vice President; [Natalie Carcamo](#)—Secretary/Treasurer

Chats with...

Dean Regan

Occur every first Wednesday of the month at 12pm ET & 6pm ET. [\[Zoom link\]](#)

In the Field

Each month we explore field from the perspective of a current student

Justin Sybenga is an advanced year MSW student in field at the [CARE to Stop Violence](#) initiative at UMD. CARE offers advocacy services and therapy for students who are survivors of interpersonal violence and engages in educational outreach that seeks to prevent sexual violence in the campus community. Justin's typical day in field includes telehealth therapy with clients, clinical notes and meeting with the therapy team at CARE for case

presentations. One interesting aspect of working at CARE is an initiative to reduce the stigma of interpersonal violence among male clients. One in six men are survivors of sexual abuse and assault and CARE has developed a therapy group specific for male-identified survivors. Nevertheless, Justin notes it is important to remain self-aware of his own identity as a white male, which can sometimes be a barrier in forming a therapeutic alliance with clients. "I'm learning to

notice and accept how my identities affect the interpersonal dynamic in therapy and to offer openness and kindness to myself and my clients." As Justin graduates in May and continues along his journey in the field, his advice for all social workers is to remember that "your best teachers are your clients. Approach each session with them as an opportunity to learn together about their individual path to wellness."