SOCIAL JUSTICE IN SOCIAL WORK
OUTLINE AND INTRODUCTION

• THE NATURE OF SOCIAL WORK
• SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WORK – ETHICAL STANDARDS
• WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE
• SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PRACTICE
  • FAIRNESS
  • EQUALITY
• WHERE TO FROM HERE
DEFINING SOCIAL WORK

• SOCIAL WORK IS A PRACTICE-BASED PROFESSION AND AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE THAT PROMOTES SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL COHESION, AND THE EMPOWERMENT AND LIBERATION OF PEOPLE. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS, COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITIES ARE CENTRAL TO SOCIAL WORK. UNDERPINNED BY THEORIES OF SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, SOCIAL WORK ENGAGES PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES TO ADDRESS LIFE CHALLENGES AND ENHANCE WELLBEING.

• THE ABOVE DEFINITION MAY BE AMPLIFIED AT NATIONAL AND/OR REGIONAL LEVELS.
Public policy advocacy with user-groups, trade-unions & civic society

Practice-based, user-controlled & anthropological research

Emancipatory practice and advocacy by engaging in transformative activities with service-users, children, families and communities
Justice
for the Earth - for the People
He Tikanga
o te Whenua - o te Tangata
SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

• SOCIAL WORK AS VALUE BASED
• CODES OF ETHICS
  • PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO SOCIAL WORK (IFSW)
  • KEY PRINCIPLES, SOCIAL JUSTICE (BASW)
SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (3)

• **CANADIAN ASSN**: THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IS … DEDICATED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

• **ANZASW**: ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE THAT IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL JUSTICE
DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE

social justice

decent work

globalization

employment

freedom

values

labour

trade union

solidarity

equality

freedom of associations

human rights

wages

income

workers' rights

organization

code of conduct

money

benefit

convention

effect

equality

community

grassroots

meeting

solidarity

organization
SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (2)

- SOCIAL WORKERS PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE WITH AND ON BEHALF OF CLIENTS (US ASSN)

- WORKING TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE. (AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION)
Recognitive social justice

Rights

Equity

Self determination

Philosophical stance

Participation

Access
CURRENT PRACTICE QUESTIONS/PRESSURES/ISSUES –
WHAT ARE OUR COMMUNITIES/FAMILIES/CLIENTS FACING

• PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY SOME KEY ISSUES
PRACTICE LIFE –
PRACTITIONERS DESCRIBE JUST ACTIVITIES

- FAIRNESS
- EQUALITY
DEFINITIONS : FAIRNESS

• TREATMENT
• ACCESS TO RESOURCES WHICH GAVE OPPORTUNITIES
• PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF RIGHTS - INDIGENOUS, MINORITY AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS
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<tr>
<th>Fairness in social issues or society, e.g. health, education, justice, welfare. This includes distribution of wealth and advantages as well as the right of self determination. Social justice is about both individuals and groups of people and in NZ it is intrinsically linked with the Treaty of Waitangi. Fairness to me is about equality and equal opportunities.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Working with teen parents of pregnant teens. Social justice issues around access to education (for them and their children), access to finance, labelled as being ‘bad’ parents. Practice: Began a project group to look at possible ways to overcome issues. Led to establishing a teen parent unit where young parents get access to education and support. My definition of social justice meant I was not able to accept the injustice due to the unfair treatment of teen parents.</td>
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<td>DEFINITION</td>
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<td>Fair and just treatment of any individual, and the right to benefit from what is available in any society</td>
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<td>This is not just a practice incident but relates to a number of the client group with whom I work – there is the problem of housing patients who have mental illness and who has a history of offending. Because they fall in a particular category HNZ and City council housing (low cost housing) are reluctant to accept them as tenants and in one instance a patient has been kept waiting 7 months for a HNZ unit while another person was granted a HNZ flat directly from prison without any wait. It has affected my practice in that I have had to become a strong advocate for this client group to the point of arranging a meeting with our management and with low cost housing providers about housing problems</td>
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DEFINITION
A society where there is a fair and equitable distribution of resources and where all members human rights are recognised and all members are considered equal.

EXAMPLE
A client over 65 with hearing loss was unable to afford hearing aids and thus his inability to communicate with others affected his quality of life. If this client was working or a child he would have had access to govt subsidies. My defn of sj includes having equal access to resources to participate in society and I felt older people ere getting a bad deal. The govt subsidy had not been raised for yrs.

I applied to a trust for funding for a hearing aid and was successful. I raised the issue at the Age Care Forum of which I am a member, a forum that meets monthly to discuss, coordinate, advocate and focus on the needs of older people. I wrote to the Minister of Health and Ruth Dyson about the issue and spoke to people at MoH. Before last election govt subsidy was raised but in the meantime the cost of aids has risen.
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<td>Where everyone no matter what their socioeconomic status is can be sure of fair and just treatment by the authorities. This includes redress for past wrongs and speedy resolution of present injustices.</td>
<td>A client was denied a benefit because he said to his case manager that he didn’t want to improve his situation and although he had perfectly good excuse for not attending a particular appointment, a training course and applying for a job he was given a standdown of 13 wks. In my definition of social justice the authorities cannot deny a person because he said the ‘wrong’ thing.</td>
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I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY SOMEBODY DID’NT DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. THEN I REALIZED I AM SOMEBODY.
DEFINITIONS : EQUALITY

- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
- EQUAL OUTCOMES
- IDENTICAL (SAME) TREATMENT
- DIFFERENT TREATMENT
**DEFINITION**
Society seeking to create a just system and working towards addressing areas that are found to be unjust or inequitable. Individuals acknowledging what is unjust and having ways of redress should they be marginalised. A whole system approach from government to society. Individuals acknowledging and changing.

**EXAMPLE**
When a client was unable to have access to a service because technically she didn’t fit their criteria. However, she had no other options available to her and if she didn’t receive help from this service she would continue in a cycle which I believe was abusive to her. It was the system in place that was abusive, not the individual workers. I felt that it was unjust for her to continue in that way, never getting what she really needed because she fell through every imaginable gap. My definition affected my practice as I felt that society and us workers as individuals had to change our way of working to ensure needs were met. Myself and others at my office continued to push the issue so that others could not ignore the needs of the client. This did take several attempts and things getting worse for the client before action was taken.
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<td>Equal opportunity for all regardless of race, age, gender or status</td>
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<td>A Maori mother who believed she was stupid and not able to better herself. She had been beaten often from an ex-partner, moved down to Christchurch from Auckland to get away from the partner. She was very isolated, had 4 children and few skills. My belief in equal opportunity for all motivated me to help this woman get support within the community. I also encouraged her to do night school and contrived to encourage and support her until she had enrolled in a polytechnic course.</td>
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<td>Once she had exp success with night school her esteem improved and inspired a belief in her own ability that opportunities were for her the same as they were for others. What was unjust? Domestic violence towards her which forced her to leave her Maori family’s support and move south; bad exp at school which left the feeling she was unbright, being raised in a dysfunctional, criminal tolerant family reduced her life chances to meet her potential.</td>
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<td>Striving for equitable outcomes for all. This may not mean equal or ‘exactly the same’ but it would lead to each person having the best possible chance at becoming able to participate in society to their fullest ability, regardless of sex, race, health, disability, country of origin, economic status etc (Human Rights Act)</td>
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| I am working with an Ethiopian mother and daughter to try to improve the behaviour of the daughter. When I first started the case the girl (aged 10) was in CYF care. The school, CYFS and the caregivers all wanted her to stay in care – they saw Mum’s struggles to negotiate the NZ system as the problem rather than trying to understand the vast cultural/language divide. 

I have seen my work with the family as having a huge educational component to bridge the gap from both sides in order to give Mum and daughter the skills to participate in NZ society without having to lose their cult identity. 

For the professionals involved with my Ethiopian family I have written a cross-cultural comparison of growing up-parenting in Ethiopia/NZ. This is to try and break down some of the judgements being made from a Western perspective about the family. I am working on this with a consultant psychologist who specialises in refugee traumas. |
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| Ensuring that people are treated equally.  
Ensuring that people of a culture are understood with respect |

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<td>Being Maori food plays a very important part of our tikanga – etiquette and protocols. I held a meeting whereby I was told there was no funding for food. The meeting would take 3-6 hrs to hold and complete. I wrote a 10 page proposal on manakitanga – treating people well; tikanga – etiquette and customary concepts on tapu, and noa pertaining to food. Utilised my own funds and prepared plenty of food.</td>
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<td>Outcome - there was a legal proceeding in accordance with the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act. People were able to make decisions and recommendations with a comfort stop (cup of tea etc) then a meal at the end of the mtg. Meeting lasted 7.5 hrs. Due to the outcome being in the best interest of the young people and their families children were not put in care of CYF. Family took care of them. I was reimbursed for my personal funds the next day. I personally believe I saved CYF thousands of dollars.</td>
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<td><strong>Equality of opportunity.</strong> Where factors such as ethnicity, gender, income, culture, geographical location are taken into account in a way that still allows equal opportunity</td>
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<td>A client needed both dialysis and rest home level care. There is no provision for funding within the local DHB for rest home care clients to have dialysis. Family were not in a position to pay for private care. DHB had no provision for this essential life support service once this client needed residential care.</td>
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<p>| | Expectation was that if she needed community based dialysis either she or family had to take responsibility for this. Placed enormous pressure on family who could no longer care for her but felt they were executing a death sentence by stating this to health services – resulted in social worker advocacy to try to access resources. |</p>
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<td>Everyone having equal opportunity to access the various resources available within society, regardless of money, ethnicity, gender, age etc and being able to achieve similar outcomes.</td>
<td>A regular occurrence is where families whose children cannot access any additional school or out of school activities such as school camps, sports clubs, music/dance/etc lessons. This disadvantages these children and sets them apart from other children. My practice has been to address the reasons for this situation, i.e. the basis of the families poverty and to do so at a practical level but also in the wider macro level.</td>
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At a local level, I have built networks e.g. to budgeting services, foodbanks, have a friend within my budget to address individual circumstances but will also report trends, advocate at WINZ and CYF, write to my MP, discuss and ANZASW meetings, support petitions etc. I also talk to families about how their circumstance are connected to political decisions.
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<td>Equality. Fairness for all groups in society</td>
<td>Grandparents raising grandchildren. Advocating that even though they are caring for family (and the expectations that they should do so) they still may require significant support including financial as they may have had to sacrifice a lot, eg. Jobs, enjoyment of life in later years to care for a child.</td>
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FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY COME TOGETHER

• DEFINITION

• SOCIAL JUSTICE IS THE UNIFYING TERM GIVEN TO THE PURSUIT OF EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IN ALL HUMAN SITUATIONS AND IN RELATION TO THE USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES. SOCIAL JUSTICE INCORPORATES NOTIONS OF PREFERENTIAL OPTIONS FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE AND THE COLLECTIVITY OF RESPONSIBILITY AND RIGHTS.
EXAMPLE

• As a policy analyst and became aware of the unfair treatment of Maori and PI young persons in their involvement with the NZ criminal justice system. Responses to them were disproportional and affected by bias and prejudice. This resulted in unfair treatment and outcomes for those young people compared with matched white young people. Was able to advocate for a change to the law (CYP&F Act) which limited the exercise of professional discretion to the nature of the offence, rather than to any characteristic of the offender. This was consistent with my training and upbringing.
OTHER TERMINOLOGY

• ACCESS
• ADVOCACY
• DISCRIMINATION
• FREEDOM
• LEGAL
• MAORI
• OPPORTUNITIES
• RIGHTS
Justice

Charity

You need both feet to walk and keep your balance.
IMPLICATIONS (1)

• SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WORK – SELF DESCRIPTION AND CLIENT DESCRIPTION
• OUR OWN APPROACH TO AND APPLICATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
• SUPPORT FOR USERS AND FOR COLLEAGUES
• MICRO AND MACRO PRACTICE: SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL CHANGE. USING DATA FROM PRACTICE
IMPLICATIONS (2)

- SOCIAL JUSTICE, SOCIAL EXCLUSION, SOCIAL COHESION
- DEVELOPING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
- BEING CRITICALLY POSITIVE ABOUT WHAT WE DO
IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE COMPASSIONATE. YOU MUST ACT.

- His Holiness The Dalai Lama
BARRIERS TO JUST PRACTICE

• RISK TO POSITION
• ORGANISATION RULES/REQUIREMENTS
  • UNSURE HOW TO MOVE
  • BUSYNESS OF PRACTICE
• I CANT CHANGE ANYTHING
JUST ACTING – WHAT CAN WE DO

• IDENTIFY ONE ACTIVITY WE CAN UNDERTAKE THIS WEEK/MONTH