“Now is not the time for social workers to sit on the sidelines. We are called to summon our courage, marshal our intellect, and lead the charge for social change. We have the knowledge, the skills, and the commitment to create a more just and equitable world for all. Now is the time to transform science into action.”

Amanda Moore McBride, PhD, MSW
Morris Endowed Dean and Professor

At the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW), 2017–18 was our first year of collective impact guided by a new strategic plan and mobilized by our vision to achieve thriving, sustainable communities, actualized human potential and embodiment of equity across all communities. In the classroom and in the community, our faculty have embraced the charge to advance equity through courageous ideas and bold action—science for action.

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In fall 2017, GSSW brought together policymakers, community members, researchers and national leaders in prevention science, practice and policy to make headway on addressing the Grand Challenge to Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth through the power of prevention. The occasion was GSSW’s inaugural session of the Science for Action Series, which continued with sessions on smart decarceration and ending homelessness.

The series is intended to address the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare’s 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work by sharing the relevant knowledge that has been developed and then aligning the evidence with policy responses needed at the local, state and federal level. But the series also is doing more, igniting a collaborative movement to effect systemic change.

As an outgrowth of that initial Science for Action event, GSSW, the University of Colorado Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence and the Colorado State University (CSU) Prevention Research Center have initiated a tri-institutional partnership that is working on prevention and healthy youth development initiatives in Colorado. The group is exploring research and policy opportunities aimed at promoting tested and effective preventive interventions for children and families in Colorado.

“Science for Action brought everybody into the room together for a day, and this is the kind of thing we wanted to see happen—for people to connect around grand challenges topics and further the work,” says Jeff Jenson, Philip D. and Eleanor G. Winn Endowed Professor for Children and Youth and chair of the national Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health, an interdisciplinary group of researchers, policymakers and practitioners working to advance grand challenges prevention action steps. GSSW is one of the coalition’s five university partners.

More than 1,650 people have directly participated in Science for Action either in person or live online, and the series continues in 2018–19.

Although many schools are addressing the grand challenges, Jenson says, what makes the Science for Action approach distinct is that it pairs evidence and knowledge with policy and advocacy.

“GSSW’s Science for Action has been a leader in the effort to bring the grand challenges into the practice world and to bring the practice world into the grand challenges,” says Grand Challenges Executive Committee member Richard Barth, dean of the University of Maryland School of Social Work and past president of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare. “Science for Action has created a strategy for engaging Coloradans and others who seek to roll out science-informed practices. The continuation of the Science for Action events offers a nation-leading approach to realizing the possibilities of the Grand Challenges for Social Work.”
By Amanda Moore McBride, Morris Endowed Dean and Professor

At the Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW), we define health in terms of thriving, sustainable communities, actualized human potential, and equity across all communities. Whether at the macro or micro level, in clinical or community practice, health is a common thread tying together all of social work.

The social determinants of health are interwoven in the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare’s 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work, and our core mission as social workers is to better understand health, to ensure people achieve or regain health, and to right inequities and remove barriers to health and well-being.

GSSW faculty members are living that mission through their research and scholarship. Our work is science with intent—science for action. Science that is actualizing social work’s transformative potential to provide better health and well-being for all.

This impact report demonstrates how GSSW is delivering on this mission, offering examples of faculty research and scholarship organized in a social determinants of health framework that captures what is unique about a social work lens when it is applied to issues of health and well-being.

As illustration, housing is health. This powerful phrase captures that housing is critical for community building, family stability, and an individual’s ability to focus beyond the basic need for shelter. Yet, housing costs continue to outpace inflation, and housing insecurity haunts renters and owners alike. Those who are housing insecure are more likely to report negative health outcomes than those who are housing secure. As such, development of affordable housing is a health priority.

Consistent with the action-oriented approach that GSSW faculty and staff apply to their research and scholarship, we offer these four social determinants and calls to action as paramount for positively influencing health outcomes:

- Improving economic stability
- Reshaping the social and community context
- Promoting physical and mental health
- Ensuring healthy youth development

The Graduate School of Social Work aims to advance brave ideas and bold actions. The ultimate standard to which we hold ourselves is that our scholarship has public impact. I invite you to learn more about our impact here and on our new website (socialwork.du.edu), to follow our faculty on social media, and to join us in shaping and advancing the national conversation about health and well-being.
Therapy to underserved Colorado communities

GSSW center is expanding Multi-Systemic Therapy to underserved Colorado communities

When Colorado’s governor signed the state’s 2018 budget into law, it included $100,000 for the GSSW Center for Effective Interventions (CEI) to help expand Multi-Systemic Therapy statewide and reduce juvenile crime and substance use.

The three-year funding is part of a $2.97 million investment in Multi-Systemic Therapy expansion—one of three pilot projects included in the governor’s Youth Pay for Success 2018 Initiative. In the Pay for Success model, upfront private or philanthropic capital funds prevention programs: the government pays later for successful outcomes when services produce high downstream benefits to taxpayers and society.

“We conservatively estimate that this program will save Colorado taxpayers $7.66 million by keeping youth in their homes and out of the juvenile justice system. That is $3.31 in taxpayer savings for every dollar spent,” says CEI Executive Director and Research Associate Professor Suzanne Kerns, who is working on a book about evidence-based interventions and implementation.

Multi-Systemic Therapy reduces out-of-home placements, keeps kids in school and out of trouble, improves family function, decreases adolescent psychiatric symptoms and decreases adolescents’ drug and alcohol use. But that is only if implementation closely adheres to the Multi-Systemic Therapy model. That is where CEI comes in. The center helps agencies, communities, tribes and government programs in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas to effectively implement Multi-Systemic Therapy for chronic and violent juvenile offenders and their families. Only a handful of Colorado communities offer the intervention, and even in places like Denver where it is available, there is unmet need.

CEI has set soliciting applications from community mental health centers that wish to provide Multi-Systemic Therapy. Once it is fully implemented, the pilot program will fund six Multi-Systemic Therapy teams that together will serve more than 600 youth during the project period. CEI will train the provider teams in the intervention and will continue to support them with technical assistance and quality assurance. Service providers also will be embedded into local and regional stakeholder groups that will help to tailor the intervention to the unique culture, challenges and needs of individual communities, says Kerns, who is research conference co-chair for the Society for Implementation Research Collaboration and a member of the Child & Family Evidence Based Practices Consortium leadership group.

Among Colorado Multi-Systemic Therapy participants, CEI expects to see lower recidivism rates, decreases in substance use and more youth living at home instead of in juvenile detention or foster care.

+ $800,000 to support intervention in underserved communities
+ Intervention tailored to unique community culture, challenges and needs
+ 600 additional youth served
+ $7.66 million estimated taxpayer savings

“Multi-Systemic Therapy has been proven to work,” Kerns says. “The tragedy of it is that it hasn’t been very widely available in Colorado communities. We’re working to change that.”

TACKLING SYSTEMATIC RACISM

Professor Debora Ortega is applying critical race theory to expand social work’s view of its grand challenges

In her teaching and research, Professor Debora Ortega uses critical race theory to understand the way that social structures—and even social work research, education and practice—sustain racism and inequity.

Ortega was part of a two-day think tank convened in 2017 by University of Washington Dean Edwina Uehara. Ortega and other participating scholars recognized that social work’s grand challenges did not adequately address racism and bias that are fundamental to social ills. “What grew out of the conveying was agreement that the grandest challenge of all was not being addressed: racism, white supremacy, neoliberalism and colonialism,” Ortega says.

Think tank discussions resulted in three panel presentations, including Ortega’s presentation entitled “Maintaining Domination: Whitesplaining Social Problems and Solutions.” That presentation focused on the grand challenge of smart decarceration as an example of the mismatch between social work’s recognition of the overrepresentation of people of color in jails and prisons, the structural issues that create this inequity, and social work’s continued focus on individual factors as intervention targets. “In this way, social work ignores structures such as racial profiling and bias in the court process that create race-based discrimination,” says Ortega, director of the University of Denver Latino Center for Community Engagement and Scholarship.

This is just one example of how Ortega uses critical race theory to better understand the ways that social systems and social work sustain inequity. Another, Ortega says, is that academic careers are built on the number of articles published rather than the quality of articles and their impact on ameliorating social ills. Ortega attributes some of this to a doctoral education that devalues the racial identities of students of color and reproduces research devoid of deep analysis about discriminatory policies and practices. Ultimately, this creates a social work research literature that is based on interventions designed by white researchers and participants who are predominantly white—“not the people we serve.” According to Ortega, by negating or obfuscating the link between race and poverty and treating race as just a demographic variable, social sciences research can perpetuate and even promote white supremacy.

On campus and online in the MSW@Denver program, Ortega is the faculty lead and course content developer for the course Power, Privilege and Oppression, for which she created a 6-minute animated video about identity and social structural inequality.

The video is an easy entry into a particularly difficult topic, Ortega says. “As a graduate school of social work, we help people learn how to think about things more deeply than what they read or see in their everyday lives,” she says. “We teach students to dig beneath and deep—to challenge their belief systems and critically look at social structures, policies, behaviors, beliefs and thought processes.”

“‘We teach students to dig beneath and deep — to challenge their belief systems and critically look at social structures, policies, behaviors, beliefs and thought processes.’ — Debora Ortega

Watch the Video: socialwork.du.edu/racetheory
A GSSW team is studying whether an animal-welfare program also has community, human and environmental health impacts

When the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) launched its Denver Pets for Life program in 2016, it started with a vaccination clinic held at a local school. It was a snowy Saturday morning, and even an hour before the clinic opened, the line stretched around the block, recalls Kevin Morris, a research associate professor in the GSSW Institute for Human–Animal Connections.

People from marginalized populations and living in underserved communities often encounter barriers to accessing health care not only for themselves, but also their pets, Morris notes. Pets for Life breaks down barriers to pet care. “These people don’t have any loss of a bond with their pets; if you provide the services, they’ll stand in the snow for two hours waiting.”

In a new 4-year research partnership with HSUS, Maddie’s Fund and the Watershed Animal Fund, Morris is studying the impacts of Pets for Life, which aims to build humane communities by extending the reach of animal services, resources and information to underserved areas and addressing the need for accessible, affordable pet care. The goal of the study, he says, is to determine whether this type of intensive, focused animal-welfare program translates to broader community-level human and environmental health impacts.

HSUS is implementing Pets for Life in four new communities and has hired community-based research assistants, who are collecting baseline data now. The GSSW research team—inclusion Clinical Professor Philip Tedeschi; Jessica Decker Sparks, GSSW PhD ‘18, Research Fellows Stacey Hawes and Erin Flynn—and two dozen or so other graduate students—is collecting data at three levels, including ZIP-code-level public health, crime, graduation, vaccination and other similar data. At the second level, they are conducting qualitative interviews with residents in target communities, who will be asked to share perspectives on topics related to community cohesion, safety and social capital.

The third level uses a 155-question survey covering themes related to animal, human, community and environmental health and the interconnections between those domains. Because Pets for Life focuses on improving access to veterinary care and pet services, it offers a unique opportunity to test this One Health concept, Morris says. Two of the new sites will get Pets for Life for two years, while the other two communities will initially be comparison sites. After the first two years, all sites will have Pets for Life. Researchers will be looking for differences in things like child vaccination rates between the Pets for Life and comparison communities.

Nationwide, tens of millions of people live in poverty with their pets, says HSUS. Pets for Life breaks down cultural and socioeconomic barriers by bringing services—everything from free dog training to pet supplies, wellness information and even transportation—into communities that may be pet-services deserts in addition to being underserved in other ways. Pets for Life representatives systematically go door-to-door in a community, making multiple contacts and building trust one household at a time. “They do this in a way that is incredibly culturally responsive,” Morris says. “They have an approach where they are providing a voucher for a free spay/neuter, but they also talk about the general health of the pet and emphasize strengthening the human–animal bond.”

Often when Pets for Life enters a community, Morris says, the spay/neuter rate for dogs and cats is below 10 percent; within a couple of years, that rate is above 80 percent. There has been a misconception that people in low-income communities or communities of color are opposed to spaying and neutering, but in study findings published last year in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, the GSSW research team concluded that race and ethnicity are not primary determinants in use of veterinary services, but access to care is.

“Helping maintain animals in people’s homes makes maintaining a healthy social fabric,” Morris says.

BUILDING HUMANE COMMUNITIES

“Helping maintain animals in people’s homes makes maintaining a healthy social fabric.”

— Kevin Morris

MAKING A PUBLIC IMPACT

From mass media to public policy, GSSW has become a hub for public impact scholarship

“Thanks for your blog, your book, and your work on such an important issue—You have continued to speak to me in a manner that makes sense and helps me stay alive.” This reader comment is one of nearly 5,000 on Speaking of Suicide, a website authored by Associate Professor Stacey Freedenthal.

Since Freedenthal launched it in 2014, the suicide-prevention website has had more than 2.2 million visitors, and more than 5,000 people follow the Speaking of Suicide Facebook group. Writing and managing all that content, moderating comments and even finding emergency help for people who appear to be at imminent risk for suicide is, essentially, unpaid work done on nights and weekends and in spare moments because Freedenthal is passionate about helping and sharing her knowledge.

GSSW has become a hub for such activity—public impact scholarship. Assistant Professor Jennifer Greenfield monitors and comments on social policy via Twitter and shares her knowledge in legislative hearings and with the news media. Assistant Professor Shannon Slová’s community-engaged research often culminates in the creation of public-facing reports, videos and other materials that help guide policy and practice.

Professor and Associate Dean for Doctoral Education Kimberly Bender has introduced the concept of public impact scholarship in the GSSW doctoral curriculum. Bender and Assistant Professor Anamika Barman-Adhikari also are members of REALIST, a national coalition of community partners that uses research to inform innovative policies, programs and services aimed at ending homelessness and housing instability among young people. Bender says the collaborative is grappling with issues such as identifying its audience and key messages/issues that used to be the purview of public relations and marketing professionals, not social work scholars.

“Public impact scholarship pushes faculty to not just engage with the community to ensure they’re answering questions that are meaningful,” says Dean Amanda Moore McBride. “They also must share their findings, explaining their research in clear terms by considering the general public as the target of their work.”

That’s a tall order for many researchers, who are trained in an entirely different way of communicating. To fill that gap, the University of Denver is training scholars to disseminate research and scholarship to the public through its new Public Impact Fellows program. Five GSSW faculty members—Greenfield, Bender, Freedenthal, Slová and Associate Professor Yolanda Anyon—are among the first cohort learning how to best use media such as blogs, radio, television, op-eds and social media to share their work.

A GSSW faculty work group is focused on public impact scholarship, leading trainings and facilitating dialogue within the school. In 2019, they’ll advance this conversation by convening leading scholars from across the United States to think about and discuss public impact scholarship and ways to help the social work field embrace it.

“We need to have a conversation as a field about making our value known to the public, and in turn making this kind of work valuable to ourselves,” Freedenthal says. “There is value in helping the public, practitioners and policymakers to discover relevant scholarship. Freedenthal notes, but there also is value to the researcher in receiving real-time, real-world feedback that can influence teaching and research. There’s also value in simply helping someone. As another of Freedenthal’s blog readers wrote, ‘I think this article saved my life.’

In 2019, GSSW will convene leading scholars to think about and discuss public impact scholarship and ways to help the social work field embrace it.

LEARN MORE:

socialwork.du.edu/publicimpact
EVALUATING A TINY-HOME VILLAGE

GSW completes study of Denver’s first tiny-home community for people experiencing homelessness

When Beloved Community Village (BCV) opened in a trendy Denver neighborhood in July 2017, no one knew how long the tiny-home community would last, or whether it would successfully support people experiencing homelessness. The answer is in: The village is a success.

Across the methods and participants, the message is consistent: The village is welcome, villagers are succeeding and are an important part of the community,” says Associate Professor Daniel Brisson, executive director of the Burns Center.

Launched as a 180-day pilot project, BCV is Denver’s first tiny-home community. It is a democratically self-governed “intentional community” of 11 tiny homes for up to 22 people experiencing homelessness. The village provides shelter, capabilities, and health and well-being. Among the findings were improvements in employment outcomes and health and well-being indicators. For instance, villagers reported increased satisfaction and decreased anxiety after moving into the village.

Villagers also reported a significant decrease in how often their belongings were stolen after moving into BCV. And, they reported making “moderate progress” in meeting their own personal goals in areas such as securing long-term housing and managing their finances.

The team also examined broader community impacts, such as traffic, noise and safety, finding few challenges associated with the village. At the organizational level, they assessed development of a sense of community within the village and determined that a sense of community had developed—social capital that contributes to better health and well-being.

The evaluation also documented infrastructure challenges, such as food storage and preparation limitations, and difficulties inherent in the intentional community model, such as a lack of full participation by all members.

Despite the evidence that Denver’s BCV is working, Brisson says, “This doesn’t mean that tiny homes anywhere will be a success. This approach is novel. We need to know a lot more.”

To that end, the Burns Center, funders and community partners are discussing ongoing evaluation of tiny homes as a viable alternative for people experiencing homelessness. And, Brisson says, the center continues to pursue questions around homelessness and other issues that people experiencing poverty face. “We want to serve as a community resource so those living in poverty or without a home can improve their health and well-being.”

READ THE SUMMARY EVALUATION:
socialwork.du.edu/tinyhomes

IN BRIEF

Books for Public Impact


Transforming Trauma: Resilience and Healing through Our Connections with Animals
By Clinical Professor Philip Tedeschi and Molly Jenkins, GSSW MSW ’18
Purdue Press, 2019

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy in Schools: A 360-Degree View of the Research and Practice Principles
By GSSW Associate Professor Johnny Kim, Michael Kelly, and Cynthia Franklin
Oxford University Press, 2017

Innovative Skills to Support Well-Being and Resiliency in Youth
By Professor Nicole Nicotera and Associate Professor Julie Anne Laser-Maira
Oxford University Press, 2017

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Clients Managing Trauma
Edited by Adam Froener, Jacqui von Cilffra-Bergs, GSSW Associate Professor Johnny Kim, and Elliott Connes
Oxford University Press, 2018

Screening, Assessment, and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders
By GSSW Professor Lena Lundgren and Ivy Krull
Purdue Press, 2019

Essential Interviewing Skills for the Helping Professions: A Social Justice and Wellness Approach
By Professor Nicole Nicotera
Oxford University Press, 2018

By Fred McKenzie and GSSW Professor Nicole Nicotera
Oxford University Press, 2018

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Queer and Trans Young Adults Navigating Family Rejection and Housing Instability
By GSSW Associate Professor Johnny Kim, and Professor Julie Anne Laser-Maira
Oxford University Press, 2017

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: A 360-Degree View of the Research and Practice Principles
By GSSW Professor Johnny Kim, Michael Kelly, and Cynthia Franklin
Oxford University Press, 2017

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Queer and Trans Young Adults Navigating Family Rejection and Housing Instability
By GSSW Associate Professor Johnny Kim, Michael Kelly, and Cynthia Franklin
Oxford University Press, 2017

Research Interests:
New and forthcoming books are featured here.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GSSW FACULTY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITIES:
socialwork.du.edu/research

READ THE SUMMARY
socialwork.du.edu/tinyhomes
Incorporating Social Justice in the Curriculum

Social justice is intertwined in all GSSW degree programs. For example, the MSW concentration in Family Systems Practice includes preparation to evaluate social systems for bias and cultural responsiveness. Students develop an awareness of the systems that create power imbalances and oppression, and they reflect on their own personal bias and positional identity, cultural bias, assumptions, values and affective reactions that may influence their relationship with families.

Recently, Family Systems Practice students’ education has also included working with organizations such as the Colorado People’s Alliance, Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, American Friends Service Committee, and Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, as they rallied against separation and prolonged detention of families seeking asylum in the U.S., supported the

Quotes from the Classroom

“My work with the Latinx certificate includes building bridges between the community and the academy and making the certificate as experiential as possible. I challenge students to go into a part of the community they don’t know and have an experience where they are not the experts, where they learn from community members themselves. That cultural humility lens is something I want students to learn and practice.”

Lorena Galcher
Clinical Assistant Professor
Program Coordinator, Latinx Social Work Certificate

“Barring of Colorado resources from being used to separate immigrant families, and denounced the U.S. Attorney General’s decision to limit asylum protections for victims of domestic violence. And, through a partnership with the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, MSW and law students worked together to help prepare women and children in family detention for immigration asylum hearings.”

“I am committed to helping students create meaningful and sustainable change where liberty and justice for all has yet to become reality,” says Clinical Associate Professor Stephen van Meurs, who chairs the concentration. “For me, this includes educating future social workers on the knowledge, skills and values critical to establishing equity and access for all.”

Organizational Leadership and Policy Practice concentration.

“Most nonprofit organizations were founded on values that are predominantly white, and those white-dominant norms are embedded in policies and practices,” Arnold-Renicker says, noting that those norms show up in everything from program design to staff hiring and promotion practices. “Those of us with dominant identities often aren’t aware of the dominant norms we perpetuate—norms held up as the standard by which everyone is measured, or when people function along other cultural lines, they may be penalized.”

“Oftentimes, the ways that organizations are funded also upholds white supremacy,” Arnold-Renicker says, and fails to address the “radical change needed to address injustice.”

Social work faces some of the same challenges, she observes: “I want my students to have a clear picture of how they could perpetuate harms, and also how they can create change.”

Putting Anti-Oppression into Practice

In her private practice, Clinical Assistant Professor Heather Arnold-Renicker, MSW ‘07, offers anti-oppressive trainings and helps nonprofits to better support staff from marginalized identity groups and be more culturally competent and responsive to community needs. She brings that experience to the classroom as coordinator of the school’s

Measuring the Impacts of Public Perception

In August, The Journal of Public Child Welfare published “Measuring the Impact of Public Perceptions on Child Welfare Workers,” an article coauthored by Research Assistant Professor Shauna Rienks, a research analyst at the Butler Institute for Families. The Public Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale measures how the social environment influences child welfare workers, including their job satisfaction and intent to leave. Psychometric studies have validated the scale for private child welfare workers, but there are no validation studies with public agency staff. This study fills that gap, showing stigma and respect are important constructs that also predict worker intent to leave. This research found an additional construct, blame, which was not present in private worker validation studies. The scale provides an important tool for the field as it continues to build evidence for effective recruitment and retention.

Understanding Genocide, Trauma, and Resilience

Nationalist rhetoric. Banishing groups of people. Dehumanizing, othering language. These dynamics have preceded every documented case of genocide, including in Bosnia, and they’re present in today’s America, says Professor of the Practice Ann Petrila. She and coauthor Hasan Hasanović are documenting Bosnian genocide in a book in progress. 11 Days in July. The book will be the first comprehensive published history of the genocide in which more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed in Srebrenica, Bosnia, over 11 days in July 1995.

Now curator at the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery, Hasanović is one of the survivors of the atrocity. The book draws on facts and testimony gathered by the Inter-national Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, along with first-hand accounts of survivors interviewed by Petrila and Hasanović.

“Documenting the atrocity and sharing stories of resilience is particularly important now,” says Petrila, who received a grant from the Council on Social Work Education to capture survivor stories on video. “This book and the programs I run in Bosnia are focused on the ultimate human rights violation—the ultimate outcome of things such as othering, nationalism, all the things that social work tries to combat in society, including ours,” says Petrila, director of Global Practice Bosnia and GSSW’s international initiatives. “How is it that this sort of thing is able to happen, and what is our individual and collective responsibility for it?”

The book explores these questions and makes recommendations for in-

PhD Candidate Spotlight: Mark Plassmeyer, PhD ‘19

Dissertation: “Can General Strain Theory Help Explain the Relationship Between Housing Instability and Recidivism for People with Criminal Drug Records?”

Specializations: civic and community engagement; community organizing and community development, criminal justice, housing and homelessness, mental and behavioral health, public policy, social justice

Research Interests: Social and economic outcomes for people with criminal drug records; the impact of drug policies on the criminal justice system; affordable housing; and the role of social workers in polices

Ann Petrila, center
Jennifer Greenfield isn’t just sharing her knowledge with local lawmakers; she’s also taking her work to Washington, D.C. She was appointed to the Advisory Council for the Bipartisan Policy Center Task Force on Paid Family Leave this year, and in July, the center hosted a national policy conversation featuring Greenfield, Senior Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump, former Sens. Chris Dodd and Rick Santorum, and others. She also regularly shares her perspective with the news media, including CNN, The Hill and The Denver Post.

Professor Jennifer Greenfield is developing evidence to inform paid-leave policy

Assistant Professor Jennifer Greenfield does not just teach about policymaking. She lives it. That has meant making multiple treks to the Colorado State Capitol to testify in support of a state insurance program to provide partial wage-replacement benefits to individuals who have to take leave from work to care for a new child or a sick family member, or for their own serious health condition.

Paid family and medical leave is a professional crusade for Greenfield, whose research focuses on the intersections of health and wealth disparities among women, especially through the mechanism of caregiving. But the issue is personal, too. In 2013, Greenfield’s twin sons were born seven weeks early and spent the first month of their lives in the NICU.

Although Greenfield had access to paid leave that allowed her to participate in her kids’ care, only 13 percent of Colorado workers have access to such leave, Greenfield says, and the resulting financial burden for individuals, families, employers, the medical system and the economy is enormous.

Greenfield is developing evidence to inform state and national paid-leave policy. She and Associate Professor Leslie Hasche are examining how public policies such as public health insurance coverage and workplace policies such as paid family leave and flexible work schedules may mitigate financial insecurity and overall caregiver strain among Coloradans caring for older adults (see Page 17 for more).

Greenfield also is studying whether there is an association between better health outcomes for preterm infants whose mothers have access to paid leave. She is collaborating on the research with faculty at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and College of Nursing, and Susanne Klawetter, GSSW PhD ’17, a Portland State University assistant professor.

Data collection (in both English and Spanish) is underway in four Colorado hospitals, where the research team—including doctoral student Kristi Roybal—is interviewing the mothers of preterm infants about their employment status, access to parental leave, family support, mental health, substance use and other variables. Mothers take surveys at baseline and six weeks after discharge, and they complete daily diaries, documenting the time they spend in the NICU and the types of activities they engage in there. The research team also is tracking the health of the preterm infants until six weeks after discharge. “We hope to get some good information about how experiences may differ by primary language used, by race and ethnicity, and area of residence,” Greenfield explains.

Greenfield says more than half of mothers interviewed thus far have no paid leave available to them, and less than 25 percent have 30 days of leave or more, although their preterm infants have average hospital stays of more than two months. “We don’t have a system of policies in place to support being a working mother or a caregiver,” Greenfield says, “but I’m incredibly motivated to get some change in place.”

13% OF COLORADO WORKERS HAVE ACCESS TO PAID LEAVE FROM WORK TO CARE FOR A NEW CHILD OR SICK FAMILY MEMBER, OR FOR THEIR OWN SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION.
ADVANCING COLORADO’S EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

Report proposes solutions for economic instability in early childhood education

An economic impact study by the GSSW Butler Institute for Families has found that Colorado’s early childhood education (ECE) industry serves more than 100,000 children, generates $1.4 billion in annual sales and services, creates over 32,000 jobs, and results in more than $619 million in related statewide earnings annually. Yet, ECE programs and their employees struggle to survive financially.

The findings are detailed in a report, “Bearing the Cost of Childhood Workforce,” commissioned by the Colorado Department of Human Services to advance the early childhood workforce in Colorado. Background research and secondary data collection was conducted by the Butler Institute, whose mission includes research, program assessment, evaluation, planning and implementation, and training and coaching for human services workers and supervisors. Brodycky Research and Consulting did the study’s economic modeling.

The numbers are startling. The average salary for child care workers in Colorado is just $25,065, placing those workers at the poverty level for a family of four. Many ECE employees receive some public subsidy, and the industry’s turnover rates are high. The result is a shortage of high-quality programs, especially for infants and toddlers, where demand has outrun supply.

Ultimately, the report concludes, it is children who pay the price. When quality care is too expensive for families and when businesses cannot afford to provide quality early care and education, “children spend their earliest, formative years in environments that do not adequately prepare them for school and life.”

A key finding is that Colorado’s early care and education industry makes a substantial impact on the state economy, but low public funding, high worker turnover and market prices that do not reflect the true costs of care pose serious problems. Recommended solutions include:

- Increasing public funding at least to the national average
- Incentivizing quality and the provision of care by improving counties’ fixed reimbursement structures
- Establishing subsidies for businesses to increase the wages of early care and education workers
- Offering refundable tax credits for early learning professionals and incentivizing higher levels of education and credentials

IN BRIEF

Quotes from the Classroom

“One can’t do effective community-based trauma work without properly meeting people’s basic needs and helping to address socioeconomic issues that contribute to maltreatment. Females tend to be disproportionately affected due to child care, low wages, lack of access to health care, and dependency on others for financial support, housing, and transportation. Trauma-informed care includes broader organizational and systemic efforts to address these issues.”

Meg Franko

Clinical Assistant Professor

Mental Health and Trauma Concentration,

MSW/DMHR

Calculating the Costs of Caregiving

Although informal caregiving is a cornerstone of the U.S. long-term care system, little is known about caregivers’ experience of financial strain or the extent to which organizational and public policies help alleviate strain among caregivers who are employed outside the home.

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Meg Franko has been director of research and evaluation at the Butler Institute since 2015 and a senior research associate prior, but she recently joined the GSSW faculty as a research assistant professor as well. The appointment will expand collaboration opportunities within GSSW and the community, and it will further incorporate Franko’s expertise in evaluation and education capacity-building into GSSW’s education and research programs. Franko will continue in her role at the Butler Institute, where she serves as a PI for grants and contracts averaging $1 million annually and manages a 20-person research and evaluation team dedicated to improving the effectiveness and demonstrating the impact of programs, organizations and systems that directly serve families. Prior to joining Butler in 2012, Franko worked as a senior consultant for the Colorado Department of Education. Franko earned her PhD in education leadership and policy at the University of Denver and a master’s in educational administration.

Kerry Caussy

Clinical Assistant Professor

Mental Health and Trauma Concentration,

MSW/DMHR

IN BRIEF

Quotes from the Classroom

“One can’t do effective community-based trauma work without properly meeting people’s basic needs and helping to address socioeconomic issues that contribute to maltreatment. Females tend to be disproportionately affected due to child care, low wages, lack of access to health care, and dependency on others for financial support, housing, and transportation. Trauma-informed care includes broader organizational and systemic efforts to address these issues.”

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**PROMOTING PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH**

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20 Preventing Substance Abuse
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**TRANSFORMING COLORADO HEALTH CARE**

GSSW is helping to guide a Colorado initiative to improve health outcomes through integrated care.

To improve health and lower costs, a State of Colorado initiative aims to increase access to integrated behavioral health and primary care for 80 percent of the state's residents by 2019. Clinical Associate Professor Michael Talamantes is part of the team guiding the initiative, known as the Colorado State Innovation Model (SIM).

Talamantes co-chairs the SIM Workforce Workgroup—one of seven workgroups reporting to Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper. Talamantes also is a member of the steering committee for SIM, which will impact up to 350 primary care practices and more than 4 million residents when it is fully implemented.

The Workforce Workgroup is charged with assessing the needs of practices regarding workforce issues; offering guidance on how to best deliver training to existing providers; and proposing strategies to standardize the way that existing—but largely unregulated—positions interact with health care integration efforts statewide. The group also has developed core competencies for licensed behavioral health providers working in integrated health care settings.

CLIMB@DU: MEETING A WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

In Colorado, 56 of the state's 64 counties have a shortage of mental health professionals. GSSW is working to meet that shortfall and make culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services more accessible to more people.

With a $1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, GSSW established CLIMB@DU, a four-year initiative with more than 10 public and private partners.

In its first year, CLIMB@DU provided $15,000 stipends for 27 MSW students; 30 more are enrolled this year.

Colorado's underserved areas include southwestern Colorado, home to GSSW's Four Corners MSW Program, directed by Professor of the Practice Wanda Ellingson. Last year, 11 Four Corners students received the stipend and have joined the region’s behavioral health workforce. This year, eight students in the Western Colorado MSW Program are part of CLIMB@DU and will graduate in 2019 ready to serve the state's western and mountain communities, says Program Director and Assistant Professor of the Practice Rachel Forbes. Denver campus and MSW@Denver students also participate in the program, and by 2021 GSSW will have trained 115 social workers to provide culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health service in underserved areas.

CLIMB@DU is just the sort of solution to workforce challenges that Colorado’s SIM initiative aims to support statewide, says Clinical Associate Professor Michael Talamantes, who leads the effort with Associate Professor Michele Hanna.

“Since we’re committed to the integration of behavioral health in primary care,” Talamantes says, “these best practices will continue to succeed in producing the best outcomes for Colorado residents.”

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WHEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED, THE COLORADO STATE INNOVATION MODEL WILL IMPACT UP TO 350 PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES AND MORE THAN 4 MILLION RESIDENTS.

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**CLINICAL INNOVATION MODEL WILL IMPACT UP TO 350 PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES AND MORE THAN 4 MILLION RESIDENTS.**

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GSSW hosted two SIM Integrated Behavioral Health Training Consortiums that brought together participants from across Colorado to discuss community needs, barriers, and the training and education needs of providers. In November 2018, GSSW and Colorado’s Office of Behavioral Health will host a symposium where experts in behavioral health, practice transformation and integrative teaming will present the content of integrated behavioral health learning modules. Launched in 2014 and funded by up to $65 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Colorado’s SIM grant will end in 2019. Results so far have been positive.

Within the first two cohorts of SIM practices, for example, more patients are being screened for depression, and patients with diabetes have improved A1c control.

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The Workforce Workgroup—one of seven workgroups reporting to Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper—is part of the SIM initiative to improve health outcomes through integrated care.
**PREVENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**Professor Anamika Barman-Adhikari is using artificial intelligence to improve substance abuse interventions for homeless youth**

Group interventions are a common approach to substance abuse treatment for youth. The aim is to reduce high-risk behaviors through positive social influence. Sometimes, though, abusive behaviors actually increase when at-risk individuals come together to discuss risky behaviors, derive status from those behaviors and then engage in more of them.

Social science has been trying to solve this problem of deviant training for more than 20 years, says Assistant Professor Anamika Barman-Adhikari. But, she may have a solution.

Instead of randomly assigning youth to treatment groups—the typical practice—what if they were assigned in such a way that positive influences were maximized and negative influences were minimized? Using an artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm that considers factors such as how often individuals engage in substance use and other risky behaviors, Barman-Adhikari is partitioning groups to promote positive outcomes.

“We try to put a high-risk individual into a group that is less risk-taking and has more positive behaviors,” she explains. “They will be more likely to change their behaviors if they’re influenced by positive forces.”

Barman-Adhikari, GSSW doctoral student Daphne Brydon, two MSW students, and colleagues at the University of Southern California Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society designed the algorithm using data collected in Los Angeles in 2013. The calculus is relatively simple, says Barman-Adhikari. “What are your social networks, and what risk behaviors do you engage in?”

When the research team tested the algorithm against the data, the simulation results were striking. Compared to randomly assigned groups, deviance training was reduced by almost 60 percent in AI-assigned groups.

The team is running a randomized controlled trial in collaboration with Urban Peak, a Denver-based nonprofit serving youth experiencing homelessness. Participants complete an initial computer-based survey that asks them to identify their most consequential personal relationships over the last 30 days and then ask questions about each of those friends. Participants in the AI-composed treatment condition and in the control condition receive the Project Towards No Drug Abuse intervention, which uses peer leaders to disseminate positive norms about substance abuse.

Clinical testing will wrap up in November, and the research team is discussing how to make an AI-informed intervention scale so organizations can use it without additional burden.

**IN A DATA SIMULATION, DEVIANCE TRAINING WAS REDUCED BY ALMOST 60 PERCENT IN AI-ASSIGNED GROUPS COMPARED TO RANDOMLY ASSIGNED GROUPS.**

**EDUCATING FACULTY ABOUT EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT**

A GSSW program has trained faculty from schools nationwide to teach evidence-based treatment methods for substance abuse and dependence

Although 70 percent of social workers encounter clients with risky substance use or substance use disorder (SUD), says Professor Lena Lundgren, fewer than 10 percent of social work graduate programs include evidence-based content about alcohol and drugs in their core curriculum.

Lundgren is working to change that. She is the principal investigator for a National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism grant to train U.S. social work faculty to teach evidence-based treatment methods for alcohol and drug dependence. The aim, Lundgren says, is to create a social work workforce prepared to effectively treat SUDs.

The Alcohol and other Drugs Social Work Faculty Education Program (ADEP) trains social work faculty to teach social work graduate students about empirically supported screening, assessment and treatment for SUDs. So far, 100 faculty from more than 80 schools of social work have participated in ADEP in the past two years, and pre- and post-surveys have shown significant increases in faculty knowledge and a boost in their confidence regarding teaching the content, says Lundgren, executive director of the GSSW Butler Institute for Families.

ADEP training is delivered in four-day intensive immersion programs taught by leading addiction experts from a range of disciplines, including public health, medicine, psychology and social work. GSSW Professors Jeff Jenson and Kimberly Bender, Clinical Assistant Professor Brian Gonzales, and Research Associate Professor Susanna Karna and Nancy Lucrec were among the instructors at the June 2018 session.

Why train faculty in evidence-based practices instead of students? “If you bring in one faculty member, you train many cohorts of students,” says Lundgren, noting that the research team is assessing knowledge transfer in the schools where ADEP faculty teach. “We want to see a transfer of knowledge so students—future social workers—can better respond in the field to the alcohol and drug epidemic.”

**TRANSFORMING TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS**

Professor Lena Lundgren, a guest professor at Umeå University in Sweden, is the principal investigator of STANCE, a research program that includes several studies and the implementation of a new national data system to help Swedish social services to better identify and examine the effectiveness of services received by individuals with or at risk for a substance use disorder (SUD). Sweden hosts some of the world’s most comprehensive health registries, and one STANCE component is an epidemiological study looking at a decade of Swedish registry data collected on 15,000 people who were assessed for a SUD. The goal is to understand the range of health, employment and treatment interventions they received and identify which groups are most vulnerable to negative outcomes.

“We need to be able to identify which clusters of services provide the best outcomes,” Lundgren explains. “The Swedish data is unique because it collects a range of services so we can actually look at real outcomes.”

Assistant Professor and co-investigator Amy He is developing a study on child welfare outcomes, and Associate Professor and co-investigator Stacey Freedenthal is examining the relationship between suicidal intent, suicidal attempt and patterns of psychiatric hospitalization. Lundgren also hopes to compare SUD treatment outcomes in Sweden and the U.S.

STANCE started in 2016, and Lundgren aims to continue the program through 2022 supported by approximately $3 million in funding from the Swedish Council for Health and Work Life. The STANCE research team spans social work, medicine, psychology and statistics, and GSSW-Umeå research collaborations and faculty and student exchanges are planned.
STRENGTHENING INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES

New HIV/AIDS prevention program uses culture-centered practices to increase awareness among Indigenous youth

Through storytelling, we can develop understanding about ourselves and our relationships with other people and the planet. But can storytelling help improve human health?

Associate Professor Ramona Beltrán believes so.

Culture-centered practices like storytelling can interrupt the intergenerational process of trauma and aid in healing, says Beltrán, a Xicana of Yaqui descent. This perspective infuses and informs all of Beltrán’s work, including the Indigenous Youth RiseUp! Culture-Centered HIV/AIDS Prevention Program.

In partnership with community organizations serving Latino and Indigenous youth in Colorado, Beltrán developed and evaluated a culture-centered HIV/AIDS prevention curriculum for Indigenous youth that aimed to increase knowledge and decrease HIV risk behaviors and stigma. The pilot project included a four-day workshop that used a Medicine Wheel framework for talking about physical, mental, social-relational and spiritual aspects of health. Storytelling was woven into the curriculum, including a poetry-writing exercise synthesizing Indigenous elders, leaders and writers.

This type of culture-centered approach is particularly important, Beltrán says, because although Indigenous communities are tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections at relatively low rates and Indigenous LGBTQ/Two Spirit youth are at increased risk for substance use and suicidality, there are few evidence-based HIV prevention curricula for Indigenous youth.

For participants, the approach was effective. For example, at the start of the intervention, only 50 percent of participants knew that you cannot contract HIV from a mosquito bite; that increased to 95 percent after the program. The study also saw a 30-percent increase in youth who reported that they know how to use a condom and how to check if it is safe to use.

Participants also strengthened their Indigenous identities, reporting more specificity about their tribal heritage or including more aspects of their racial/ethnic identity. Such changes indicate an increased understanding of cultural history and tribal heritage, Beltrán explains.

“That to us was a really important finding, and that was the thing the community was most excited about,” Beltrán says. “Our community members understand that when our youth know who they are and where they come from and have a sense of pride, it’s easier to navigate challenges. Finding positivity in one’s identity is an important health protective factor.”

PARTICIPANTS IN THE INDIGENOUS YOUTH RISEUP! CULTURE-CENTERED HIV/AIDS PREVENTION PROGRAM DEMONSTRATED INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIV PREVENTION, AND THEY REPORTED STRENGTHENED INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES.

STUDYING HIV RISK

Professor N. Eugene Walls helps design National HIV Behavioral Surveillance Study of men who have sex with men

Every three years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance Study of men who have sex with men (MSM). Denver is one of 22 study locations nationwide, and since 2011, Professor N. Eugene Walls has been part of the city’s research team.

Walls’ role is to conduct an ethnographic scan that informs survey design. He meets with dozens of stakeholders in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and services as well as MSM who have unique perspectives on HIV/AIDS and related risk behaviors—people such as MSM sex workers. Walls also conducts focus group ranging across the MSM population, such as injection drug users, HIV-positive MSM and Latino MSM.

“The scan takes the pulse of the target population,” says Walls, who collaborates with Denver Health on the study. “We want to know, has anything changed? Are there any new emerging issues or trends? This approach allows us to shape and contextualize the survey to be the most benefit to the Denver area.”

Insights gained through the ethnographic scan and secondary analysis of past surveys shape each new survey, which includes a set of questions used in all cities and questions specific to the local area as well.

When the survey was conducted in 2014, for example, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was just hitting the MSM community. “We were really curious about what MSM were thinking about PrEP and what the barriers to access were,” Walls says. In 2017, the survey included questions about the human papillomavirus vaccine, which the CDC had begun recommending for MSM under age 25. In Denver, where marijuana is legal, the survey includes questions related to marijuana use and HIV risk.

Ultimately, data from the survey are used to inform national HIV/AIDS strategies aimed at decreasing incidence, improving care and reducing disparities. Locally, study findings shape policy, identify priority funding areas and inform providers about new directions or areas of need. “It shapes how we do prevention and treatment,” Walls says.

“GSSW produces a significant amount of research on the LGBT community, and a lot of what is published about the trans community comes from GSSW. We’re the place for research into under-studied populations”

～ N. Eugene Walls

NEW FACULTY

GSSW welcomes Donny Gerke as a new assistant professor. Gerke holds a PhD and MSW from the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. His research and scholarship are focused on HIV prevention and health disparities in sexual and gender minority populations. Before returning to his doctoral education, Gerke worked at the Lifelong AIDS Alliance in Seattle, Washington.

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UNDERSTANDING TRANS HEALTH LITERACY

Health risks—from substance use to HIV to depression and suicidality—are elevated among transgender people. “That’s predominantly because they are living in a world that is transphobic and the consequences of that,” says Professor N. Eugene Walls.

And, Walls says, trans people face significant barriers to health care, including a limited number of physicians who are trans-competent. Yet, there is no literature describing trans health literacy from either a patient or a provider perspective.

In collaboration with LGBT advocacy organization One Colorado, Walls, Assistant Professors Donny Gerke and Jennifer Greenfield, and doctoral student Brittanee Atteberry-Ash have embarked on a new study to examine trans health literacy. They’re conducting focus groups statewide with trans-identified individuals to gain a better sense of their health-related struggles and how they define their needs. The focus groups will then inform a survey to be administered statewide in 2019.

Ultimately, the data gathered will inform interventions to educate health care providers and help One Colorado to better serve its constituents.

“We want to provide opportunities for providers and trans individuals to have more inclusive and positive health care experiences,” Gerke says.

~ PROMOTING PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH ~ 23
Professor Johnny Kim is studying the effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy.

Most individual, couples and family therapy takes a problem-focused approach—delving deep to understand a problem over many sessions before beginning to address solutions. Associate Professor Johnny Kim advocates for a different approach for many clients: solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), which moves directly to solutions for a wide range of issues, including depression, addiction and trauma.

Kim is putting the effectiveness of SFBT to the test. In partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services and funded by a U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Regional Partnership Grant, Kim and co-investigators at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare are using a randomized controlled trial to investigate whether parents who received SFBT improved on both substance abuse and trauma outcomes compared to treatment as usual (cognitive–behavioral therapy, or CBT). For the study, they trained substance abuse and mental health counselors in SFBT. These clinicians had been using CBT and motivational interviewing, but in working with families who were involved in the child welfare system and whose children had been removed from the home, clinicians often felt “stuck” when clients didn’t want to talk about problems.

The trial followed 180 families involved in the child welfare system over three months as half received SFBT and half received CBT. Although data analysis is still underway, Kim says initial results show that SFBT is as effective as CBT for treating substance abuse, trauma, child well-being, parental stress and parental depression.

In a second study, Kim is serving as co-investigator to Carrie Pettus-Davis, director of the Institute for Justice Research and Development and associate professor at the Florida State University College of Social Work. The 5 Key Model for Reentry Program Demonstration Project aims to study and establish a model of reentry services that are individualized and effective at reducing recidivism, decreasing cost and fostering productive citizenship through improved occupational status, interpersonal relationships, coping skills and social activities. The study includes a randomized controlled trial involving 1,100 participants in a mix of urban and rural communities in Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

Several key ingredients help prisoners stay out of jail—healthy thinking patterns, meaningful work, effective coping, developing positive social engagement, and positive relationships—and four evidence-based interventions are being used to target those five keys. SFBT targets two of them: finding effective coping strategies and developing positive relationships with family, friends and coworkers.

The two-year study got underway in January, and the first group of prisoners has been released and began receiving treatment. Kim has been hiring and training counselors to use SFBT to help prisoners come up with positive coping strategies and positive relationships; the SFBT-trained clinicians are embedded in agencies that provide re-entry services in local communities.

“The more tools we can give our clinicians, the better,” says Kim, chair of the Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association research committee. “But we believe the SFBT-trained clinicians are equipped to support the most effective intervention out there to help their clients in the quickest amount of time.”

Professor William Cloud discusses his concept of recovery capital, which has reframed the addiction treatment field.

In July 2018, Professor William Cloud, GSSW PhD ’87, received an email from a multi-billion-dollar health care technology company seeking to include the Recovery Capital Scale in its behavioral health electronic workflow. Cloud didn’t develop the instrument, but he and former University of Denver Associate Professor of Sociology Robert Granfield did introduce the recovery capital construct a decade ago. The idea has since taken root in the study and treatment of addiction, and recovery capital has been the subject of countless papers, presentations and dissertations by other scholars. It’s even the focus of an annual conference.

“Recovery capital is the sum of personal and social resources at one’s disposal for addressing drug dependence and, chiefly, bolstering one’s capacity and opportunities for recovery,” Cloud and Granfield wrote in their seminal paper, “Conceptualizing recovery capital: Expansions of a theoretical construct,” published in the International Journal of the Addictions in 2008.

Treatment practitioners use the strengths-based recovery capital approach to identify clients’ internal and external resources—everything from physical health to family relationships to recovery role models—that can support them in recovery.

The recovery capital concept was central to a paradigm shift in the addictions field, which moved from a focus on pathology and intervention to a focus on recovery. But Cloud and Granfield’s big idea had humble beginnings. They honed the concept over a backyard barbecue, Cloud recalls.

“We had experienced this in our own practice careers,” Cloud says. “How is it that some people are able to get over addiction and others aren’t? Some people enter treatment four or five times and still struggle with it; others never enter treatment and they’re doing fine.”

In the early 1990s, Cloud and Granfield had been investigating people about their addiction and recovery experiences. “There were some common themes that led us to our first idea that these folks had social capital—relationships, friendships, supportive families, people who assisted them with their recovery efforts,” Cloud says. “Many also had a ‘state of conventional life’—they weren’t entirely encapsulated in drug culture, and they had a lot of networks and support systems.”

But as they interviewed more and more people, Cloud and Granfield realized there was more than social capital at work in recovery success or relapse. As they “tossed ideas around” over grilled hamburgers one summer day, they landed on recovery capital as a concept that combined not only social capital but also personal, community and cultural capital, which all impact an individual’s recovery.

“Poverty is tough. It creates barriers for all sorts of things, including getting off drugs,” says Cloud, who has been working in, studying and teaching about addiction and treatment for more than 40 years and authored three books about recovery. “People with recovery capital often have physical capital—assets and financial ability. People with less recovery capital need more resources. Treatment should be building recovery capital.”

There’s still plenty to learn, Cloud says, including how domains such as culture and community affect recovery. “The addiction and recovery field continues to evolve as people deconstruct the process of recovery. What’s common among people that allows them to get off drugs? This question has perplexed researchers for a century,” he says. “There continues to be an interest in solving this."

**FOCUSING ON SOLUTIONS**

**INITIAL RESULTS SHOW THAT SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY IS AS EFFECTIVE AS COGNITIVE–BEHAVIORAL THERAPY FOR TREATING SUBSTANCE ABUSE, TRAUMA, CHILD WELL-BEING, PARENTAL STRESS AND PARENTAL DEPRESSION.**
Improving Suicide Prevention Training

Assistant Professor Anthony Fulginiti wants to harness the power of social networks to inform more effective and sustainable suicide intervention and prevention—an approach that may be particularly relevant on college campuses. Colleges often use gatekeeper training for resident assistants (RAs) and staff as a prevention approach. However, Fulginiti says, peers tend to discuss suicidal thoughts to other peers—not to people in positions of power, such as RAs and teachers. And, the standard approach cannot guarantee that all students are connected to someone who has received training, he says.

An alternative network-driven approach would collect information about student social networks—such as friends and group memberships—and then recruit people from those networks for training. That approach can provide a blueprint of the social landscape, guiding training so that everyone in the network is connected to someone trained in suicide prevention; it also can identify service and outreach blind spots to address.

Fulginiti aims to map the complex web of student relationships on a larger scale than has been previously attempted. He surveyed nearly 500 first-year University of Denver students and developed a new methodology that maps based on self-report friendship ties and affiliations.

Fulginiti demonstrated that it was feasible to collect the network data needed to plan gatekeeper training. The next step will be to show that a successful computer algorithm can be developed to guide gatekeeper training recruitment. Fulginiti is collaborating with colleagues at the University of Southern California Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society to develop a computer program to help identify a subset of people who can maximize training coverage in the student network. An efficacy study will then compare the standard and network-driven approaches to gatekeeper training to determine how these different training approaches affect student help-seeking and service use.

The work also will provide descriptive data to test assumptions about where RAs are situated in peer networks. Fulginiti says. The ultimate goal is to use this information to make better decisions about treatment and services.

MINING SOCIAL NETWORK DATA TO IDENTIFY SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Fulginiti and colleagues conducted a study that demonstrated that asking about suicide and suicidal ideation among college students who are friends of each other can provide an opportunity to intervene and engage students who have been reluctant to receive help. They based this approach on the idea that if a friend is willing to talk about their suicidal thoughts, then other friends might also be more willing to speak up.

In a second study with staff from Denver Health social worker Robin List, GSSW MSW ’06, Laser-Maira has examined the effectiveness of the Nia Technique, a mind/body physical conditioning program that combines martial, dance and healing arts in a workout set to music. Laser-Maira found that the sample was positively influenced by the activities, both individually and as a group, with most participants reporting transformational change in their lives. In a separate study with staff from Denver Parks and Recreation, Laser-Maira found that the sample was positively influenced by the activities, both individually and as a group, with most participants reporting transformational change in their lives.

Laser-Maira is presenting findings from both studies at the Alliance for Social Workers in Sports’ 4th Annual Social Work in Sports Symposium in November.

Life Saving Activities


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Exploring the Effectiveness of Mind–Body Interventions

Neuroscience has demonstrated that mind–body interventions such as yoga and mindful breathing can change the brain, says Professor Nicole Nicotera, who studies the healing efficacy of mind–body interventions in clinical practice.

In collaboration with the The Blue Bench, a nonprofit serving sexual assault survivors, Nicotera and Megan Coonelly, GSSW MSW ’14, are looking at the potential of trauma-sensitive yoga and mindfulness interventions for survivors of sexual assault. The intervention was developed at the Blue Bench in Denver in collaboration with the The Blue Bench, a nonprofit serving sexual assault survivors, Nicotera and Megan Coonelly, GSSW MSW ’14, and is looking at the potential of trauma-sensitive yoga and mindfulness interventions for survivors of sexual assault.

The intervention was developed and implemented by licensed mental health providers and certified yoga teachers in the natural setting of a community–based organization. Unlike traditional yoga, trauma-sensitive yoga does not include teaching, it emphasizes mind–body awareness and is careful about the language used and poses introduced, as some could be triggering. Findings have demonstrated statistically significant changes in participants’ emotion regulation and skilled awareness, both of which have the potential to reduce PTSD symptomatology, Nicotera says.

“Mindfulness and gentle mind–body interventions can be more helpful than forcing survivors to talk,” says Nicotera, noting that The Blue Bench is using data from the ongoing study to refine the intervention.

In a second study, Nicotera and community partner Erica Viggiani (BSW, MSW) are studying the outcomes of an eight-week yoga–mindfulness based intervention designed to address the behavioral and emotional self-regulation needs of young women incarcerated in a high-security facility, specifically targeting development of interoceptive awareness. Although data analysis is still underway, participant scores on the Mindful Awareness and Attention Scale for Adolescents increased significantly from pre–to post-test, Nicotera says.

“There is hope for all of us to change through mind–body interventions such as yoga and mindful breathing due to the neuroplasticity of the brain,” she says. “Interventions can be simple and don’t have to be expensive. Once these kinds of interventions are learned, practicing them can be free because all you need is your body, breath and mind.”

Connecting Social Work and Public Health

GSSW has added a new dual–degree program that pairs a master of social work (MSW) with a master of public health (MPH). The partnership between the University of Denver and the Colorado School of Public Health is a natural fit, says Associate Professor of the Practice Karen Bensen, coordinator of dual degrees. Both fields strive to improve health and social functioning, with public health focusing on population health and social work focusing on individuals within systems. Ten students have enrolled in the new program, says Bensen, noting that dual–degree graduates can expect expanded career options in areas such as medical and public health services, substance use prevention and treatment, and behavioral health. Coordinated by Clinical Associate Professor Michael Talamanes, the MSW/MPH program is one of 13 GSSW dual–degree programs that pair social work with degrees in business, law, international studies and theology.

Understanding Benefits of Social Media

Assistant Professor Anamika Barman–Adhikari, Professor Kimberly Bender, University of Denver engineering and business colleagues and a team of graduate students are studying the benefits of social media for homeless youth. They aim to develop a better understanding of how youth use Facebook, the topics they discuss and share, and how others respond to them. Researchers also want to understand how these interactions influence young people’s engagement in sexual risk behaviors, substance use and experiences of victimization. The ultimate aim of the study—the first in the country to examine how homeless populations are using social media—is to use this information to develop social media interventions to help unstably housed youth avoid negative outcomes.

Investigating Cognitive and Emotional Responses to Suicidal Thoughts

PE: Associate Professor Stacey Freedenthal and Professor Nicole Nicotera
Co-PE: Clinical Assistant Professor Brian Gonzales
Community Partner: Denver Health Medical Center Psychiatric Emergency Services
Impact: This qualitative pilot study investigates individuals’ cognitive and emotional responses to suicidal thoughts. Findings will lay the groundwork for future research into the relationship of treatment outcomes and responses to suicidal ideation, new interventions to modify responses to suicidal thoughts, and possible modifications to interventions to accommodate different responses to suicidal ideation.

Antonia Alvarez, PhD '19

Specializations: Addictions and substance use, community organizing and community development, culturally responsive practice, disparities, Indigenous and native peoples, LGBTQ+ mental and behavioral health, social justice, suicide and suicide prevention, trauma

Dissertation: “Historic Loss and Suicide Risk Between and Among Native Hawaiians: Exploring a Historical–Trauma Informed Approach to Suicide Prevention”

Research Interests: Community-based interventions, culturally responsive social work practice, and Indigenous/ minority health and mental health; continuing to challenge systems that perpetuate health disparities among communities of color, LGBTQ youth, and other multiple-minority groups; the use of qualitative, arts-based and liberatory methodologies that translate research to practice and practice to prevention

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INCREASING FATHER INVOLVEMENT TO PROMOTE CHILDREN’S SOCIO–EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

PI: Associate Professor Inna Altschul

Funder: National Institutes of Health, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development

Impact: Using longitudinal data from 5,102 racially diverse, low-income families with young children to test transactional family process models, this project advances the understanding of family processes associated with father involvement and socio–emotional outcomes for children in fragile families, providing targets for interventions to increase father involvement and promote children’s socio–emotional well-being.

Specializations: interprofessional collaboration, child welfare, child and youth well-being, and workforce development

PHD CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT: JON PHILLIPS, PHD ‘19


Research Interests: Increasing the intensity and quality of interprofessional collaboration in the child welfare system to improve child and family well-being

LEARN MORE: portfolio.du.edu/Jon.Phillips

The Dads Matter parenting intervention reduces child maltreatment by increasing father involvement

Despite strong evidence that fathers are important to children’s development, dads are often overlooked in perinatal home–visiting programs intended to reduce maltreatment and optimize developmental outcomes for kids. Associate Professor Jennifer Bellamy is shifting more focus onto fathers through Dads Matter, a new intervention designed to incorporate fathers into perinatal home–visiting programs. Typically, home–visiting programs start close to the time of a child’s birth and are focused on mothers and babies. Although the home–visiting program may continue until children are 3–5 years old, early positive results usually are not sustained over time. “We believe that’s because we’re dissecting families,” Bellamy explains. “We pay little attention to dads, and fathers have been the missing link.”

With a focus on co–parenting, Dads Matter reorients home visiting to a family approach that includes fathers when they are present in the home. The intervention is layered into standard home–visiting programs and helps mothers and fathers to develop parenting skills together and support one another.

Findings from a quasi–experimental pilot study of Dads Matter suggest that the intervention resulted in better engagement of fathers in services, better quality of father–child and mother–father relationships, and fewer child maltreatment indicators as compared to home visiting as usual.

Dads Matter has been implemented via five large Chicago agencies that provide home–visiting services; data collection for a randomized controlled trial of the intervention recently wrapped up. In addition to Bellamy, project collaborators include faculty at New York University and the University of Nebraska, as well as GSSW PhD candidate Jon Phillips and doctoral student Rachel Speer.

Trial participants completed a baseline interview before receiving services. Researchers also audio recorded participants for 24 hours, allowing them to pick up on harsh parenting such as yelling and gauge the quality of parents’ interactions with their child; they repeated this process after four months—the length of time required to deliver Dads Matter—and again after one year.

“My hope is that we could shift the entire field of home visiting to be family inclusive, leveraging what is already a good service into an extraordinary service that has the opportunity to reduce child maltreatment widely,” Bellamy says.
Since it was established more than 15 years ago, Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF) has transformed the lives of hundreds of youth involved in the child welfare system through mentoring and skills-training and has been the focus of multiple studies, including three randomized controlled trials. The preventive intervention has also been a training ground for almost 400 MSW and other graduate students who have worked as FHF mentors and research assistants.

One of those in MSW student and Research Assistant Liza Baxter, who is responsible for coding, data entry, and cleaning and merging data from multiple databases spanning four cohorts over many years. Another is Rachel Benznetz, GSSW MSW ’15, who started out as an FHF mentor, became a research assistant, and now works as the program’s full-time project manager, supervising up to 10 graduate student interviewers and research assistants and coordinating with counties and caseworkers. “Some of the best training and supervision I received as a social worker came through this program,” Bennett says. Mentors, for example, participate in training, weekly individual and group supervision, and take a weekly seminar covering topics such as emotion regulation or trauma and attachment.

Recognized as an evidence-based intervention, FHF is the brainchild of Professor Heather Taussig, associate dean for research. Designed for youth ages 9 to 12 who are in foster care, the nine-month program includes group-based skills training on topics such as healthy relationships, anger management, communication, and resisting negative peer pressure. Graduate student mentors also work individually with participants to generalize the skills they are learning to real-life situations.

Two randomized controlled trials found that FHF participants had fewer placements changes, higher rates of permanency, fewer trauma symptoms, better mental health functioning, less residential treatment, and better quality of life. Taussig and Professor Kimberly Bender now are conducting a randomized controlled trial of the Fostering Healthy Futures for Teens mentoring program, which enrolls 8th and 9th graders with open child welfare cases. Mentors (each works with three students) are trained to creatively and organically incorporate skill and resource building into meetings and activities, promoting positive youth development within the relationship. Education, extracurricular activity, career, and health domains.

Taussig and colleagues recently completed a National Institute of Justice–funded 10-year follow-up study examining dating violence (DV) outcomes. They found several salient skill and resource building outcomes as well as a protective effect of social support. Taussig and colleagues are now conducting a study of delinquency prevention for youth ages 9 to 11 who are in foster care.

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After five years, Anyon has studied restorative practices in Denver Public Schools (CPS). In a recently completed study funded by the University of Denver Burton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise, Anyon looked at whether participation in a district-level restorative practices learning community led to increased implementation of the approach. Anyon’s previous research had shown that certain implementation conditions mattered for schools to take up restorative practices in a robust, school-wide way. So, she helped to design a learning community to strengthen implementation.

Every month, educators from 15 DPS elementary, middle and high schools came together to review implementation strategies, discuss best practices and problems to solve, and to learn from each other. The program has been a success, with all participating schools showing increased implementation of restorative practices. In the past five years, Anyon has studied restorative practices in Denver Public Schools (CPS). In a recently completed study funded by the University of Denver Burton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise, Anyon looked at whether participation in a district-level restorative practices learning community led to increased implementation of the approach. Anyon’s previous research had shown that certain implementation conditions mattered for schools to take up restorative practices in a robust, school-wide way. So, she helped to design a learning community to strengthen implementation.

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IN BRIEF

Enhancing Publishing Practices

A decade ago, the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) asked Jeff Jensen to lead an examination of social work publishing practices. Jensen and a group of leading scholars identified several challenges, including weak reviews, inconsistent publishing processes, lengthy waits between submission and decision, and even longer waits for publication. Those findings led the SSWG board to create a journal known for rapid decisions, high-quality reviews, and quick publication. The Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research (JSSWR) published its first issue in 2010 as an open-access journal.

Today, SSWG’s flagship publication is published by the University of Chicago Press, and Jensen is the journal’s editor-in-chief.

“I’m continually impressed by the caliber and impact of social work research published by JSSWR. We publish rigorous, original qualitative and quantitative research by both established and emerging scholars from all over the world,” says Jensen, the Winn Endowed Professor for Children and Youth. “We’ll celebrate JSSWR’s 10th anniversary next year, and I’m particularly proud that the journal’s publishing practices continue to align with its founding principles.”

The journal received its second Impact Factor of 1.053 and is ranked 21 among 42 social work journals. Submissions increased 5.3 percent from 2016 to 2017, authors receive a decision within six weeks of submission, and most articles are published online within 6 months of acceptance.

Jensen credits much of this success to JSSWR’s team of associate editors, including GSSW Associate Professor Jennifer Bellamy, who also serves on the SSWG board.

FOLLOW JSSWR ON TWITTER: @journalJSSWR

Training an Evidence-Based Workforce

Students in GSSW’s Denver, Western Colorado and Four Corners programs get to choose internships that fit their interests from more than 750 field education options. For Erin Mussman, GSSW MSW ’18, that meant finding a second-year internship that included a research component.

Mussman interned at EarthLinks, where her responsibilities included grant writing and program evaluation. EarthLinks is a Denver nonprofit that aims to cultivate transformation and self-worth with people experiencing homelessness and poverty by creating opportunities through Earth-centered programs such as the EarthLinks Workshop, where participants work in an urban garden, create crafts from what is harvested and then sell the handicrafts to support participant programs.

“I found the survey instruments EarthLinks was using, and how they administered them, were not effective,” says Mussman, whose concentration was a sustainable development and global practice. “They do really important work, but not work that can be easily measured. A lack of good data demonstrating results limited grant opportunities, Mussman explains.

So, Mussman designed a new survey instrument. She adapted Pick-A-Mood, a tool used by EarthLinks, which would be administered when participants arrived in the morning and again after completion of their group sessions and workshop.

Pilot results were positive, Mussman says, and the survey better demonstrated the program’s direct impact on individuals.

Today, Mussman works with nonprofits as a grant writer for Zim Consulting, a professional connection she made through a mentor at her first-year field placement.

Mussman says, “I want to make the world a better place, and grant writing is the best use of my skills and how I can make a meaningful impact.”

IN BRIEF

Expanding Access to Social Work Education

Through initiatives such as its Four Corners and Western Colorado MSW programs, GSSW expands access to social work graduate education and provides a well-trained, culturally responsive workforce in rural and underserved communities.

The MSW@Denver online MSW program is expanding the school’s footprint and carrying its social justice emphasis even farther—to communities in 37 states. With 283 advanced-standing and two-year students currently enrolled, MSW@Denver will graduate its first cohort of students in June 2019.

“We’re providing broad access to the MSW degree for changemakers in communities where there are few social workers, if any,” says Associate Professor of the Practice Jae McBuen, founding associate dean for online programs. For instance, she says, one student lives from a small town in Arkansas and intends to continue living and working in that community, which has had few social access to social workers. “We provide access for individuals who wouldn’t be able to join the social work profession otherwise.”

In developing the MSW@Denver program, McBuen says, “GSSW has worked to match the curriculum to diverse needs of learners from different contexts and localities. “We give students opportunities to bring their unique community perspective into the classroom. These engaging learning experiences expand understanding of social work’s grand challenges and generate action for social and racial equity across a range of issues.”

“The GSSW community is growing to include individuals across the country who are passionate about making change and working for social justice,” McBuen adds. “Through MSW@Denver, we are advancing our vision to create equity across the country by increasing access to quality social work services.”

MSW@DENVER

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Today, Mussman works with nonprofits as a grant writer for Zim Consulting, a professional connection she made through a mentor at her first-year field placement.

This sort of outcome is exactly what GSSW is aiming for with its field education program, says Annesha Bhasrawi, associate professor of the practice and assistant dean for field education and community partnerships. Bhasrawi and the field education team—Clinical Assistant Professor Denise Breining-Ghinn, Associate Director Clinical Assistant Professor Kathryn Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor Johanne Mitchell, Assistant Professor of the Practice Jessica Zaslav, and Associate Director/Associate Professor of the Practice Michele Sienkiewicz—continue expanding and enriching field education opportunities, including a new collaboration with Savio House that will train GSSW intern in evidence-based practices such as Multi-Sytemic Therapy and offer them a job upon graduation.

Meanwhile, Mussman says, “I want to make the world a better place, and grant writing is the best use of my skills and how I can make a meaningful impact.”

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TRIBES

P: Research Associate Professor Robin Leake
Co-P: Research Associate Professor Nancy Lucero

Community Partners: Tribal Law and Policy Institute, University of Southern Maine, Wootat

Impact: The Capacity Building Center for Tribes is part of the Children’s Bureau Capacity Building Collaborative—a partnership between the Center for Tribes, the Center for States and the Center for Court. The project will strengthen tribal child welfare and family service systems and services to nurture the safety, permanency and well-being of children, youth and families.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GSSW’S PARTNERSHIP WITH SAVIO HOUSE:

socialwork.du.edu/saviohouse
Tennyson to monitor outcomes of children and families using a range of indicators within a three-part treatment framework (stabilize, heal, reintegrate) for up to three years after discharge. Professor He also looked at Tennyson’s organizational health—including the culture and climate of the organization and issues such as inquiries and employment bureaus—using the Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment, an instrument developed for child welfare organizations. This was the first time the instrument has been used in a residential community-based program, she says. “The Tennyson Center is a great agency that helps children in many ways while they’re in its therapeutic program,” Hanna says. “We pushed the center to consider new ways to ensure that the work they do is sustained after discharge.” GSSW provided much-needed skills and capacity, helping Tennyson Center staff find ways to illuminate those aspects of Tennyson’s programs that have lasting impact and those that need to be reconsidered, says Tennyson Center President and CEO Ned Breelin. “GSSW has made Tennyson better, which will translate into better results for children and families across Colorado,” Breelin says. “GSSW leaders helped walk us to a radically new place that tied our ambitions for impact with dynamic and achievable ways to monitor results over time. That created the conditions for us to constantly improve and innovate. Tennyson is better when we let others, like GSSW, into our work and together forge ahead to dramatically change for the good of children and families.”

PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST

Assistant Professor Amy He has been invited to serve as a member of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Program and Services Subcommittee. The committee supports CDHS’s efforts to analyze and implement stipulations of the FFPSA, groundbreaking legislation aimed at providing prevention services to families at imminent risk of entering the foster care system. Professor He also is a member of the CDHS Core Compression Planning Team. Working with Casey Family Services, the team has identified and developed critical stipulations of the FFPSA, Family First Program and Services Subcommittee. The FFPSA Program and Services Subcommittee. The FFPSA, Family First Program and Services Subcommittee. The FFPSA, Family First Program and Services Subcommittee.

Michele Hanna, Associate Professor & Executive Director, Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness

Daniel Brisson, Associate Professor & Executive Director, Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness

Jesse Burns, Assistant Professor of the Practice & Executive Director, Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness

Kerry Cassley, Clinical Assistant Professor

William Cloud, Professor

Wanda Ellingson, Professor of the Practice & Program Director, Four Corners FFPSA Roadmap

Rachel Forbes, Assistant Professor of the Practice & Program Director, Western Colorado

Meg Franko, Research Associate Professor

Stacey Freedenthal, Associate Professor

Anthony Fuligniti, Assistant Professor

Lorena Galton, Clinical Assistant Professor & Coordinator, Latino Social Work Certificate

Donny Geerke, Assistant Professor

Brian Gonzales, Clinical Assistant Professor & Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

Jennifer Greenfield, Assistant Professor

Michele Hanna, Associate Professor & Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Amy He, Assistant Professor

Jeff Jansen, Philip D. and Eleanor G. Witte Endowed Professor for Children and Youth

Kathy Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor & Associate Director, Field Education

Suzanne Korns, Research Associate Professor of the Practice & Executive Director, Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness

Johnny Kim, Associate Professor

Julie Ana Lasser-Maize, Associate Professor & Coordinator, School Social Work Certificate

Robin Leake, Research Associate Professor

Nancy Locero, Research Associate Professor

Dr. Tennyson Center staff also collaborated with Jennifer Sedivy, Assistant Professor; and Amy He, Associate Professor, paying attention to the need for data-informed decision-making. In 2017, Tennyson launched an Impact Department focused on measurement, data integrity and programmatic improvement and turned to GSSW to help develop a monitoring framework to improve outcomes through data-driven measurement, data integrity and programmatic improvement. In 2017, Tennyson launched an Impact Department focused on measurement, data integrity and programmatic improvement and turned to GSSW to help develop a monitoring framework to improve outcomes through data-driven measurement, data integrity and programmatic improvement.

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